



**IEDA Relief Cameroon Report**

## **“Ossoko IEDA Relief”: Supporting the Bororo Shepherd Community**

**Timangolo, Cameroon**

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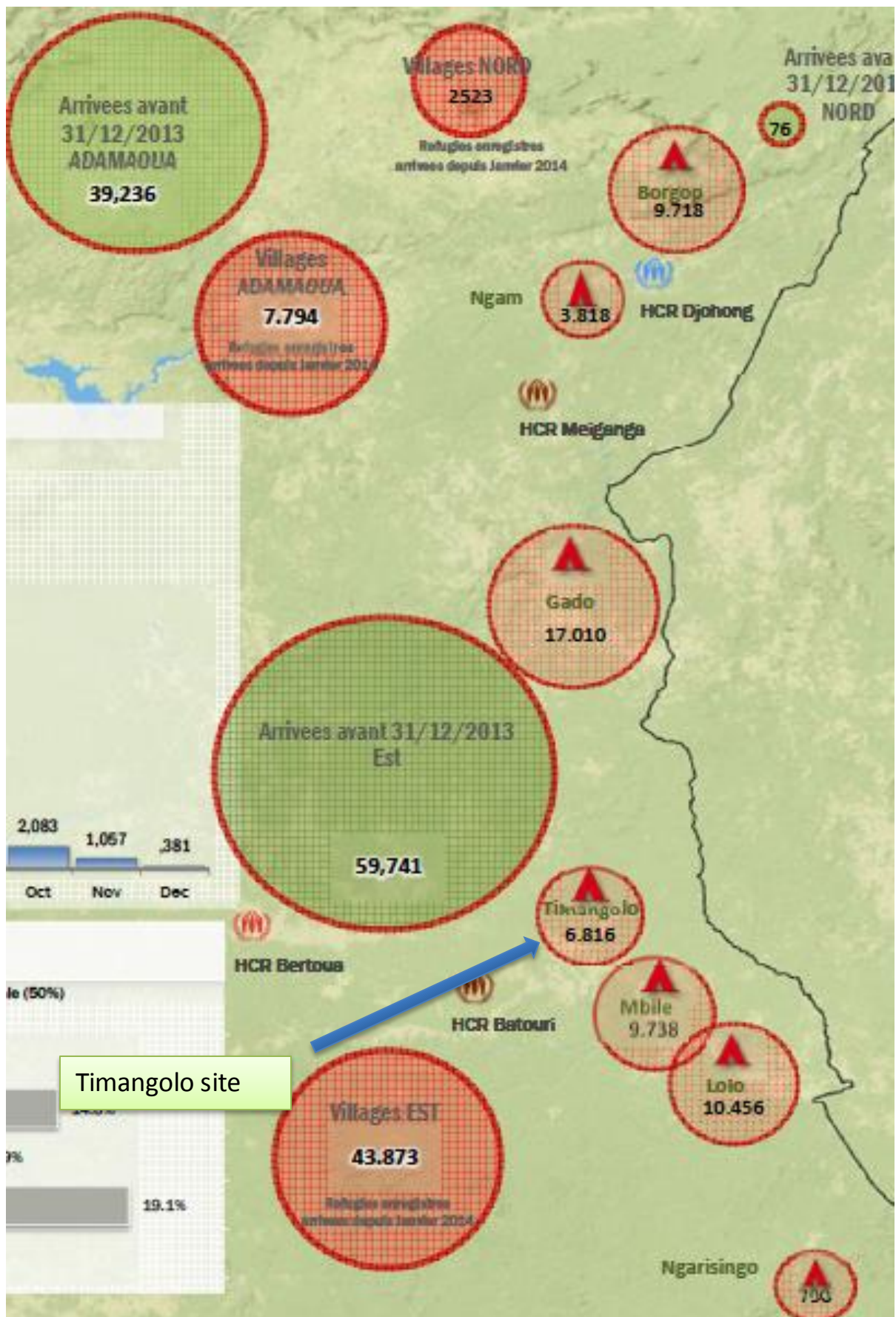
*IEDA Relief Cameroon*

### **Abstract**

IEDA Relief, along with its partner, the UNHCR, provided aid to Central-African refugees in the village of Bengouété, near the site of Timangolo in Cameroon. This particular refugee community strategically moved away from the Timangolo site in order to avoid creating tensions with the host community and other refugees and to have more space for their animals to practice pastoralism. As a result, the relocated refugee community frequently missed distributions available to them. IEDA Relief advocated for this community and therefore enabled them to participate in the distributions in January of 2015 and beyond.



## Map of East Cameroon, and the border with Central-African Republic (CAR)



Source: UNHCR

## Introduction

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Since December of 2014, a community of Bororo shepherds with more than 80 individuals, established itself along the outskirts of the Timangolo site, in a place named Bengouété. Originally from the vicinities of Kambélé, where most of them used to be registered regularly, they decided to settle down near the Timangolo site. A couple of factors led to their decision to isolate and distance themselves from the rest of the refugees in the Timangolo site. The first one was the fact that this group owned a significant number of animals capable of creating considerable damage among the plantations of the population living alongside the river. The second was their desire to live in peace with the host community and the rest of the refugees. However, this decision has led to consequences of being misinformed about various distribution dates and times. After identifying this gap of service to the Bororo shepherds, IEDA Relief immediately responded to address the needs.

## Providing for the Uninformed

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This community of Bororo shepherds has stated that their isolation keeps them from accessing the latest information regarding distributions, especially the distribution of food which takes place in the Timangolo site. They are rarely able to take advantage of the distribution because they are often informed too late, leaving insufficient time to arrive at the Timangolo site. Access to all the other services to which refugees have the right to benefit from, also remains very difficult and sometimes even impossible. Nonetheless, the location seemed to them the best choice to settle down because of the proximity to the village of Timangolo in comparison to the actual site.

IEDA Relief in Cameroon, working alongside its partner the UNHCR in the area of community service, was informed of the situation of the Central-African refugees through its community volunteers. IEDA Relief's community service team rushed to the Timangolo site in order to rapidly assess their needs and immediately process the distribution of non-food items such as shoes, buckets and mats among others.

On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 a second trip from the same team executed the distribution of buckets, mats, saucepans, recipients, basins, blankets for the babies and shoes for the children as well as biscuits.

A refugee and recent mother eagerly thanked the IEDA Relief team for having thought of her and for the distribution of non-food items. She also expressed her urgent needs for the future:

*"Ossoko" means "thank you" in the fulbé language, which is spoken in CAR and in Cameroon.*

*"I fervently thank IEDA Relief for having thought of me and my children. Indeed, I did not have basins to take water from the well and keep it properly. With this assistance, my life will improve. I also have another request: I am always surprised of hearing that the food distribution has already taken place at the Timangolo site without me having been made aware, and I usually miss the date of the distribution. I currently have nothing to feed my children with and I am myself, breast-feeding. I beg you to send the word to the right authorities and to come back soon to assist us again."*

*-Refugee woman from the Bengouété village near the Timangolo site.*

Following her request and having perceived this urgent need in the community, the community service team began advocating on behalf of the Bororo shepherds to the UNHCR, who at the same time consulted the members of staff from the World Food Program. This advocacy enabled this community of refugees to benefit from the food distribution in the Timangolo site. The same process will be developed with each future distribution until all of these people are transferred by the UNHCR to the Timangolo site. Only a few of them have been relocated thus far, but IEDA Relief continues advocating on behalf of the Bororo shepherds of Bengouété.

## Photo Highlights

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*Picture 1. A breast-feeding refugee benefits from a kit.*





**Picture 2. After the distribution of buckets has taken place.**



2<sup>nd</sup> arrival of IEDA Relief on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 in Bengouété - village near the Timangolo site. Specific distribution of buckets, mats, saucepans, pots, basins, glasses, blankets for the babies and shoes for the children as well as biscuits.

*“Thank you very much to IEDA Relief for these shoes given to my son who is often stung by thorns when he takes care of the bulls. Thank you as well for all the materials: buckets and recipients for the babies. Now we need food.”*

*A refugee woman who is a head-of-household in Bengouété-village near the Timangolo site.*

**Picture 4. Distribution of shoes**



**Picture 5. Return after the non-food item distribution**

