

Strengthening society with refugees

by

■ **Nathanaël Molle** ■

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Overview

The refugee issue has been a major source of concern in Europe for a number of months, generating fear and preposterous ideas, and posing important political challenges. Refugees are continuing to flee war zones and countries under dictatorships. Faced with this surge in asylum seekers, France's response has been merely to suggest unsatisfactory administrative and social solutions for the refugees. The refugees have to spend an unacceptable amount of time waiting for their dossiers to be processed and often, when they are finally granted legal refugee status, they have to put up with a totally diminished social and professional situation. If only we were to change our state of mind, stop seeing them as a threatening mob, and to recognise them as people who can contribute to the common good in their host country, then everything could change. This is what SINGA, an innovative company in the social economy sector, demonstrates over and above the wildest dreams of its young co-founder.

Report by Pascal Lefebvre • Translation by Rachel Marlin

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I was lucky enough to live abroad almost all my life because my father worked for the French Research Institute for Development (*Institut de recherche sur le développement* – IRD) on water-related problems. I was born in Brazil and grew up in Mali. Later, I lived in Thailand where, at the age of 14 and as part of my catechism classes, I lived and worked for several weeks in a camp for Karen refugees. This amazing experience gave me my first glimpse of human rights violations committed by police officers on the Karen population, and made me very aware of the refugee problem. Later on, I lived in Sri Lanka which for twenty-five years had been ravaged by civil war resulting in a massive exodus of the civilian population. I worked there for the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and remained committed to helping displaced people.

I became deeply involved in humanitarian work after the tsunami hit this region in 2004. The day after it struck, like many other expats, I committed myself to helping relief operations. This was when I realised the amazing work which is carried out in the field by NGOs. I was also aware of some ridiculous situations in the area of aid relief such as the supply of boats which were ill-adapted for fishermen who did not know how to use them. This kind of situation is the result of centralised programming carried out thousands of miles away which is often more dependent on available funds than real needs in the field. Similarly, I was struck by the fact that a great deal of emergency work is carried out without a clear, long-term vision. When hundreds of volunteers leave, some regions which rely on them for their economic survival collapse because their main source of income has disappeared.

After I passed my International Baccalauréat (IB) examination, I decided to continue to work in the humanitarian aid sector. I was an intern at the very influential British NGO ‘Save the Children’. I came across violent situations during this time, and realised that humanitarian work was not for me, even though I still have limitless admiration for those who are involved in this work on a daily basis, sometimes risking their lives. Nonetheless, I still wanted to find a job which would be meaningful for me.

I came back to Paris to study for a Master’s in International and European Law specialising in international security and defence. The course I followed at the *Institut d’étude des relations internationales* (ILERI) was very interesting. Half of these Masters graduates go on to work in arms sales and the other half, in humanitarian associations. After graduation, I was lucky to find a job straightaway, and started working in Syria in a refugee camp near Aleppo. However, because of the civil war there I returned to France, and like many other young people, started looking for work. In the end, I found an internship at the Moroccan Organisation of Human Rights (*Organisation marocaine des droits humains* – OMDH). My job was to solve legal problems and act as a mediator for sub-Saharan refugees. Many had left in order to travel to Europe, but they ended up in Morocco and had to live under very difficult conditions. They were not legally allowed to work, but could not be extradited because they were protected by the UNHCR. However, they were allowed to create their own companies and to benefit from micro-finance subsidies granted by the United Nations. About forty of these refugees were funded in this way, but not one of them was able to make a living from this activity. My work consisted of helping them with day-to-day matters and problems linked to prevailing racism and the lack of motivation of the people who were supposed to be helping them.

I realised that most NGOs had a very restricted view of refugees, and that the money the NGOs received merely served to give instant ‘first degree’ solutions. As far as I was concerned, this only solved half the problem. Of course, one can help someone open a halal butcher’s shop, but if one is unable to change potential clients’ views about the butcher, they will not buy their meat there. In fact, in traditional refugee aid programmes, we did not take the host society into account.

The definition of a refugee

Often in the media, the term 'refugee' is used to describe diverse situations, and as a result, it loses its meaning. Quite recently, in the collective mind, the vision of the refugee has become blurred or unidentified; he is a person in a mass of people advancing in a potentially threatening way towards our country. Images of crises, wars and misery which are relayed by the media and politicians produce this very negative view which is shared by many. There is therefore a problem of perception among the populations of host countries, and this is heightened in developing countries where the effects of the crisis are even more profoundly felt than in the developed world.

In France, refugee status is recognised by the *Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides* (OFPRA) in Article 1A2 of the 1951 Geneva Convention which states 'the term 'refugee' shall apply to any person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being prosecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.'

Once this status of refugee has been granted, these people benefit from state protection and, having signed a Reception and Integration Contract (RIC), then receive a ten-year, renewable residency permit. Before being granted this status, they have to go through a very complex procedure, sometimes lasting more than two years, during which they are not allowed to work. During the asylum request procedure, they are constantly questioned about the reasons for their request by the OFPRA or the *Cour nationale du droit d'asile* (French National Court for the Right of Asylum) which reviews appeals from decisions made by the OFPRA. For many refugees, this waiting period is extremely destabilising and has a very strong negative impact on their subsequent ability to integrate into French society. They are very isolated during this time and are either confined to reception centres for asylum seekers, or sleep rough on the streets or in squats with illegal migrants, despite the fact that France is legally obliged to provide asylum seekers with accommodation. There are only 25,000 places available in French reception centres for the 80,000 asylum seekers who await placement.

After my internship in Morocco where the situation had become too difficult for me to be able to act according to my convictions, I returned to France. I met up with Guillaume Capelle, a colleague who had done the same Master's degree as I had. He had experienced the same sorts of situations as I had in Australia. Regardless of one's location in the world it seemed that the barriers to refugees were the same in varying degrees.

Difficult barriers to cross

Language is one of these barriers. Curiously, in France, language is not considered to be an important factor compared to other countries like Germany. To avoid 'needlessly' spending money during the 400 hours of training which is theoretically given to refugees, the French administration judges it necessary to give just a simple language test to people requesting refugee status. As a result, most of them do not have access to the one skill which is most important for them to build a new life and to work in France. They are consequently confined to jobs which do not require knowledge of the language and therefore do not correspond to the refugees' qualifications. Some refugees, even ten years after their arrival in France, still do not know how to speak French because they have only been able to do odd jobs since their arrival. It must be very frustrating for them to hear people say that the reason that they do not speak French is because they do not want to integrate into French society... These circumstances often weigh heavily on their children who have been educated in French schools since their arrival in France, and who then act as intermediaries between their parents and the rest of society.

Educational degrees which do have no similar equivalent in France or are not recognised by the French system are further examples of barriers which are insurmountable because resuming studies after a certain age is very complicated for refugees. This situation leads to a reduction in professional and social opportunities, and has a very negative psychological impact on refugees. Many think that France will not give them the opportunity

to build a future and contribute to the French economy. As a result, they turn to other destinations such as the United Kingdom: the situation in the French Channel port of Calais arose because of the overwhelming presence of migrants who wanted to cross to the United Kingdom.

The physical and psychological trauma experienced by refugees in their country of origin, during their escape to a host country, or even at their arrival in France where they are treated with suspicion and even hostility, also creates difficulties in the long-term. Little of this is taken into account. Despite the urgency of the situation and faced with a flood of requests, the French government merely gives the strict minimum, namely a roof and an odd job so that the dependency of refugees on social aid lasts for as little time as possible. It is important to know that not only are there not enough social workers available in France, but they are not at all capable (because of their training) to cope with these sorts of problems. For example, at 'France Terre d'Asile', a French humanitarian association, there are 800 refugees to one social worker per year. It is clearly impossible to bring the necessary relevant aid to each asylum seeker, and this is extremely frustrating both for the social worker and for the refugee who is only asking for help.

This strictly humanitarian approach also implies that no attention is paid to socio-economic integration. This is borne out by the fact that from the French Office for Immigration and Insertion's annual budget of 700 million Euros, only 3.4 million Euros is devoted to integration.

For all these reasons the SINGA association chose to work specifically on these problems in order to help asylum seekers and refugees to become true French citizens in the long term by creating activities and no longer being dependent on public funding.

The SINGA community

We created the SINGA community because we hoped to do things differently. We wanted refugees to meet other people and to benefit from help which is more adapted to their projects. The community is essentially a group of professionals, entrepreneurs, artists, sportspeople, dancers, singers, and students. It is a community of human beings who want to get to know and understand each other better. Today, more than 15,000 people are part of SINGA France and this number is growing daily. The community's aim is to create a framework to receive these refugees who arrive from all over the world, and who we hope will be able to integrate society, develop a social and professional network, identify opportunities, speak French, and so on. We would like this to take place in a caring environment.

The community has a number of possible means of action. Firstly, we have a programme, 'Language and cultures', whose aim is to bring people together by learning a language as well as the social codes and behaviour of the French. SINGA offers classes in the form of one-to-one tutoring. There are both tutor/refugee duos and refugee/refugee duos (called 'buddies'). Care is taken to adapt the tutoring to the appropriate degree of proficiency of the student, and the aims of the work are defined together from the outset. In our community, there is no difference between refugees and helpers as each one enriches the other in the course of these exchanges. SINGA also gives refugees the opportunity of teaching their language to the other members of the community. In this context of exchanges, anyone, a Frenchman or a refugee, can suggest organising cultural or sporting events which may be of interest.

In a way, we have tried to reinvent voluntary work. The traditional model, adopted by the majority of associations, did not seem viable to us any more. Generally speaking, we found that the volunteer who wanted to give his time to an association was not able to choose what he wanted to do in the association. As a result, he got bored quickly, and gave up. We want people to get involved in whatever area they choose. A marketing specialist could help a refugee create a company; a Sunday-morning footballer could take a refugee who is interested in playing football to a football ground; someone who likes museums could organise a visit to a museum, and so on. Taking part in welcoming refugees does not require a radical change in one's way of life, and it can be done very simply by doing what one likes to do in the time that one has put aside to do this. The result is a completely different relationship between the two people than the usual one, and the buddies

are on the same hierarchical level as the volunteers. Duos form because of shared interests or enthusiasm for something, and refugees can help out other refugees.

A great number of events evolve in this way. They are not just related to problems of refugees, but may be based on art, cooking, music, yoga, tai chi, and so on. There are endless possibilities. This programme has the advantage of reaching out to people who previously were unaware of these activities. For a long period of time, the humanitarian and human rights sectors preached to the converted at meetings of the associations where it was always the same people who were taking part. On the other hand, in order to put the local butcher, banker and neighbours in contact with refugees we had to think outside the box and put something else in place to reach them. Our approach has meant that today we have a community of 15,000 people which is still growing, and every event attracts more people who want to join us.

In June 2015, we launched the CALM (Comme A La Maison: 'Like at home') programme which aims to accommodate refugees in host families. Other associations already did this: 'Welcome JRS France' is a network of households and communities which gives hospitality to young asylum seekers for one-month periods which can be renewed six times. JRS has similar values to us, such as an approach which is much more human than administrative, but only SINGA works with people who have refugee status. CALM will soon have a web platform which will enable us to put people in contact with each other and to monitor events more closely.

Even though the beginning of our association was small-scale, the worldwide publication in September 2015 of the photo of the little migrant boy, Aylan, found dead on a beach in Turkey, changed everything. In the space of a few days, we received more than 5,000 offers of accommodation from all over France, and we had to organise ourselves quickly to reply by telephone or by letter to as many of these offers as we could. We were able to accommodate 250 people in the first six months. We were pleased with our efficiency, and we were able to liaise well with the hosts, making them aware of certain cultural habits of refugee families. We like to think that if we are able to place refugees who have specific skills with people who have a well-established social and professional network then we will be able to give additional aid which is not provided by social services. Our initial thinking was confirmed: 10 % of refugees who were able to benefit from the social network of their hosts were able to find work. We are now trying to improve on these initial results, and we hope that we can put people in contact with each other according to their centres of interest and the professions of those involved and generate better integration.

We also created 'La Fabrique', SINGA's Île-de-France regional incubator, which helps refugees who have projects and who benefit from international legal protection, or indeed people who develop an activity which helps refugees to integrate into our society. They can use a 400 m² co-working space, 'Kiwanda', to meet up, create events, and so on.

An original economic model

SINGA is unusual in that it is much more of a social company than an association. When we created it four years ago, we noticed that public funding to all the associations which work with asylum seekers was being reduced, and this put them in a very difficult situation. From the outset we knew it was essential to devise an economic model which would allow us to finance our activities ourselves, and to keep our freedom to do what we wanted over time.

To make money, we sell services. For example, at BNP, a refugee who has a project can benefit from the expertise of BNP employees who will help him to solve his problem one or two days. If he envisages opening a business, the department at BNP specialising in this sector will help him to identify his needs and to implement his communications strategy. Surprisingly, it is BNP who pays us to put this sort of operation in place! All important companies ought to organise a 'Solidarity Day', but they have no experience in doing this, and generally restrict themselves to uninteresting projects. We suggest that they take on projects which not only have a real social impact, but which also highlight the skills of their employees. Because we prepare and manage them these days, these companies are interested in taking part as they do not have to think about the organisation involved.

We can offer additional services to the companies which are most invested in this programme. These include putting on international lunches during which head chefs from the SINGA community invite the company's employees to discover the gastronomic specialities of their home countries. The underlying idea is that the employees can give feedback about the meal to the chefs and allow them to adapt their menus according to French culinary tastes.

In the same way, Chassis Brakes International France, a car company and one of our first partners, is one of our most important sponsors, and consequently its employees have privileged access to all the events in the SINGA community.

We are training a number of civil servants as well as people whose jobs are related to the public service sector. The Françoise Sagan multimedia library, one of the newest public libraries in Paris, attracted a very large number of migrants, but it did not really know how to handle their requests. We stepped in with Afghan refugees in order to implement processes which were better adapted to their needs. We offer our help to all the local councils which want to accommodate migrants and assist them in the necessary organisation. SINGA now sells so many services that we are going to create a company in order to market our services without losing our status as a recognised association. What sets us apart from most associations is that we are in direct contact with numerous companies. Therefore, we have a network of professionals at our fingertips which allows us to know where to direct refugees who are looking for work.

Our aim: 500,000 members!

We have reached the limit of what we can do in terms of managing our human resources. The SINGA community has fourteen employees which is a reasonable number, but is inadequate to handle more than 15,000 members. We are developing tools to enable SINGA to be more autonomous. As a result, we will continue to provide services, plan events and train people while allowing the community to live independently. This will strengthen our impact and allow us to pursue our goal of 500,000 members in France by 2020.

One of the promising developments for us is WAYA. This is a project which aims to put the asylum seeker or refugee at the heart of what he wants to do in the most autonomous and calmest way possible, using the Internet in order to obtain comprehensive information. It is a web platform designed to give all the information necessary to people who have just arrived due to help from refugees already in the country who have translated the information. Social workers are unable to provide such a service today. The platform informs refugees about all our activities so that everyone, regardless of where he is located, can find what he needs locally, ranging from sports activities, professional activities, language classes, accommodation, and so on. This platform goes hand in hand with the 'Trait d'union' magazine which is a new form of media that we have created with the aim of changing people's opinions, how they talk about asylum, to see it from a different perspective, and to think up solutions which can then be shared with a larger group of people.

Finally, our laboratory helps SINGA to experiment and to promote research to suggest innovative solutions for problems regarding asylum, and to satisfy the aims of the association. In this context, we launched an international study to discover how new technologies could contribute to fulfilling these objectives in 2013. We realised that this represented an enormous potential because most refugees are extremely 'connected'. This implies that every project from now on ought to be available on the Internet. Every two years, we study a new subject. Our next one will be the role of women in achieving integration. This laboratory has helped us to develop CALM and WAYA, and in 2015 SINGA was awarded the 'Hackathon Réfugiés connectés' prize. This hackathon was orchestrated with Simplon.co and took place at the l'Archipel¹. Over a week-end, about ten teams of three or four developers and designers worked together on the development of applications or

1. The French government allowed the Aurore association to use the former convent, dating back to the 12th century, in 2012. It has become an emergency reception centre which can accommodate 160 people, covering 37 nationalities, and they can stay there until they are able to rebuild their lives and find permanent housing.

of sites so that the chosen projects can become real prototypes. This event was also the occasion to meet people who help with the integration of refugees and take part in the social and digital economy.

Today SINGA exists in Canada, France, Belgium and Germany. We have created a kind of social franchise which enables people who want to become involved in this sort of work to benefit from our brand and our know-how at no cost, providing that they respect a certain number of values and rules which we uphold. Consequently, there is true diversity and a genuine sharing of skills, and from now on, innovative projects can be exchanged within the SINGA community.

Discussion



Question: *Do you have any other income apart from the sales of your services?*

Nathanaël Molle: Our aim over the next three years is to self-finance 80% of our activities by the sales of these services. In 2015, 25% of our revenues came from public funding, 30% from the sales of our services – which is significant, but still far from our aim –, and the rest comes from endowments from private foundations. We were also awarded the prestigious ‘La France s’engage’ prize. It is important to receive such recognition from the French President who believes that SINGA is an essential project which should be developed throughout France. Incidentally, the prize money was substantial. We were also recognised by the magazine ‘Forbes’ as social entrepreneur of the year, and I became an Ashoka fellow in 2014.

Q.: *What is the origin of the name ‘SINGA’?*

N. M.: Initially our project was to set up an on-line microcredit site to support refugees’ projects to create companies throughout the world. However, things never go according to plan, and the project changed and focussed instead on the creation of links between refugees and host organisations. We were lucky that ‘Singa’, which in Bambara (a dialect in Mali) means ‘to lend’, also means ‘link’ in Lingala, a language spoken in the Congo. And to our knowledge, this simple word, which is very easy to remember and has no stigmatising connotation with regard to refugees, has no negative meaning in other languages. ‘Waya’ also means ‘link’, but in Swahili.

Q.: *How do you manage the association with just fourteen employees?*

N. M.: We rely a great deal on IT. We have a great deal of Internet workgroups which means that we can share information with a large number of people. We also organise many meetings. In Lyon, for example, five meetings take place every week in different places. This variety of resources allows us to manage what we are doing as best we can, even if the increasing number of requests and the rapidity of our development mean that sometimes both the teams and the means we use find it hard to keep up. This is why we develop different platforms which I mentioned in order to ensure much more efficient monitoring in the long term.

Our system also relies on our members who are autonomous and who we train. As a result, they are more aware of the difficulties facing refugees. Refugees also receive training about intercultural questions and we can ask them to translate information which needs to be shared into their own language even though we encourage all of them to speak French. We do not claim to teach French, and we redirect them towards language specialists. We are currently putting our training methods on a YouTube video so that those interested can train themselves.

Creating links

Q.: *Where do your colleagues come from?*

N. M.: The SINGA project emerged from associations which had their origins in the social economy. This is a small sector and so we decided to recruit people who came from the entrepreneurial world, in other words, people who had the ability to develop and manage projects rather than social workers. Our main problem is the young age of our team because some of our partners are not used to working with young people. Nonetheless, these colleagues are very enthusiastic and are ready to move mountains to reach our goals.

Q.: *What you do is a long way from the reality of the real-life dramas of refugees in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, isn't it?*

N. M.: The reason that governments intervene so little is that their populations, in particular in France, do not feel very concerned about the refugee question apart from its negative aspects such as threats to employment and insecurity. Photos of the dead little boy, Aylan, were necessary to 'rehumanise' the question of accepting refugees. Suddenly, anonymous masses of people became human beings. This helped to strengthen our hope that it was possible to recreate a bond of humanity between refugees and the host population. This is where SINGA plays a very concrete and important role. If tomorrow we have to welcome more refugees to France and our population is already aware of their plight, then the government will not be able to pass laws which contravene the rights of these people. Pragmatically, we have to take into account the political situation and ask ourselves how we are able to change things because we have public support.

Q.: *Mobile telephones must be an important means of communication for you.*

N. M.: Absolutely. We send 30,000 texts a week. It is very important for us to use devices which refugees use every day as this allows us to be as flexible as possible. Unfortunately, even today, most relief agencies do not use these devices. It is true that it is expensive but we think that this cost is essential, and our WAYA platform will be set up to send automatically a certain number of messages which contain essential information.

Q.: *Do you think that you can help to contribute to solutions on a European level? Do you receive funding from the European Union (EU)?*

N. M.: For the time being, we have not asked for EU funding because our structure does not have the capacity to deal with the EU's slow and unwieldy procedures. However, the European Commission honoured me by appointing me as one of the judges of the European Social Innovation competition which focused on the reception of refugees, and this is wonderful recognition.

SINGA communities are developing in Belgium and Germany where more than one thousand members have already joined in three months. Because the tools which we put in place in France are shared in their language with all the other communities, our international expansion relies essentially on the translation and the personal investment of those who have projects. This is all happening very quickly and our major aim is to generate greater awareness among the populations in the largest number of countries possible in order to be able to provide concrete solutions. In our approach, we state that it is possible to do much better and to implement work processes which have a strong social impact at lower cost, and this is of interest to the authorities in every country.

Housing refugees in private homes is the best example. This programme was finally recognised by the French government as a viable alternative to existing suggestions. We were called to a meeting with the Housing Minister in order to work on a draft law regarding this solution and the way in which it was possible to support initiatives. This is very significant for us because it meant that SINGA was able to suggest something innovative and realistic economically. We are not a substitute for the French government which should play its role, but our citizens should also play theirs.

Q.: How do you explain the problems we have seen in Calais between refugees?

N. M.: These problems are primarily related to the welcome which refugees have received. In the Calais jungle, the living conditions are atrocious, but unfortunately this is not the only case. These sorts of problems and discrimination already existed in reception centres for asylum seekers because the people there were under great stress and living in insalubrious conditions where the atmosphere was explosive. It is also due to the fact that nothing is done to enable people to talk together and to get to know each other. It is a case of 'everyone for himself, inward-looking, survival strategies and opposition, and this results in confrontational situations. It is not at all due to pre-existing hatred.

We welcomed people who were granted refugee status in France, but who decided to stay on in Calais because they said it was the only place where they knew anyone. The government's current strategy is to distribute refugees throughout the country, but without addressing the fundamental problems. Nothing is done before the refugees arrive to prepare the towns which have reception centres for them and to make the inhabitants aware of the situation. We think that in these cases, the project is bound to fail. All that is needed is for one incident to take place and then all the xenophobic networks in France will latch on to it, use it for their propaganda purposes and exacerbate underlying tensions inciting others to reject migrants.

Q.: Do you have the government's ear?

N. M.: Yes, to a fairly large extent. Regarding the project to accommodate refugees in private homes, for example, we were very clear about the fact that our solution was only temporary and that it was not a substitute for the need to find decent accommodation for these refugees. Today, the Île-de-France region is completely saturated because 70% of all refugees in France are located there. Because they do not have either appropriate monitoring from the social services or the possibility to find out about professional opportunities or accommodation in other cities themselves, it is very difficult for them to choose a city other than the capital. And yet, other solutions do exist. In a village near Montpellier, an old bread oven was abandoned because the baker left to earn his living in the town. An Afghan refugee took it over and now he supplies bread to the surrounding area. Refugees have a considerable potential to breathe new life back into our regions, re-open schools which had to close because there were not enough children, set up medical facilities, and so on. Unfortunately, people do not mention these successes often enough, and, for example, there are currently no means by which a refugee who was a qualified doctor in his country can practise as a doctor in France.

There is a large number of things to do once one changes one's state of mind, stops looking at refugees as if they are a threatening mob, and sees that these people can contribute to the common good in their host country.

Q.: What is your greatest fear?

N. M.: Because we are growing so quickly, our greatest danger, in my opinion, is that we will explode. Our funding is also a cause for concern because we have to find the money to pay our teams during the time it takes us to develop our economic model. But we are being helped. Ashoka is there to advise us about development. Having won the prize for 'La France s'engage' makes us credible in the eyes of local authorities when we establish ourselves in a new region. All of this is very positive, but what is new for me is the fact that we are faced with all the problems with which managers of small companies are faced with on a daily basis. This is part of the job, and today we are trying to avoid cash flow problems as much as possible. We just need to be able to adapt ourselves in order to continue to move forward.

■ Presentation of the speaker ■

Nathanaël Molle: in 2007, he was the administrative assistant to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Brasilia; in 2008, he was an assistant at the French Embassy in Bolivia; in 2009, he was communications assistant at the ILERI (Institut d'étude des relations internationales) in Paris; in 2010, he was communications assistant and advocate at the Paris office of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation; in 2011, he was legal assistant for refugees at the Moroccan Organisation of Human Rights (Organisation marocaine des droits humains); in 2012 he was an assistant in the international office of the Institute of Intercultural Management and Communication. He has been the co-founder and managing director of the SINGA association (France) since 2012.

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