

**Mid-Term Evaluation (Niger) of the project
"Combating traditional slavery based on descent and
forced begging of children and the reintegration of
former slaves in four West African countries"**

October 2021

List of acronyms and abbreviations

CAE	Communities of slave descent
AGR	Income-generating activities
ASO/EPT	Education for All
BEN	National Executive Board
BIT	International Labour Organisation
CaCoPeD	Consultation Framework for the Promotion of Education
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OI	International Organizations
OSC	Civil society organizations
PAM	World Food Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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Summary

1. Brief introduction to the project

The project "Combating traditional slavery based on descent and forced begging of children and the reintegration of former slaves in four West African countries" aims to contribute to the eradication of slavery practices in Niger, Mauritania, Senegal and Nigeria. In Niger, the objectives assigned to the project are:

1. Former slaves in Niger experience improved social integration and economic empowerment;
2. Legal and political systems that identify and protect people vulnerable to slavery in Niger are strengthened.

2. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Research Questions

The purpose of the evaluation is to measure the impact of this project and to provide practical recommendations and lessons for future research projects or initiatives. To this end, the evaluation will focus its analysis on the impact of legal aid services, socio-economic support and advocacy work, and will examine the role of the project in the collective emancipation of former slaves and the establishment of independent communities. In total, fifteen (15) research questions served as a guideline for the conduct of this evaluation based on the generally accepted evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach is purely qualitative and consisted of focus group discussions with direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as interviews with identified key informants who are project stakeholders or representatives of humanitarian, development or human rights organizations at national, regional, and local level. A total of eight (8) focus groups were conducted in Affalalo and Ineiss which reached ninety-six (96) people, 48 of whom were female. At the level of the control community, four (4) focus groups were carried out which reached 28 people including 14 women and 14 men.

As part of the effectiveness measurement, four (4) areas of intervention of the project were reviewed: i) legal assistance, ii) judicial procedure, iii) socio-economic support and iv) advocacy at local, regional and national level. For the measurement of relevance, it is the advocacy component that has been explored, in terms of capacity, inclusiveness and achievements. Then, the impact was analyzed in terms of the influence of the project on the emergence of new independent communities. With regard to efficiency, it was approached from the point of view of internal collaboration and partnership between the two organizations. As for sustainability, it was analysed on the basis of the capacity of communities to continue interventions and the exit strategy put in place by the project.

4. Results

4.1. Effectiveness

The project "Breaking the cycle of poverty and supporting the emancipation of slavery communities in Niger" has truly demonstrated its effectiveness by considering the dimensions assessed. Within the framework of legal assistance, the communities unanimously welcomed awareness-raising activities

on the rights and duties of citizens. Moreover, these same sensitizations have been replicated in communities still in slavery to encourage their emancipation. The permanent civic education centres went beyond their mission and continued to assist CAEs in all parts of their lives. Regarding judicial proceedings, although communities have filed very few complaints about serious forms of slavery, it must be said that the judgment of the Court of Appeal in March 2019 in the Case of Hadijatou Mani, declaring the illegality of the practice of "Wahaya" is an important step forward in the protection of women's rights. By considering advocacy at the local level, the achievements are seen in the strong mobilization of the municipality for the financing of water infrastructure for the benefit of CAEs. At the regional level, the achievements consisted in the mobilization of the authorities at the highest level of the region who presided over the ceremonies to celebrate the first day of the fight against trafficking in persons and slavery. At the national level, the effective recognition of the situation of the CAEs, including the adoption in 2020 of the National Day of Mobilization against trafficking in persons and slavery (celebrated every 28 September) and the progress in terms of education services (schools and canteens) for the benefit of these CAEs are irreversible achievements.

4.2. Relevance

The project responded to the essential needs of CAEs by empowering them to claim their rights and empower others to do so. Moreover, they evaluated positively the access and use of the services available to them, particularly the use of the services of paralegals and field animators. Communities claim to have the capacity to seek basic social services through the acquisition of civil status documents and the request for specific awareness sessions with paralegals on environmental protection; use basic social services by enrolling their children in school and taking them to health centres; and to redress their rights in the event of intimidation, physical abuse or economic disputes, particularly over land.

4.3. Impact

The project allowed assisted communities to integrate into the administrative management structure of the regions in Niger through the recognition of villages and the formalization of village and tribal leaders. The project has sparked the emancipation of five communities that have liberated themselves from their villages of origin and are now autonomous. The project has thus enabled communities to remain independent through the acquisition of knowledge about rights and responsibilities, access to education and socio-economic support. The benefits of emancipation for the new CAEs are: i) The former slaves are grouped together in communities without prejudice or prosecution and abuse. ii) Improved way of life within the assisted communities which have functional schools and which are financially autonomous. iii) The inter-community meetings held by the project have enabled them to acquire knowledge of their rights and responsibilities. (iv) Corporal punishment, abuse and the persistence of their exploitation have ceased.

4.4. Efficiency

The efficiency measurement focused on the partnership between ASI and Timidria on the one hand, and between Timidria and the other organisations present in Niger on the other. It shows that the partnership between Timidria and ASI is mutually beneficial and has enabled both organizations to gain national and international recognition in the fight against traditional slavery. Despite the transfer of competencies, Timidria's dependence on the partnership with ASI in terms of resource mobilization and redefinition of anti-slavery strategies is still present.

The project engaged many partners in advocacy, who were of considerable support. Representation in national networks and other organizations in itself reflects Timidria's primary place on the national stage.

However, the evaluation found a lack of communication and information to the wider Nigerian population, which would have increased public pressure on government authorities and judicial actors on the issue of slavery.

4.5. Sustainability

The project has included an exit strategy that should allow implementing partners to disengage from the nine assisted communities. This strategy consisted of including, on a smaller scale, these communities in a new project funded by DRL and continuing to accompany them through regular visits by field staff and advocacy on their behalf. The communities, for their part, believe that this exit strategy is adequate because they have the technical and financial capital necessary to take over the project. From their point of view, the activities that can be maintained and continued on their own are: the schooling of girls and boys; fishing operations with the multiplication of livestock; and knowledge gained from awareness-raising that is already being passed on to other communities and is still reproducible.

5. Recommendations

Following the analysis by criteria, recommendations were made in the area of the expected results of the project. They relate to legal assistance, legal proceedings, socio-economic support, advocacy at local, regional and national level, support for the new Autonomous Communities and finally, the partnership between Timidria and ASI. One of the major recommendations is undoubtedly the replication of the activities already carried out by the project for the benefit of newly emancipated communities while proactively targeting their specific needs, especially for young girls and boys who have just emerged from slavery.

I. General information on the project context and partners

1.1. Project Description

The project "Combating traditional slavery based on descent and forced begging of children and the reintegration of former slaves in four West African countries" aims to contribute to the eradication of slavery practices in Niger, Mauritania, Senegal and Nigeria. In Niger, the objectives assigned to the project are:

3. former slaves in Niger experience improved social integration and economic empowerment;
4. Legal and political systems that identify and protect people vulnerable to slavery in Niger are strengthened.

The project aims to: (i) support the social, economic, political and legal empowerment of people emerging from slavery; (ii) strengthening the sustainability of newly established schools and other basic services in three slave communities where vulnerability to "slavery" remains acute and where education, State engagement and community development will be used to break the bonds of slavery, exploitation and subordination; and (iii) improving the enforcement of anti-slavery and anti-discrimination laws to better protect people from slavery-related practices.

1.2. Implementing partners

The project "Combating traditional slavery based on descent and forced begging of children and the reintegration of former slaves in four West African countries" is implemented by an international partner, in this case, Anti-Slavery International (ASI) and its local respondent, the Timidria Association.

Anti-Slavery International (ASI) is an organization that was established in 1839 with the mission of fighting slavery and similar practices around the world, based on the premise that slavery, servitude and forced labor violate individual freedoms and deprive millions of people of their dignity and fundamental rights. ASI intervenes at community, national and international level with a view to the eradication of slavery. These interventions include conducting studies on slavery practices, intervening with governments and intergovernmental agencies to adopt measures to prevent and combat slavery, and supporting local and national organizations working to eradicate slavery through awareness-raising, advocacy and victim assistance.

The Timidria Association is an organization under Nigerien law that was created in 1991 by former slaves and descendants of slaves to fight against slavery and associated discrimination. It is the main abolitionist movement in Niger and has about 300,000 members and supporters throughout the country. The association covers the entire Nigerien territory with 9 sections, 32 subsections and 682 local offices. With ASI's support, Timidria's work led to the criminalization of slavery in 2003 and allowed dozens of victims to access justice and reparations before national and international courts.

Through its various programs and interventions, Timidria facilitated the release of thousands of slaves, enabled nearly 1,500 children of slave descent to access quality primary education, and supported about 1,200 survivors of slavery in the creation of small businesses. Thanks to Timidria's commitment and training, these communities are now in direct contact with their elected representatives to assert their rights and needs.

II. Description of the objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to measure the impact of DRL-funded projects and to provide practical recommendations and lessons for future research and dissemination initiatives. To this end, the evaluation will focus its analysis on the impact of legal aid services, socio-economic support and advocacy work, and will examine the role of the project in the collective emancipation of former slaves and the establishment of independent communities. The evaluation research questions are as follows:

Legal assistance (questions on effectiveness)

- 1 - How effective are the outreach activities conducted by paralegals? Do they target the most vulnerable and marginalized communities?
- 2- To what extent are civic education centres effective in counselling and supporting victims of slavery and related practices?
- 3- To what extent has the collaboration between the legal assistant, lawyer, paralegals and other local structures of Timidria been effective? How can it be improved?

Judicial proceedings (questions on efficiency)

- 1- What explains the low number of cases brought before the courts, especially when it comes to the most serious cases of slavery? What explains the low number of convictions?
- 2- How can ASI and Timidria improve the efficiency of their legal work to get more convictions?

Socio-economic support (efficiency questions)

- 1- To what extent has socio-economic support improved the livelihoods of beneficiaries?
- 2- How to improve the effectiveness of socio-economic assistance?
- 3- What are the challenges faced by Timidria in its collaboration with Tanaadi, the micro-credit institute? How could these have been mitigated/avoided?

Advocacy (local, regional, national) (questions on effectiveness)

- 1- Do we target the most relevant stakeholders at local, regional and national level?
- 2- What are the main achievements of advocacy at local, regional and national levels?

Advocacy (local, regional, national) (questions on relevance)

- 1- To what extent are communities able to defend their own needs independently (without the support of Timidria) at local and regional levels?
- 2- What is the level of diversity among community representatives in charge of advocacy? To what extent do they include women, youth and people with disabilities?

New communities (impact question)

- 1- To what extent can the liberation of entire communities be attributed to the projects? What specific anti-slavery efforts or activities had the greatest impact on these emancipation movements? (From the point of view of Timidria as well as through 2 or 3 testimonies from members of these newly established communities)

Partnership (efficiency question)

1- How do you assess the partnership between Timidria and ASI?

2- To what extent has the project allowed Timidria to develop with other stakeholders and collaborators to fight against slavery by descent in Niger?

III. Description of the methodology applied

3.1.1. Qualitative method

The evaluation was conducted taking into account mainly the evaluation questions identified by ASI on the basis of the generally accepted evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. It is purely qualitative and consisted of focus groups with direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as interviews with identified key informants; these informants being project stakeholders or members of the development community at national, regional and local level. To this end, specific tools have been developed on the basis of the initial assessment matrix submitted to ASI and Timidria.

3.1.2. Sampling

The research sample consists of the targets presented in the following sections.

3.1.2.1. Project Team

As part of this evaluation, the project team members interviewed are:

- The National Coordinator of Timidria
- Timidria's Legal Assistant
- The Regional Coordinator of Timidria
- The Tchintabaraden Paralegal
- Anti-Slavery International's Africa Program Manager
- The Project Manager of Anti-Slavery International's Africa program

3.1.2.2. Institutional Actors

The institutional actors interviewed as part of the evaluation are:

Institutional Actors	Number of persons	Typology of collection tools
Niamey		
Lawyer	1	Maintenance Guide
National Executive Office of Timidria	1	Maintenance Guide
Tahoua		
Governorate	1	Maintenance Guide
Regional Directorate of Primary Education - DREP	1	Maintenance Guide
Regional Council	1	Maintenance Guide
Tchintabaraden		
Prefect	1	Maintenance Guide
Village Chiefs	5	Maintenance Guide
Outgoing Mayor	1	Maintenance Guide
Incoming Mayor	1	Maintenance Guide

Institutional Actors	Number of persons	Typology of collection tools
Departmental Directorate for the Advancement of Women and Child Protection	1	Maintenance Guide
Departmental Directorate of Community Development	1	Maintenance Guide
Inspectorate Basic Education	1	Maintenance Guide
Court of Justice	2	Maintenance Guide

3.1.2.3. Direct and indirect beneficiaries

In total, eight (8) focus groups were carried out in the communities of Affalalo and Ineiss which reached ninety-six (96) people, 48 of whom were women.

At the level of the control community, four (4) focus groups were carried out which reached 28 people including 14 women and 14 men.

Communities	Women	Men	Girls	Young Boys
Affalalo	10	10	10	10
Inaandiss	7	7	7	7
Taghazarte (control)	7	7	7	7
Total	24	24	24	24

3.1.3. Difficulties encountered

The main difficulties encountered are inherent in the effective conduct of interviews with institutional actors for the following reasons: i) the turnover of State staff; ii) the lapse of some targeted actors due to the lack of interactions in the implementation of the project; (iii) the non-return of the guides sent by the evaluator.

IV. Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the evaluation, including key findings and preliminary findings. These results were identified for each of the key evaluation questions.

4.1. Efficiency

The effectiveness measurement involved four (4) areas of intervention of the project including: (i) legal assistance, (ii) judicial proceedings, (iii) socio-economic support and (iv) advocacy at the local, regional and national levels.

4.1.1. Legal assistance

4.1.1.1. Effectiveness of outreach activities

From the perspective of the communities of Affalalo and Ineiss, the services offered by paralegals are awareness and training. The main themes developed during the awareness sessions are related to: i) knowledge of their rights and responsibilities; ii) reporting of demeaning practices; iii) monitoring of slavery outbreaks; (iv) the analysis of situations of servitude and the identification of appropriate solutions; and (v) direct access to justice. This knowledge allowed them to overcome their fear of regrouping, which led to the emergence and expansion of the village of Affalalo for example. They

have allowed them to establish a more peaceful relationship with the old masters who come to visit them on their new sites and who now tend to consider them as brothers.

Awareness-raising activities have helped to facilitate access to education, the demand for water infrastructure and the strengthening of citizenship through the knowledgeable exercising of their right to vote. Indeed, if formerly, the vote was based on the instructions of the masters or the appearance of the candidates, they are now keen to vote for the men and women from their communities. The emergence of new communities was also a result of awareness-raising actions.

The perception of the range of paralegal services is considered satisfactory. The most useful themes are those related to awareness raising on the rights and responsibilities of citizens. And there are no additional themes identified as currently missing. Access to paralegals was also found to be satisfactory, with no barriers identified.

In general, systematic mechanisms to assess communities' understanding of messages have not been put in place in a standardized manner by all project team stakeholders. For example, at the local level, focus groups and questionnaires are applied to communities to assess the level of understanding and assimilation of these messages. However, the findings and recommendations emanating from the communities were not used to adapt the project as could have been done, for example, through feedback mechanisms to improve or add awareness-raising themes or mobilize other partners with additional expertise.

4.1.1.2. Targeting the most vulnerable and marginalized communities

Outreach activities have only targeted communities of slave descent. These are extremely vulnerable communities as they have almost no infrastructure except for schools, a few traditional wells and a borehole. Moreover, none of these communities have health huts. This vulnerability of communities is also marked by the absence of external partners, national or international NGOs, who could provide complementary services. Under these conditions, the continuum of services offered by the project is the only way to empower CAEs.

Targeting is differentiated within CAEs and has affected all segments of the population: men, women, girls and boys. These populations can be divided into two distinct groups:

- A first group of people who have experienced the situation of slavery from which it was necessary to help them to get out of it, especially in the new communities where they are just beginning to raise their heads;
- A second group of people who know slavery only in name, being born outside the communities of origin [the communities controlled by masters].

Finally, the relevance of targeting is materialized by the cascading awareness strategy put in place by the project. This has been characterized by the establishment of a small group that has already been sensitized and is delegated to the communities of origin or in hamlets still under servitude to raise their awareness in order to get them out of slavery. In fact, communities even further on the margins of assisted communities were able to benefit from the awareness sessions.

Thus, it can be accepted that, directly and indirectly, targeting has indeed affected the most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

EQ2. To what extent are civic education centres effective in counselling and supporting victims of slavery and related practices?

The Permanent Centre for Civic Education (CPEC) in Tchintabaraden is open and offers the following services: (i) support for the filing of complaints, (ii) activities and awareness-raising sessions; (iii) access to civil status documents and (iv) financial support for victims of slavery. This center, located in the premises of Timidria, operates at the request of users but also plans awareness actions to which communities are invited. Some communities perceive the centre as the continuation of all services provided by paralegals. Others, on the other hand, claim not to know the existence of the center. For example, of the eight (8) focus groups organized, only three (adult men, women and young men of Inazgar) said they were aware of the existence of the center and the actions carried out there, including the resolution of conflicts related to slavery and animations. Among those who are aware of the existence of this centre, the services offered that have been noted are awareness sessions on rights, home management, mutual respect in the community and the education of children.

The level of attendance at the Tchintabaraden centre is quite high. The reception register of the centre makes it possible to note that:

- Thirteen (13) persons including 11 men and 2 women have introduced 11 cases that have been integrated into the judicial circuit;
- 685 women and 292 men accessed the awareness and facilitation sessions;
- 357 women and 130 men had access to civil status documents. This is a facilitation by the paralegal, the civil status documents being issued by the administrative authorities designated by the State.

In fact, the centre goes beyond its assigned missions and functions as a continuation of the services offered by paralegals at the community level. The centre appears to have little added value compared to outreach activities conducted by paralegals in the communities, and when its existence is known by the communities, this centre is seen more as a way to meet their needs for services of all kinds than as a structure offering only specific and personalized services in the fight against slavery and similar practices.

Complaints related to slavery are not mentioned at all, as the communities have not identified any act in this direction. Indeed, of the 12 focus groups carried out, no case of slavery, servitude or bullying has been noted. Thus, according to the communities supported by the project, the main complaints they have filed relate to conflicts between farmers and herders.

EQ3. To what extent has the collaboration between the legal assistant, lawyer, paralegals and other local structures in Timidria been effective? How can it be improved?

The work chain at project team level is enshrined in an organizational chart and job descriptions. The paralegal forwards complaints registered at the centre level to the legal assistant. Then, the latter draws up a report that he submits to the lawyer who makes a return on the advisability of filing a complaint at the courts.

This information is then shared with the National Executive Office (BEN) and the project team. The division of roles between the legal assistant, the lawyer, the paralegals and other local structures of Timidria is clear. The lines of supervision and the modalities of interaction between the project team and the BEN are explained by the texts of the organization.

According to the project team, the availability of the lawyer and the legal assistant allows a certain fluidity in the exchanges and sharing of information, as well as the establishment of a group on social networks between the project manager at ASI, the legal assistant and the paralegals which allows them to interact directly.

Unfortunately, the project team deplored the lack of formal communication or meetings between internal staff members but also between legal staff (legal assistant, paralegal, lawyer) and the BEN of Timidria. Insufficient resources also hampered the lawyer's travel to victims to intervene from the outset of cases. Finally, the low level of training of paralegals has proven to be a real obstacle to the effectiveness of the system.

From the analysis of this interrelationship, it appears that:

- The distribution of roles follows a hierarchical logic within the project, which in itself is the norm.
- The BEN must have the opportunity to play a strategic and reference role in improving collaboration. For example, very clear instructions given by the BEN on whether or not to go to court could refocus the project's work on more serious cases.
- The lines of collaboration between the legal assistant and the BEN Commissioner for Human Rights are not well established. Timidria's texts attribute to the BEN Commissioner for Human Rights the prerogatives of legal assistance for which a legal assistant was appointed by the project. Hence the urgent need to differentiate between the strategic and operational levels of intervention in order to enhance the effectiveness of the system. Indeed, according to the principles of good governance, at the operational level, the project team must be supervised by the project coordinator, especially since the mandate of the team is to implement the defined project. At the strategic level, it would be a question of giving guidance on the positioning of Timidria in relation to its strategic axes and its mission but also on its single-mindedness on cases of slavery such as the practice of zero tolerance for serious cases of slavery, which is already the case.

The effectiveness of the collaboration between the legal assistant, the lawyer, the paralegals and other local structures of Timidria can be demonstrated through the results obtained before the courts at the national and supranational level. Indeed, the first case brought against the government of Niger before the ECOWAS Treaty was a case of slavery, already brought at the time by Timidria (Hadijatou Mani case, 2008). In the wake of this case, the project supported the defense of the Dame Fodi Mohamed case to ECOWAS. The State of Niger was sentenced, once again, to pay damages to the tune of 6,000.000,000 FCFA to the victim and her children.

4.1. 2. Legal proceedings

QE1. What explains the low number of cases brought before the courts, especially in the most serious cases of slavery? What explains the low number of convictions?

The project facilitated the establishment of a dedicated staff composed of a legal assistant and six (6) paralegals who are permanently accessible as well as a lawyer who can be mobilized if necessary to allow communities to access justice. In addition, mobile sessions have been held in some communities with the notable intervention of the President of the Tchintabaraden Court, which indicates the accessibility of justice. Also, the coaching work on the duty of citizen watch and protection of citizens with the chiefs of tribes and villages carried out by the project (who by definition became auxiliary to the administration) facilitates the use of justice for previously marginalized communities. Moreover,

the administrative authorities have reaffirmed their responsibility to enforce law and order at the level of their constituencies, which includes compliance with the 2003 Anti-Slavery Act.

By consulting departmental statistics, only four (4) slavery cases were brought before the district court between February 2018 and August 2019 (the only report on the project period available) and only half resulted in convictions. These cases have, moreover, been reclassified as "acts of racial discrimination and or similar acts that have led to other offences".

The low level of complaints of slavery brought before the gendarmerie, the police or the Prosecutor's Office could be explained by:

- The primacy of conciliation. The perpetrators of serious crimes mobilize very quickly to propose an amicable settlement that often takes the form of compensation in contexts of exacerbated vulnerability where these offers are difficult to negotiate.
- Religion. The belief relayed by slave families to maintain the practice of slavery is to make enslaved people believe that their paradise is in the hands of their masters. And to upset them would be to give up their place in paradise. This argument is by far the strongest deterrent.
- Social coercion. Even in the event of serious damage related to the situation of servitude, the close relatives of the victims sometimes exercise a physical threat that can go to that of death to demand the non-recourse to justice. The interventions of the various authorities on behalf of the perpetrators of reprehensible acts make the victims feel a strong sense of injustice. This destroys the will of the most determined of them to resort to justice because they say to themselves that it is not worth it since in any case it will not go far.
- Economic dependence on the community of origin because some have paid employment with former masters. In addition, some still have close relatives who continue to live in the old communities of origin and who are still under the domination of the masters.

From the point of view of the communities, the most serious forms of slavery are no longer common and therefore there is no reason to file a complaint. And, during the focus groups, some women mentioned that their offspring did not live in a situation of servitude.

Apart from the low number of complaints filed implying the de facto impossibility of prosecution, it should be noted that the country does not have a specialized court on issues of slavery and human rights violations in general. Also, the various cases of slavery are qualified either as misdemeanours and prosecuted in correctional courts with low sentences or as crimes and entrusted to the investigating judges. The crimes are judged at the assizes where the procedure is very long. It has been noted that for these cases, prosecutions are almost always not initiated. However, if the slowness of the judicial system is a fact in Niger with regard to crimes, it is even more so for slavery cases where the courts most often do not prosecute, notwithstanding the declared independence of the said justice. Moreover, recourse to the regional court is greatly facilitated by the slowness of justice and the lack of response from judges within the time limits prescribed by law. And, it is on this observation that the Lawyer is each time able to seize the said court.

In addition, the National Agency for Legal and Judicial Assistance (ANAJJ), which is supposed to offer legal protection to citizens, currently only fully covers young adolescents. It is expected that it will integrate women who could thus benefit in the future.

It is obvious that the State has not equipped itself with the means to fight slavery. Despite the jurisprudence of the first slavery case brought before the ECOWAS Court of Justice in 2008, national courts continue to deal with slavery cases with the greatest slowness, forcing Timidria to refer cases to supranational jurisdictions.

As a reminder, according to data collected from the district court, 50% of the cases handled at the level of the department of Tchintabaraden did not give right to any conviction for lack of facts accomplished. Indeed, because of the lack of solid evidence (testimonies, medical examinations etc.), the offences or crimes are not constituted. In contrast, the files managed directly by the project team were much more successful. Of the 12 complaints received, 8% were abandoned by Timidria, 84% resulted in conciliation and 8% resulted in a conviction before the district court. Conciliations were carried out before the judicial, administrative and community authorities in the following proportions:

- 40% in front of the traditional leader;
- 40% before the judicial authorities;
- 20% within the community. (CPEC Tchinta statistics, May 2021).

In the context of the area of the project where the 2003 law and its consequences are understood by all, former masters as well as descendants of CAE, conciliation can be considered a success because not only does it restore the victim's rights but it can be a factor in strengthening social cohesion, knowing once again, that these are not serious forms of slavery but offenses (insults, bullying, theft etc.).

This result is undoubtedly attributable to the sensitizations carried out by Timidria: as soon as a person is the victim of a crime or misdemeanor, they must have it immediately confirmed by two eyewitnesses and build a file. It should be remembered that this provision was not admissible before because "the slave has no word and therefore cannot testify", an argument that can no longer be used by those at risk of being prosecuted. Thus, new social and behavioural norms are being established to limit the abuse and bullying suffered by communities of slave descent.

Communities are unanimous in their ability to use justice services when needed. This state of affairs is now recorded and constitutes a barrier of protection against possible abuses against communities of slave descent who brandish the threat of legal recourse to protect themselves and from servitude. Both now know that there can be prosecutions that can end up in prison. It should be noted, however, that complaints related to the most serious forms of slavery are rather rare, unlike complaints related to farmer-herder conflicts.

Despite the different forms of judicial recourse that exist, in this case, denunciation, referral or complaints, it is clear that these mechanisms are very little used by the communities, due in part to the fact that the slavers warn victims to not file a complaint or to withdraw them through inter-tribal negotiations and interventions of third parties. These negotiations take the form of conciliations before the customary authorities, the president of the district court with the participation of paralegals or within the community. From the legal point of view, national legislation, in this case the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Code of Civil Procedure, encourage the practice of conciliation, which most often makes it possible to give victims their rights. The conciliation, according to the law, takes place behind closed doors and the participation of paralegals is left to the discretion of the judge.

In conclusion, it can be noted that in terms of achievements, at the judicial level, the effective recognition in 2015 of the fact that the custom of "Wahaya" is contrary to national law constitutes an important step forward in the protection of the rights of women of slave descent. This jurisprudence was obtained more than 7 years after the ECOWAS Conviction of the State of Niger in 2008 in the Hadijatou Mani case. Finally, it should be noted that magistrates' courts seem to be more responsive than high courts and other superior courts. Indeed, considering the statistical yearbook of the Ministry of Justice, in 2019, the trial rate of cases is 92.64% for the Tchintabaraden District Court including for slavery cases that are tried at 100% (indeed, all four registered slavery cases have been the subject of a judgment), 78.77% for the high courts as a whole and 36.64% for the Niamey Court of Appeal (Statistical Yearbook of the Ministry of Justice justice, 2020 edition).

EQ2. To what extent could ASI and Timidria improve their legal work to obtain more convictions in the courts?

The two implementing partners find themselves in a situation where the nature of slavery is changing in the areas of intervention of the project. And, despite the legal work done, the reasons for prosecution are only diminishing because there are fewer and fewer serious forms of slavery referring to cases where the victim would live under the permanent yoke of his traditional master. However, specific measures could be taken to increase the number of complaints, including, inter alia:

- Increase the level of training of paralegals in law. For example, the paralegal of Tchintabaraden has just the general baccalaureate level which certifies the completion of secondary studies (high school);
- Ensure the safety of complainants by setting up a reception centre in Tchintabaraden. Indeed, in view of the pressure exerted on the few complainants to withdraw their complaints, potential victims should be able to benefit from protection that ensures the prosecution and maintenance of the case before the courts;
- Ensure that victims receive protection and psychological assistance as provided by law;
- Ensure advocacy for the establishment of the compensation fund for victims of trafficking and slavery as provided for in the 2010 Ordinance. Provided for in Article 97 of this Ordinance, this fund should be managed by the Nigerien Agency for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons (ANLTP). This fund also covers victims of slavery or similar practices, including serfdom and servitude. The Ordinance provides that the terms of financing and management are fixed by decree signed by the Council of Ministers. And, this decree has still not been adopted.

Legal work mainly concerned the Ministry in charge of Justice which had to carry out missions in the project areas through the Directorate of Human Rights. Ad hoc collaborations also took place with prosecutors and judges at regional and local level through the holding of mobile hearings to raise awareness among communities about rights and their rights and duties as citizens; referencing to the administration and access to civil status documents. This work has a rather formative scope for the benefit of communities who are able to enjoy their rights like all citizens and cannot make it possible to influence or improve legal work. During the focus groups, the communities largely returned to the hearings conducted by the judge of Tchintabaraden which marked them a lot. According to them, these hearings allowed them to get closer to the administrative services and particularly to the judiciary. These hearings have accelerated access to civil status documents and reinforced, by the awareness-raising work, carried out by the project.

While it is true that influence over judges is impossible to advocate or practise, the fact remains that other ways and means could have been envisaged by, for example, engaging third-party organisations which have all or part of the mandate, such as the Commission for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP) or the National Agency for the Fight against the Treatment of Persons (ANLTP). As a reminder in Niger, the CNLTP is the strategic body that guides the actions of the ANLTP. And, among the mandates of these state institutions, is inscribed the problem of slavery. This commitment could take various forms such as the sending of official letters with the transmission of files for the purposes of information, additional information and/or action.

The prosecution rate is 92.64% in the department of Tchintabaraden and cases are relatively quickly investigated, particularly considering the slowness of cases at national level. It should be remembered that the law sets fairly reasonable deadlines for judging the cases submitted. For crimes, "the life of investigation" is 12 months and after 6 months, any untreated file leads de facto to the release of the preparator. In the case of crimes, the reasonable period of time is 18 months with the possibility of adding 12 months. What remains regrettable is the specific treatment of cases related to severe forms of slavery. The courts are reluctant to investigate and judge these cases, placing themselves in a silence that is very telling since, as a reminder, it opens the way to appeals to regional courts. For example, all three cases were brought before the ECOWAS court because they were not followed up in the courts in Niger.

4.1.3. Socio-economic support

QE1. To what extent has socio-economic support improved the livelihoods of beneficiaries?

Socio-economic support is widely supported in the communities interviewed. All groups (men, women, girls and boys) accessed either the financial resources or the goat kit, although not all interviewees benefited from it. This support has enabled them to:

- Improve their daily diet;
- Meet their needs;
- Get out of the spiral of debt and dependence;
- Initiate socio-economic activities;
- Strengthen their life skills.

According to the communities interviewed, socio-economic support has strengthened the already very strong sense of independence among the communities covered by the DRL project. This support has given them access to local markets where they sell the stuffed animals. And, training in making salt allowed them to engage in further income-generating activities. During the focus groups, one of the recipients said "Before I was undead, now I live".

Socio-economic support has also facilitated the enrolment of girls and boys, some of whom enter secondary school with the help of their parents. Girls mentioned access to education to learn to read and write, which would be difficult for them if it were to devote herself to survival activities.

It can be concluded that:

- Socio-economic support has undoubtedly contributed to the food security of households and contributed to their socialization by allowing them to exercise social solidarity with the ease of taking financial resources or animals that are sold to support each other.

- The strategy of returning the initial donation to others in the case of micro-credits allows resources to flow through the community and reach everyone.
- Socio-economic support has also enabled men to open up to other forms of occupation, including small trades, which were previously unknown to them.
- Socio-economic support has also enabled young men to limit their propensity to flee, now having an opportunity to integrate into the local economic fabric.
- Women are mainly destined for the hiring and handicrafts that were not previously unknown to them but from which they did not directly derive the benefits that went either to their husbands or to the masters – this is no longer the case today because they carry out these activities on their own account.
- Socio-economic support has enabled women to learn about small business with the running of shops at the village level.

QE2. How can the effectiveness of socio-economic assistance be improved?

Ways and means of improving the effectiveness of socio-economic assistance were explored. According to the communities, the effectiveness of socio-economic assistance could be improved through a supplement in support of the monetary and goat kits they have received. The main solutions advocated by the communities are:

- Support for access to agricultural inputs (seeds and fertilizers) as well as agricultural farming equipment.
- Facilitating access to drinking water and surfacewater management.
- The exercise of maraîchage which consists of the cultivation of vegetables. This activity could be organized, according to the communities once again, in the form of community initiatives, with the establishment of groups for women, men, girls and boys;
- Job creation for young people is also a very strong demand for communities, for both girls and boys. Indeed, young people represent a high proportion of the population of these communities and do not have particular skills to exercise promising professions. For example, during the focus groups with them, some suggested being able to learn new trades such as repairing phones or operating solar panels.

From an evaluation perspective, measures to improve the effectiveness of economic support have two dimensions:

- The difficulties of access to drinking water are not only constraining daily life but also eliminate any possibility of undertaking "off-season" activities, thus accentuating the idleness and vulnerability of these communities. It should be noted here that off-season crops (lettuce, potatoes, watermelons, etc.), as opposed to rainy crops (millet, sorghum, cowpea), constitute a national policy advocated since the 80s in Niger. It is a strategy to offer rural communities the opportunity to diversify their diet and sources of income and get out of the spiral of the single harvest per year with its share of food insecurity in bad years. The major observation is that one year out of three is in deficit, as far as rainy crops are concerned.
- The will to undertake community activities aimed at strengthening solidarity and social cohesion is very strong among young people. This need has resulted in the endogenous establishment of a village association by young people who aspire to practice market gardening.

EQ3. What are the challenges faced by Timidria in its collaboration with Tanaadi, the micro-credit institute? How could these have been mitigated/avoided?

The collaboration with Tanaadi has not been formalized. As it does not have representation in Tahoua, the Agadez office is expected to cover the project areas. According to the communities, they received only one fact-finding visit that was not followed up. The purpose of this visit was to inform communities about the services available, to organize them into committees to ensure their access to microfinance services. We cannot thus speak of results or even less assess the quality of the services received.

From an evaluation point of view, the collaboration with Tanaadi is not effective. First, the choice of institution seems inappropriate since it has no representation at the regional level, which thus makes operating costs very high. Secondly, the services it is supposed to provide to the communities have been overestimated in so far as they are men and women who are at the beginning of their 'socio-economic life'. Indeed, it is too hasty to move towards financial intermediation without having previously created the conditions for community structuring and the mobilization of internal resources. Also, an organization and training in associative life should be the first step and, the decentralized technical services, such as for example, the Departmental Directorate of Community Development, could have supervised it. The nature of the collaboration has also had significant problems which is more of the mutual adjustment than the partnership: only one interlocutor is known of the project and in its absence, very few answers could be provided.

The formalization of the partnership between the project and Tanaadi, through partnership agreements or memoranda of understanding, would have made it possible to have a balanced and beneficial relationship for both parties.

4.1.4. Advocacy at local, regional and national level

As part of the implementation of this project, an advocacy plan was formulated in which different partners were identified. These partners come from the government and its decentralized structures, Parliament, bilateral cooperation, United Nations agencies and national and international NGOs.

At the level of national governance structures, the priority targets identified are the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Primary Education, the Ministry of Secondary Education, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Protection of the Child, the Ministry of Justice, and parliamentarians.

In the context of advocacy, the targeted bilateral cooperations are the US Embassy and the French Embassy.

With regard to the United Nations system, the targeted organizations are the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization against Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). Results were achieved with the funding by WFP through the DREN of canteens and the launch of an anti-slavery project by the ILO whose socio-economic support component benefits 60 women among the communities supported by the project. As part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, awareness-raising actions for communities and training for Timidria staff were delivered in partnership with OCHA and Action Against Hunger.

As for international non-governmental organizations, advocacy targeted Plan Niger; Save the Children and the Red Cross. It is clear that they are not active in the department of Tchintabaraden. And, it

should be emphasized the absence of international NGOs in the areas of intervention of the project, which makes it difficult to concretize promising partnerships.

It should also be noted that the project team participates in the meetings of the networks to which the association is affiliated such as the Concertation Framework for the Promotion of Education (CaCoPeD) and the ASO/EPT - Nigerien Coalition for Quality Education for All. Here too, additional financial resources have been mobilized to support primary education.

In conclusion, it can be noted that:

- At the national level, interactions with the Ministries of Primary Education, Secondary Education, Justice and Parliament were noted. The results obtained from these interactions may suggest that attempts to advocate towards the other actors identified in the advocacy plan could lead to success. Indeed, the project was able to achieve the transition from community schools to national schools with the advantages of the availability of teachers, school canteens, pedagogical supervision, etc. The project also involved the Ministry of Justice in awareness-raising activities and in the working group on the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Special Procedures on Slavery.
- The identified NGOs are not active in the project area. Therefore, it would be appropriate to have a mapping of the actors present in the region. In doing so, in view of the convincing results of the project and the specificity of the project's partner communities, advocacy with more generalist organizations that do not currently intervene in the area could indeed lead them to develop new intervention programs in this sector in collaboration with Timidria.

EQ2. What are the main achievements of advocacy at local, regional and national levels?

Local Plan

At the local level, development policy is supported by the municipal development plan (PDC) 2021-2025 formulated by the municipalities. The formulation of this plan is made according to a framework developed in partnership by the Ministry of the Interior, Public Security and Decentralization and that of Community Development. NGOs may be solicited as **resource persons** to be part of the development committee. This plan, both in its diagnosis and in its strategies for responding to development challenges, does not, however, mention communities of slave descent. Moreover, the aspects related to unpaid work, servitude and trafficking in persons, although recognized by all actors, are not diagnosed and therefore not addressed. This could be explained by the absence of a specific national program for the CAEs. However, in terms of challenges, the weakness of social cohesion at the municipal level was noted

The interviews revealed that the municipality of Tchintabaraden has built water infrastructure in two CAE villages. It also emerged that while the elected officials we met claim to be CAEs, they believe that the provision of services to citizens should be considered in a logic of administrative neutrality which puts all citizens on the same footing of equality. Also, vulnerability criteria such as the presence or absence of infrastructure are established to identify priority communities within the framework of the annual investment plans and it most often turns out that the CAEs because of the youth of their land and their extreme destitution are often beneficiaries.

According to both the administrative and communal authorities and the decentralised technical services, CAEs have equitable access to basic and administrative social services on the same basis as

all citizens. While it is true that some barriers have existed (situation of servitude, scattering of habitats, nomadism), the grouping into recognized villages and tribes have made them full citizens with access to all services. For example, during the visit of the mission, all the village chiefs mentioned the good relations they have with the authorities and some even showed the impregnated mosquito nets received under the malaria control programme, like all the villages in the department.

This feeling is also shared by the people and women interviewed who, beyond access to these services, noted above all the importance of their use, particularly with regard to the schooling of girls and boys, access to health care or access to civil status documents. In terms of measures to improve this access, both parties have largely focused on raising awareness and informing as many people as possible about the accessibility of these services.

The communities note that they now know how to be respected and respect others and promote peaceful cohabitation both within the villages and with the neighbours, formerly slave owners. And, unanimously, they recognize that there is no risk of a return to a situation of slavery: "we know what we have gained today by living independently and we know that we have lost nothing by leaving our past status."

Regional plan

At the regional level, the gains of advocacy have resulted in a very strong involvement of the outgoing governor in the emancipation of the new communities, particularly with his participation in the activities in the village of Afalalo. This was perceived by the CAEs as a recognition by the State of their existence and helped to lift the last reservations for those who were still in a situation of servitude. At the level of the regional development plan, which is mandatory and aligned with the country's economic and social development plan, slavery is not mentioned, just as in the PDC. However, the interview with the first vice-president of the regional council of Tahoua identified very good knowledge of the problem and challenges inherent to CAEs. And, the needs and priorities of the CAEs should certainly be taken into account in the next development plan of the region.

Plan national

At the national level, the achievements of advocacy have been analysed in the same way as the ambitions of the advocacy plan. In terms of impact, advocacy aims for the government to develop programs, projects or public policies that take into account and respond to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of communities of slave descent, through the creation of an agency dedicated to the fight against slavery. This objective has not yet been realized but on September 25, 2020, a decree establishing a national day of mobilization against human trafficking and slavery in Niger was adopted. The Nigerien Government having already established the National Day of Mobilization against Trafficking in Persons by decree in 2015, it was a question of introducing the slavery aspect. This day gave rise to celebrations and speeches in the community of Afalalo, in the presence of a large number of stakeholders. It is a national recognition of the need to combat the phenomenon of slavery and this is a major achievement of the advocacy work undertaken.

In terms of gains, it can be noted: (i) the establishment of six schools by the State in communities of slave descent in Tchintabaraden; the other requests for the creation of schools in the CAE by the State are being filled with, admittedly, obvious shortcomings including the absence of teachers and equipment. For example, it was sad to note that in the two classes of Tagazarte, the pupils have at

their disposal cans of oil as seats; ii) the rural colleges of proximity have not been created but as for all the schools of the zone, the children of the CAE access the colleges of general and technical education with a formal monitoring of the numbers by Timidria; iii) only 3 school canteens have been set up with an estimated need of threefold; iv) none of the communities visited have health huts and socio-economic support services are only provided by the project in partnership with the ILO. However, it is to be commended the recognition of the villages of the CAE as administrative villages, which has opened up many more perspectives and opportunities for them in terms of access to services; v) the high level of knowledge of the 2003 law criminalizing slavery not only by judicial personnel but by the beneficiaries, and former slaves themselves, as well as the former masters, which contributes to the limitation of serious forms of slavery. The advocacy aspect makes it possible to highlight that unanimously, for all the parties involved in the practice, alleged victims and perpetrators, administrative and judicial authorities, this law allows for the limitation of serious forms of slavery; and (vi) access to civil status documents is greatly facilitated by mobile courts in which the entire community participates. However, like the rest of the country, births outside health centres are not systematically registered. The same is true of other civil acts outside the administrative services such as deaths and marriages.

In terms of conclusion, it can be noted that:

- At the local level, the achievements of advocacy are reflected in the adoption of new social norms tending towards the limitation of serious forms of slavery and the acquisition of knowledge in terms of the rights and duties of the citizen who contribute greatly to the emancipation of the CAEs as well as by the mobilization of the municipality alongside the CAEs. Then, the erection of the CAEs into tribes and villages gave them a status that contributes to the normalization of their situation. The CAEs have the same statutes as the other villages in Niger and can claim titles of "chiefdoms" auxiliary to the administration.
- At the regional level, the achievements consisted of the mobilisation of the authorities at the highest level and the targeted decentralised technical services. It remains only to strengthen relations with the regional council that steers the development policy of the region and to formalize relations with the decentralized technical services.
- At national level, the effective recognition of the situation of the CAEs and the progress in terms of services for the benefit of them are irreversible achievements.
- Communication materials such as factsheets, posters, and leaflets to support advocacy at local, regional and national level have probably been lacking, which is all the more surprising given the central role that the project has given to advocacy in supporting the emancipation of communities.

4.2. Relevance

QE1. To what extent are communities able to defend their own needs independently (without timidria's support) at local and regional levels?

This project is in the wake of Timidria's interventions at the level of the CAE in the department of Tchintabaraden. The priority needs of the communities were thus able to be assessed on the basis of the lessons learned from previous phases. In addition, communities were consulted to identify these priority needs. Thus, from an essentially formative and sensitizing approach for the emancipation of

communities, the project has set up socio-economic interventions to support the empowerment of men and women.

Due to the emanation of new communities, the needs of communities are constantly evolving and among the most significant, it can be retained: i) the demand for water infrastructure to cover the needs for drinking water and surface water due to a continuous increase in populations; (ii) the demand for community initiatives to support agricultural production and increase the empowerment of communities; iii) the demand for vocational training with a view to developing new production niches and definitively breaking out of the cycle of survival strategies (harvesting, collecting dead wood, etc.).

Initiatives have been taken by the project to cover these needs, including for example the mobilization of the municipal council to include and respond to the priorities of the CAEs in the annual investment plans with regard to access to water. The coaching of village chiefs to request services from the administrations concerned, training in the manufacture of salt to lick for animals in support of pastoral production and AGR are all examples of adaptation of the project to the emerging needs of communities.

Considering the project's theory of change, it can be accepted that the adoption of new social norms has led to behavioural changes particularly for women and girls who have demonstrated an informed demand by identifying and expressing their gender needs (creation of shops, conduct of AGR, and the processing of agro-pastoral products such as milk); This has largely positively influenced the communities' support for the project's objectives. The project environment has also been favourable to taking into account the existing needs of the communities with the support of the State for community schools (although much remains to be done), the election of a woman to the post of deputy mayor, the reaffirmed commitment of the departmental administrative and judicial authorities in favour of CAEs and the socio-economic support that has proved fruitful and favourable. Therefore, the demand for new services stemming from the existence of emerging needs should make it possible to evolve the theory of change by integrating these new dimensions with what they imply in terms of advocacy, partnership and resource mobilization.

From the perspective of the communities, the consideration of their needs is effective. And, the acquisition of new knowledge about the rights and duties of the citizen, the ability to raise awareness among their parents still in servitude and socio-economic support were widely acclaimed. Direct beneficiaries thus claim to have the capacity to:

- Request basic social services through the acquisition of civil status documents and the request for specific awareness sessions with the paralegal on the protection of the environment which is a source of legal proceedings and risks of fines for CAEs;
- Use basic social services by enrolling their children in school and taking them to health centres and to claim their rights in case of bullying, physical abuse or economic disputes, particularly around land. The initiation of community activities, on the other hand, remains a challenge despite attempts to organize women into groups due to the lack of training in promising trades such as sewing, food processing, crafts, etc.

From an evaluation point of view, it can be held that:

- The project responded to the essential needs of CAEs by empowering them to empower themselves and others. Moreover, they evaluate positively the access and use of the services available to them, particularly the use of the services of paralegals and field animators.
- The structuring of communities into recognized villages and administrative tribes with easy access to departmental and communal authorities is an opportunity well understood and seized by the CAE to defend their own needs independently.
- The integration of the CAEs into the Kel Temet group, which brings together all the tribes of black stock that were once attached to the former masters, is another lever for the independence of the communities who have access to a larger sounding board to assert their needs.
- However, the low technical capacities in associative life, management and diversification of women and men constitute a handicap for the initiation of community actions in order to meet on their own needs of internal organization, community production, organization of tontines etc.

EQ2. What is the level of diversity among community representatives in charge of advocacy?

The mechanisms put in place to ensure advocacy vary from one level to another. At the local level, the sensitivity of elected officials to the issue of slavery (all those met claiming to be descendants of the CAEs) was a major factor in the organization of advocacy. Indeed, there is a certain proximity and ease of attachment that has not required the establishment of a planned and coherent approach to promote the consideration of the needs of CAEs in terms of access to services, especially since they are already committed to this cause.

At the community level, a group of three people identified by the communities themselves has been set up. This group is composed of a man, a woman and a young person. This group is changed periodically and is responsible for leading advocacy interventions in the CAEs and surrounding villages. The criteria for designation are left to the discretion of the communities who choose one and the other on the basis of their supposed competence and availability. The groups responsible for conducting advocacy interventions are not formalized, with a view to giving them flexibility and ensuring the participation of all. Indeed, it would have been more sustainable to structure them into a basic community organization with elected members who will be able to ensure respect for the decision of the communities that wish to emancipate themselves.

At the regional level, there are no established mechanisms, the tendency has been, for the project team, to go to the actors who can participate in advocacy, often to the highest level of the region.

At the national level, the project did not initiate specific and structured mechanisms despite the existence of an advocacy plan but maintained bilateral relations with the identified resource persons.

4.3. Impact

EQ 1. To what extent can the liberation of entire communities be attributed to projects? What specific anti-slavery efforts or activities had the greatest impact on these emancipation movements?

The communities benefiting from the direct support of the project were created before the intervention of the project with the awareness-raising work carried out by Timidria since the early 2000s. However, these communities had no administrative recognition, and had almost no access to basic social and administrative services, including justice, with a tendency to gather and disperse due

to a lack of options. The project's intervention has made it possible to establish the sustainability of these communities and to structure them by equipping them with schools and facilitating the socio-economic integration of men and women. Between the beginning of 2019 and the end of the project, five new autonomous communities have since been formed around the villages of intervention of the project, representing the impact of the project.

a) communities supported by the project

The interventions of the project have led to the creation of new social norms that have made it possible to ensure the total emancipation of these communities, which now, like all communities established in Niger, fully enjoy their rights and ensure their self-management, thanks to their permanent settlement in territories with retained contours. This installation, as trivial as it may seem, allowed them to acquire land that they can use as they wish, within the limits of the law.

Among these new standards, it can be retained:

- The social maturation of communities that have become aware that they can flourish in new communities without the tutelage of anyone through awareness-raising and legal assistance work. It is easy to note that they have gone from a status where they did not possess anything by themselves and for themselves to a status of autonomous adults and owners.
- The administrative recognition of villages and tribes that have joined the Kel Tamat group of their choice (Tchintabaraden or Kao) with village chiefs representing the community and auxiliaries of the administration. As such, they have acquired the same status as all other village chiefs in Niger, which has strengthened the sense of respect and recognition of each member of the community. The administrative recognition of these communities seems to have been a catalyst in the decision of the other communities still under guardianship to emancipate themselves from their traditional masters.
- The slavery criminalization law in 2003, widely disseminated by Timidria in areas of slavery prevalence, had a strong deterrent effect on the slave classes, resulting in the emancipation of hundreds of thousands of slaves. The perpetrators of this type of attack have become aware that they are not acts without consequences and thus try to create fraternal and friendly links with emancipated communities.
- The acquisition of the status of parents: the children brought into the world are now under the guardianship and responsibility of their biological family whereas previously this role was devolved to traditional teachers. Indeed, from parents giving birth to children on behalf of a third person, the men and women of CAEs have learned to become parents and heads of household.
- Finally, the example of the imprisonment of an illustrious group leader of the area, in this case the formidable Tuareg leader Ridouane Mohamed in 1998 for acts of rape and other acts of violence against people from the CAE, has sent a strong signal for all communities. Despite the power he wielded over the men and women in the area, he was forced to answer and face justice in his country. Therefore, it is obvious that no one is above the law.

In the opinion of the communities, regardless of their gender and age, the project's interventions that have promoted the emancipation of communities are:

- i) The sensitizations that first triggered their empowerment because they allowed them exercise their freedom and make their own life choices.

- ii) The creation of schools whose benefits are expected in the coming years. Indeed, the communities pointed out that their teenagers and young men do not even understand the notion of slavery: "They attend educational institutions in the village and in Tchintabaraden. They will not know the life of misery that we have suffered. They have received an education that predisposes them to a better life," says a head of household.
- iii) Socio-economic support that has allowed the creation of new jobs and the continuation of their initial activity, which is animal husbandry.

Testimony of the village chief of Inaiss

In the old days, I didn't live. I couldn't do anything freely. Today I circulate freely without anyone's permission. I am in my family and my community. I have everything I need to live. I am proud to see all these animals that belong to me and it is my children who take care of them now. I just have a word in my mouth: thank you to the project and to Timidria

For the men and women interviewed, the external factors that favored their emancipation are:

- Access to Koranic schools with a better knowledge of religion. The only religious teachings they received came from their ancient communities, which instrumentalized them for their purposes.
- Servitude with its share of ill-treatment including the hindering of their freedom of movement. Every day many households decide to join the villages of Affalalo and Inaiss.

You know, Affalalo means puddle. When, with the sensitizations of Timidria, we decided to emancipate ourselves, there was only this puddle and the trees that you see to shelter us. I encouraged community members to stand their own, because freedom is priceless. This tenacity was rewarded with the intervention of the project: my village has a school, a well and I myself benefited from the economic support that allowed me to become more resistant. I am living proof of an impact of the project: before I was nothing now I am Hakimi (chief) of the Kel Ajuet Affalalo tribe. I am reached on the phone by the Mayor, the head of the group. I am often invited to Tchintabaraden. What more could you ask for? I give thanks to the project.

Testimony of the village chief of Affalalo



(b) newly moved communities

At the level of the new independent community of Taghazarte, formed in 2019, its members have identified as main factors of emancipation:

- i) Seeing people congregate in autonomous communities without prejudice to prosecution and abuse. Indeed, as property of others, they thought that the latter would be caught and brought back to their community of origin.

- ii) The way of life within assisted communities that have functional schools and are financially autonomous. At the level of these already emancipated communities, parents themselves give their daughters in marriage and have the dowry of their daughters who in return are entitled to trousseaux to start their new life. This aspect is certainly decisive since it marks the change of status, from slave to free man and woman.
- iii) Inter-community meetings that allowed them to acquire knowledge about their rights and duties. These inter-community meetings are facilitated by the communities already assisted by the project.
- iv) Corporal punishment, abuse and the persistence of their exploitation were triggers for this emancipation. Moreover, the testimony below of the village chief of the community is quite edifying.

My old life was a life of regret and emptiness, without thanks. This is a lost period of my life. Since I became a village chief, my lifestyle has changed. I have access to the highest authorities of the department: prefect, mayor, head of group. I now know how to defend my rights and where to go so that justice can be done to me. And, when the project arrived, I left my home community to create the village of Taghazarte.

Today, I have my wife and children. I have regained a life of dignity!



« Ismaghila de Taghazarte »

In conclusion, it can be accepted that the project has made it possible to:

- Create communities recognized by the State and inserted in the administrative management scheme of the territories.
- Empower communities through the acquisition of knowledge about rights and duties, access to education and socio-economic support.
- Strengthen the capacity of village and community leaders to seek basic social services including justice.
- Fixing communities around the school and water points, which is also an asset and a guarantee of community empowerment.
- Generate the emanation of new communities in the wake of already assisted communities.

4.4. Efficiency

As part of this evaluation, the measurement of efficiency focused on the analysis of the partnership between Timidria and ASI, on the one hand and Timidria's ability to mobilize other partners, on the other.

QE1. How do you rate the partnership between Timidria and ASI?

With regard to Timidria, the partnership with ASI has made it possible to position the organization as one of the most recognized in the field of the fight against traditional slavery in Niger and the sub-region and to give it an international influence. At the organizational level, Timidria has been able to strengthen its capacity for resource mobilization and networking, both inside and outside the country.

The main assets of this partnership are:

- The sharing of experiences and expertise by ASI staff in the legal field, particularly with regard to strategic litigation before supranational jurisdictions (ECOWAS);
- The strengthening by ASI of the capacities of the members of the association in the fields of financial and administrative management, governance, project management, monitoring and evaluation and on the principles of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, through follow-up visits, training and study tours;
- Support for the development and implementation of an advocacy strategy;
- Networking with other anti-slavery associations in the sub-region, including Temedt in Mali or SOS-Esclaves in Mauritania.

Areas for improvement in this partnership could include:

- The establishment of a formalized exchange framework between the two organizations to exchange practices and evaluate the achievement of results. This framework could take the form of regular meetings, annual reviews or retreats between the Timidria executive board and ASI. Retreats are days of *teambuilding* and reflection that make it possible to identify common strategic options;
- The definition of new strategies to react and adapt to the new practices identified on the ground: hidden forms of slavery and trafficking in persons, the keeping of people of slave descent in servitude by making them work without pay, the reduction of slavery-like practices, the persistence of discrimination and marginalization of people of slave descent, etc.
- From ASI's point of view, despite the satisfactory results achieved, there are still many expectations regarding the progress achieved in legal terms, particularly in view of the low number of complaints, prosecutions initiated and convictions obtained. Indeed, the prosecutions initiated concern almost

only minor crimes, which is not up to the level of the work carried out on the ground in terms of psycho-social and economic support.

- In the area of advocacy, the strategy put in place has also led to satisfactory results in terms of the legal framework and access to basic social services. Despite the quality of the results obtained, Timidria's influence is rather mixed: i) at the local level, the organization is very influential in the defense of the interests of its members and communities; (ii) at the regional level, the organisation maintains good working relations with regional officials and (iii) at the national level, although Timidria is a key player on slavery issues, the fact remains that it does not maintain formal relations with other organisations at its level and is also too involved in the political sphere, which could call into question its impartiality and therefore its legitimacy.

The partnership with Timidria has enabled ASI to become a privileged interlocutor at the international level with proven expertise on traditional slavery issues. The organization has acquired a legitimacy and credibility that make it a reference for its knowledge of the situation of slavery in Niger.

From the partnership with Timidria, some good practices were noted:

- The improvement of human resources management, the establishment of functional lines of supervision with detailed job descriptions that have made it possible to establish a separation between the strategic and decision-making functions that are of the order of the BEN and the operational implementation functions that fall under the responsibility of the project team;
- The implementation of a periodic monitoring system including the entire project team provided an analysis informed by the realities on the ground and contributed to the strengthening of team spirit;
- The quarterly planning mechanism put in place ensured the effectiveness of the monitoring system and made it possible to integrate the project into a results-based management approach, ensuring a better understanding of its implementation and continuously adapting its theory of change;
- Timidria's capacity-building has enabled the organization to develop a procedures manual that has improved the quality of management of the organization and made it a credible and autonomous organization that can mobilize and manage resources.

In conclusion, it can be held that:

- The partnership between Timidria and ASI is mutually beneficial and has enabled both organizations to gain national and international recognition in the fight against traditional slavery.
- However, this partnership has still not allowed Timidria to be an organization with all the standards expected for an organization at this level: strategic plan, communication/public information plan, and a resource mobilization strategy. Despite the capacity building already achieved, Timidria's dependence on the partnership with ASI in terms of resource mobilization and the definition of anti-slavery strategies is still real.

EQ2. To what extent has the project enabled Timidria to develop with other stakeholders and collaborators to combat descent slavery in Niger?

According to Timidria, the advocacy plan has led to an awareness by the various stakeholders (communities, GoN, bilateral actors) of issues related to slavery in Niger. This advocacy made it

possible to make available to judicial actors a guide on the texts and laws applicable to slavery with the support of a fund of the Embassy of France.

This advocacy has fostered the mobilization of the Ministry of Justice and the magistrates' courts in raising awareness of the rights and duties of the citizen at the national, regional and municipal levels.

At the institutional level, the association has joined several networks including the Collective of Organizations for the Defense of Human Rights and Democracy (CODDHD), of which it is a founding member and member of the board. Timidria was also represented on the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) even if they are no longer represented since the last elections for the appointment of the members of the said institution in 2021. However, it is represented on the National Commission for the Fight against Illicit Weapons. This is a given for Timidria insofar as the areas of intervention of the project are those where illicit weapons circulate with a direct impact on the delivery of services: risks of enlistment of people of slave descent in non-state armed groups, proliferation of armed conflicts, brawls between communities with often armed threats to CAE members.

In terms of functional relations with the decentralized technical services, the latter have been mobilized on the basis of their expertise in the execution and monitoring of activities in the field. As part of the implementation of this project, the partnership with the decentralized technical services has been effective with the increase in investment for the benefit of the communities.

While the association claims to seize all existing funding opportunities, it does not have a formalized resource mobilization strategy whose implementation is monitored and evaluated.

As part of the specific implementation of this project, Timidria has entered into promising partnerships with other organizations. Thus, in partnership with the ILO, it was able to strengthen the socio-economic support response for the communities. With the Embassy of France, support awareness-raising and legal assistance actions through the development and dissemination of the legal guide at the service of the Nigerien populations. Through the project *Legacies of Slavery in Niger* (Leslan) or legacies of slavery in Niger, Timidria raised awareness, supported and strengthened the capacities of civil society in the context of the fight against slavery in Niger and finally with OCHA and Action Against Hunger, respond to the urgency of the global COVID-19 pandemic by strengthening the capacities of CAEs.

In conclusion, it can be accepted that:

- The advocacy work carried out by the association is characterized by concrete actions of joint awareness-raising on the rights and duties of the citizen in partnership with national institutions.
- However, the evaluation found a lack of communication and information to the wider Nigerien population, which would have increased public pressure on government authorities and judicial actors on the issue of slavery.
- Representation in national networks and other organizations in itself reflects the organization's primary place on the national stage.
- The ad-hoc and unplanned resource mobilization strategy could impede the predictability of the organization's interventions.

4.5. Sustainability

QE1.1. To what extent is it to be expected that the results (effects) will continue after the withdrawal of the project in these communities?

The project has included an exit strategy that should allow implementing partners to disengage from the nine assisted communities. This strategy included, on a smaller scale, these communities been included in a new project funded by the US government, through the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). This project started in November 2021 and should complete the retrocession process by which the CAEs will be in technical, financial and organizational capacity to continue the activities undertaken by the project and to bear some of the costs previously borne by the project.

The communities, for their part, believe that this exit strategy is really adequate because they have the technical and financial capital necessary to take over the project. From their point of view, the activities that can be maintained and continued on their own are:

- Schooling for girls and boys;
- Socioeconomic activity with the multiplication of the livestock;
- The knowledge gained during sensitizations that is already transmitted to other communities and is still reproducible.

The factors that contribute to the sustainability of these interventions are:

- the creation of canteens, feed and grain banks;
- Capacity building including training in advocacy, gender and child participation;
- Awareness-raising on the rights and duties of the citizen;
- The full exercise of their citizenship with access to civil status documents and their participation in the electoral process;
- The administrative recognition of villages with now lasting relations with local elected officials and the administration.

Risk factors could be:

- Therisks associated with the marriage of young girls, particularly in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic where the closure of schools has led to the return home of students enrolled in secondary school or the fact of accepting dowries for girls still in school;
- Low employment opportunities for young boys and girls;
- Poor access to agricultural inputs, equipment, seeds and fertilizers;
- Insufficient water supply.

In terms of conclusion, it can be held that:

- The project has implemented an exit strategy. Also, communities believe in the sustainability of the package of interventions to which they have had access and in their technical and financial capacities to continue to implement it.
- Basic community-based organizations have been set up to support the project's interventions. It will also be necessary to count on the effectiveness of community facilitators placed in the communities.

V. Conclusion

The evaluation of the project "Combating traditional slavery based on descent and forced begging of children and the reintegration of former slaves in four West African countries", has a purely formative scope. It aims to provide practical recommendations and lessons for future research and dissemination initiatives with key research questions that have served a common thread to understand the behavior of the project in the field. On the basis of the main findings and the analysis carried out, the following concluding remarks can be made:

- The effectiveness of paralegal outreach activities is demonstrated and communities have unanimously praised the work of paralegals and identified no barriers to accessing it. Of course, given the precariousness and widespread marginalization of the targeted communities, it is indeed the most vulnerable who have accessed services.
- The Permanent Centre for Civic Education (CPEC) goes beyond its assigned missions and functions as a continuation of the services offered by paralegals at the community level. The centre seems to have little added value compared to the outreach activities carried out by paralegals in the communities, and when its existence is known by the communities, this centre is seen more as a means of meeting their needs for services of all kinds than as a structure offering only specific and personalized services in the fight against slavery and similar practices.
- The collaboration between the legal assistant, the lawyer, the paralegals and other local structures of Timidria went well overall with hierarchical and organized relationships within the project.
- The low level of complaints of slavery brought before the gendarmerie, the police or the Prosecutor's Office could be explained by: the practice of conciliation, the misinterpretation of religion, social coercion and economic dependence because some people from CAEs have paid working relationships with the communities of origin. At the judicial level, the effective recognition in 2019 that the custom of "Wahaya" is now contrary to the law is an important step forward in the protection of women's rights.
- ASI and Timidria could improve their legal work to obtain more convictions before the courts by putting in place measures to protect victims such as reception, accommodation, psycho-social support and financial accompaniment, significantly improving the partnership with other actors in the judicial chain and raising the level of education when recruiting paralegals. As noted in the report, paralegals do not have legal training.
- At the national level, interactions with the Ministries of Primary Education, Secondary Education, Justice and Parliament were noted. The results obtained from these interactions may suggest that advocacy attempts towards other actors such as members of the Tahoua Regional Council or non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies present at the regional level could lead to successes. Apart from the activity reports, however, the evaluation found that no advocacy tools had been specifically developed by the project.
- At the local level, the gains of advocacy are reflected in:
 - o the mobilization of the municipality for the financing of water infrastructure;
 - o the introduction of mobile clinics providing immunization and health care services at the nine community level;
 - o The construction of six schools for newly emancipated communities and three more in progress;

- Recruitment of five additional teachers for community schools;
- The drilling of three wells in the communities of Inazgar, Tanguizatane, Jigui Agoda;
- The construction of the health centre in Affalalo and Intatolene;
- The large-scale distribution of national identity cards for the benefit of 2423 people from CAEs
- The election of the CAEs into tribes and villages which has given them a status that contributes to the normalization of their situation by integrating them into the national administrative management scheme.
- At the regional level, the achievements consisted in the mobilization of the authorities at the highest level of the region who presided over the ceremonies to celebrate the first day of the fight against trafficking in persons and slavery.
- At the national level, the main achievements are:
 - the institutionalization of a day of struggle against slavery
 - The creation of conditions for a lasting partnership between Timidria and the Ministry of Justice with the establishment of a working group on the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Slavery and the creation of an anti-slavery agency, the redress of customs that contravene the anti-slavery law of 2003, and the establishment of specialized anti-slavery courts.
- The project responded to the essential needs of CAEs by empowering them. Moreover, they evaluate positively the access and use of the services available to them, particularly the services of paralegals and field animators.
- Advocacy at the local level is carried out exclusively by CAE members. Also, it will be necessary to highlight the effective mobilization of the administrative and judicial authorities each time they are requested. Community advocacy groups are representative of the diversity of communities in terms of both gender and age.
- The existence of communities in their present form is in itself an impact of the project, as is the creation of new communities. The project also enabled communities to stay through the acquisition of knowledge about rights and duties, access to education and socio-economic support.
- The partnership between Timidria and ASI is mutually beneficial and has enabled both organizations to gain national and international recognition in the fight against traditional slavery. But, despite the long traditional partnership between the two organizations, Timidria remains dependent on ASI's support in the area of capacity building.
- The advocacy work carried out by the association is characterized by concrete joint awareness-raising actions on the rights and duties of the citizen in partnership with national institutions. Representation in networks and other national organizations denotes the organization's primary place on the national stage. Notwithstanding the partnerships concluded at national, regional, and local level for the benefit of advocacy, the work carried out includes influencing the general public. This dimension accompanies the advocacy work and is conducted through systematic mediatized denunciations and information to the general public to reach the greatest number of people and attract the sympathy of national and international public opinion and thus put pressure to provide the appropriate responses in compliance with the law.
- The project has put in place an exit strategy for autonomous management by communities based on various trainings in capacity building (advocacy, business management, women's rights, child participation, etc.), the maintenance of part of the field staff in the context of the

implementation of a new project, the establishment of autonomous community management and monitoring structures as well as long-term relations with the authorities and local structures of Timidria. Also, communities believe in the sustainability of the package of interventions to which they have had access.

- The project has demonstrated its coherence by giving itself the means to mobilize additional resources for its implementation and has undoubtedly created the conditions for the representativeness of communities in local public life.

VI. Recommendations

The recommendations relate to the lines of research selected for this analysis: legal assistance, judicial procedure, socio-economic support, advocacy and new communities.

4.1. Recommendations on legal assistance

Set up systematized pre- and post-test mechanisms for all awareness sessions, analyze the results and make recommendations in the activity report.

Improve the visibility, exposure and functioning of the permanent civic education centre by setting up a formal and welcoming structure that can reassure communities about the centre's real assistance potential.

Raise the level of education of paralegals who have no legal training and cannot interact effectively with administrative and judicial authorities.

Reposition the permanent centers of civic education into legal clinics by orienting their missions on purely legal assistance and carry out and consolidate the work of civic education through home visits to beneficiaries. This separation of missions could reposition the centres in their role and open up more space for the demand for legal assistance, a weak link in judicial referrals.

4.2. Recommendations on judicial remedies

Seize the opportunity of the partnership with ASI for an international referral on serious forms of human rights violations, for which victims may have to recuse themselves, i.e. refuse to bring the case before the courts.

Create the conditions to allow the lawyer to very quickly introduce complaints at the level of local magistrates' courts who have a mission to prevent and strengthen social cohesion at the local level by increasing the amount of field missions and their resources.

Set up community relays within the CAEs themselves for monitoring and alerting slavery issues in order to generate more complaints.

Sustainably strengthen the technical capacities of magistrates on the judicial arsenal available for slavery cases.

Promote and strengthen partnership with other national government structures in charge of human rights and trafficking in persons such as the National Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP), the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (CESOC) and the Ombudsman of the Republic.

Systematically publicize cases of slavery brought to justice and take public opinion as a witness.

To refer officially and in the first place to the High Authority for the Fight against Corruption and Assimilated Offences (HALCIA) or the Ombudsman of the Republic in case of non-response of the judicial authorities for the purposes of investigation.

4.3. Recommendations on socio-economic support

Strengthen the sustainability of socio-economic support by offering vocational training for communities through the identification of needs and promising sectors.

Increase the amount of financial assistance in view of the speed of turnover between beneficiaries, which is only six (6) months.

Structure women and young people into economic interest groups and strengthen their capacities in associative life and in the management of their micro-enterprises, in particular the module "Manage your company better" GERME.

Fund community-based initiatives such as community shops, grain banks and feed banks.

Establish a mapping of microfinance institutions that cover the project areas and launch an open call for proposals.

Strengthening the technical skills in agro-sylvo-pastoral production and processing of men and women should be the second phase of capacity building to go beyond knowledge of rights and duties; and begin a dynamic of strengthening the local economic fabric in which all men and women are stakeholders.

Conduct a technical study to identify vegetable production adapted to local climatic conditions, financially profitable and technically controllable (e.g., adapted means of irrigation)

4.4. Recommendations on plaidoyer at local, regional and national level

Design and disseminate communication media such as factsheets, leaflets and other materials for public information.

Systematize the sharing of activity reports with all stakeholders and at all levels.

Establish a mapping of stakeholders in the areas of intervention of the project with a view to a better targeting of partners.

Establish formalized relations with the decentralized structures of the State through the organization of joint annual reviews at the departmental level, and by inviting the regional level or vice versa, in the presence of the project team.

Formally register Timidria in the humanitarian community on the basis of affiliation with the United Nations Humanitarian Coordination (OCHA) and participation in these different clusters (sectoral groups) both in the Tahoua region and Niamey.

4.5. Partnership recommendations

Undertake the organizational audit of Timidria to promote updates and improvements to existing policies and strategies to ensure that the organization complies with the highest standards.

Strengthen and/or energize the formal exchange frameworks between Timidria and ASI.

Refocus legal aid work on the most serious forms of slavery.

4.6. Recommendations on new communities

Continue the process of official recognition of the new independent communities and include departmental and regional tribal leaders in advocacy. For information, they are de facto members of the Association of Traditional Chiefs of Niger, an association that has proven itself in advocating for the change of harmful practices in Niger such as, among others, early marriage or the non-schooling of young people, especially girls.

Continue efforts to mobilize partners for the financing of basic social services, particularly water infrastructure and socio-economic support.

Renew the package of interventions implemented at the level of the nine communities assisted by this project evaluated in the new independent communities, including:

1. The creation of primary schools and school canteens
2. Make made available financial kits and goat kits
3. Raising awareness about citizens' rights and duties

Conduct a needs assessment in terms of communication for development with a view to identifying new awareness-raising themes related to the needs of communities

Conduct group discussions with girls and boys to identify their needs for their socio-economic reintegration, especially since they are just coming out of slavery and have not had access to specific professional skills.

Place relays or facilitators in new CAEs for ongoing awareness raising and ensure the transition to empowerment through the use of basic social services.