

**The Interaction between  
National Forest Management  
and Rural Life  
in Burkina Faso**  
- An example from Yaho

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The Interaction between National Forest Management and  
Rural Life in Burkina Faso  
- An example from Yaho

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## Preface

The ideas for this thesis started over a year ago and we would not have come this far without all the assistance we got from our supervisor Klas Ernald Borges, PhD in Real Estate Planning. A lot of the contacts, information about Burkina Faso and support were given to us by Anders Andén and Olle Wendt who are friends with our supervisor in Yaho.

The major part of the work on this thesis has been performed in Burkina Faso and in the village Yaho. We are very grateful that we were given the opportunity to combine studies with getting to know the friendly and generous Burkinabé and their country. The Mayor of Yaho as well our local supervisor Zoukanta Tuina has been encouraging in our work and arranged all practicalities whenever needed. Of course the forest keeper of Yaho Sawadogo Yacouba has been our principal source of knowledge about the *forêt classée de Tui* and has given us a lot of inspiration on the way.

During our time in Yaho we stayed in the house of the accoucheuse, thank you Nadine for your hospitality. We made a lot of friends in the village but two persons in particular stood at our side at all times, Issa and Seydoba. We would like to give a special thanks to the people we have interviewed; your answers have been the back bone for this essay.

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Malin Gustafsson and Lina Norman



## Summary

This report is the result of a master thesis in the field of land surveying and land management. The purpose is to examine how national forest management harmonizes with rural life in Burkina Faso. To enable a description of rural life and social structures a field study has been conducted in the rural municipality and village Yaho in western Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso is situated in West Africa and is a landlocked country. An absolute majority of the Burkinabé live in rural areas where agriculture is the foremost livelihood. The climate is very hot and dry during larger parts of the year and the cultivation conditions are difficult. The economic performance of the country is heavily dependent on how the harvests turn out since it relies mostly on export of agriculture, mainly cotton. This makes the economy very fragile and vulnerable to changes in economies beyond the country borders. Burkina Faso is considered to be one of the poorest countries in the world. The illiteracy within the country concerns well over three-quarters of the population.

Burkina Faso is a former French colony that obtained independence in 1960. The French system has had impacts on the governance of the country and French is the official language. Burkina Faso is a parliamentary republic with Blaise Compaore as president since 1987. There is an ongoing decentralization process which started in 1991. The goal is to diminish the gap between the government and the people through a transfer of powers and resources to local governments. So far, 351 municipalities have been founded, each with a democratically elected Mayor to actualize the goal.

There are two different kinds of land use that dominates the country. In the north people are traditionally herdsman and in the south where the soils are easier to cultivate they live out of agriculture. As the need for sustenance grows in pace with the population, the soils become more and more strained. When facing this, the government also has to work in lines of the environmental law. It has the intention to fight all kinds of pollution, promote natural resources and ameliorate the living conditions of the inhabitants.

The wooded areas in Burkina Faso are mainly of the dry forest kind. For the majority of the Burkinabé the assets of the forest are vital for their sustenance including food security, energy source and building materials. The forests of Burkina Faso has diminished tremendously due to agricultural expansion, desertification is an impending threat. Most of the now existing forests in the country are the preserved forests founded by the French during the colonization; some of them are classified as *forêts classées*. The local inhabitants have limited access to these forests that are managed by the government. The main law concerning forest management is the *Code Forestier* with the primary aim to conserve and manage forests fauna and water. It signifies that the state is the guarantor of the preservation of these resources; the law further holds violations and penalties.

The villagers live their life the same way their parents and grand parents did. The foremost priority for the villagers is to cultivate their land to provide for the family. The same crops are cultivated today as they were in the old days and the same methods are being used. The gender roles and hierarchies are strikingly strong in Yaho; great respect is shown to those who "deserve" it. There are some groups in the village that are recently supervened and for different reasons do not have a natural place in existing structures of Yaho. The municipality was founded in 2006 and the roles within the municipality building and their operating range are still vague.

The population in the village is fast-growing, the combination with degrading soils results in a lack of agricultural land. The villagers are now looking for solutions and sees exploitation of the wooded land in the neighboring *Forêt classée de Tui* as their only way to nourish their children. The villagers consider the forest an endless resource and are not aware of the importance of preserving the forest.

There is one forest keeper that alone has to manage all land covered with forest within the municipality of Yaho. He is a good source of knowledge, has ideas and a will to work with the inhabitants. The problem is that this knowledge can not be passed on to the villagers partly due to language difficulties but also as an effect of the generally low level of education.

Through the decentralization the responsibility for the forest management of *Forêt classée de Tui* will be passed on to Yaho and the three other municipalities situated in connection to the forest. For enabling a functioning system in the future there are several obstacles that have to be eliminated. Community based forest management has been successful in other parts of the world where the forest management has been transferred to community-level institutions. The main purpose of community participation is to introduce more efficient regulations that fit the local needs and gives the locals increased access to the forest.

In the interaction between national forest management and rural life in the village Yaho five principle falliblenesses were found:

- The forest keeper has a very low amount of respect from the villagers.
- The villagers do not share any benefits from the forest nor do they have any responsibilities or say in the planning of the future of the forest.
- The villagers do not have any incentive for the conservation of the forest.
- There is a legal system and a police force to impose sanctions but the legislation is not suited for the rural poor.
- There is no forest management plan.

There are problems concerning forest management in Yaho but also prospective possibilities. The two systems that today are governing the village need to be merged. The villagers need an incentive for preserving the forest. The forest keeper with his knowledge and the respected Mayor has decisive parts in this process.

## Sommaire

Ce report est un résultat d'une thèse de maître dans le champ de lotissement et aménagement de la terre. Le but est de examiner comment la gestion national des forêts accord avec la vie rurale au Burkina Faso. Pour la description de la vie rurale et les structure sociale une étude sur le terrain a été accomplie dans le village et commune rurale de Yaho dans l'ouest de Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso est situé dans l'Afrique Occidentale sans débouché sur la mer. Une majorité absolu des Burkinabé habite dans la campagne ou l'agriculture est la moins d'existence principal. Le climat est très chaud et sec pendant un part d'important de l'année est les conditions de cultiver sont très difficile. L'économie du pays est très dépendante de la réussite de la récolte comme l'export compte d'un grand partie de l'agriculture, surtout le coton. Comme un résultat, l'économie est fragile et vulnérable des changements dans les économies d'ailleurs. Burkina Faso est considéré comme un des pays plus pauvre dans le monde. L'analphabétisme est bien étendu avec 75 pourcent de la population sont analphabètes.

Burkina Faso est une vieille colonie de la France qui a obtenue leur indépendance en 1960. Le système français a influé la gouvernance du pays et le français est la langue officielle. Burkina Faso est une république parlementaire avec Blaise Compaoré comme président depuis 1987. Dans le pays il y a une décentralisation en cours qui avait son début en 1991. Le but est de diminuer la distance entre le gouvernement et le peuple par un transfert des pouvoirs et ressources aux gouvernements locales. Jusqu'à maintenant, 351 communes ont été fondé, chacun avec un Maire démocratiquement élu.

Il y a deux utilisations de terre principales au Burkina Faso. Dans le Nord les habitants sont traditionnellement gardiens de troupeau et dans le sud, où les terres sont meilleure a cultiver, le gents sont agriculteurs. Comme la besoin de soutenance augment avec la population les terres deviennent de plus en plus hérissées. Comme un résultat, le gouvernement doivent travailler dans la ligne de la loi de l'environnement. L'intention de la loi est de prévenir tous sort de pollution, promouvoir les ressources naturelles et améliorer les conditions de vie des habitants.

Les zones boisées de Burkina Faso sont surtout des bois secs. D'une majorité des Burkinabé, les ressources des forêts sont vitale pour la soutenance, principalement pour la sécurité de nourriture, les ressources d'énergie et les matérielles de construire. Les forêts de Burkina Faso ont diminué extrêmement grâce à l'expansion de l'agriculture, la désertification est une menace imminente. La majorité des forêts existant sont les forêts classés fondés des français pendant la colonisation. Les habitants locaux ont un accès limité de ces forêts qui sont géré par le gouvernement. La loi principale concernant la gestion des forêts est le Code Forestier avec un but primaire de conserver et gérer les forêts, la faune est les eaux. Il signifie que l'état est le garant de la préservation de ces ressources, la loi inclut aussi les infractions et pénalités.

Les villageois vivent leurs vies dans la même façon que leur parent et leurs grands-parents. La plus grande priorité est de cultiver la terre pour prévoir la famille. Les mêmes récoltes sont trouvées aujourd'hui comme dans les jours vieux et les mêmes



méthodes sont utilisées. Les rôles des genres et les hiérarchies sont remarquablement fort à Yaho, ceux-là qui le valent est montré un grand respect. Il y a des groupes dans le village qui sont récemment survenus et pour des raisons différents n'ont pas un endroit naturel dans la hiérarchie existant du village. Cela inclut les groupes d'une différente origine comme les Mossi qui vive la même vie que les villageois et pour cela est un groupe assez impliqué dans la vie traditionnelle de Yaho. A part de ca il y a les employés de l'état qui sont plus exclus de la vie du village et qui n'ont pas beaucoup de contact avec les villageois. Comme la commune de Yaho a été fondé a 2006 les rôles dans la commune, notamment la mairie, sont vague.

La population du village a une croissance rapide, la combinaison avec les terres dégradant a le resulta d'un manque des terres à cultiver. Maintenant les villageois cherchent des solutions pour le problème et vois une exploitation du *Forêt classé de Tui*, qui est située à coté du village, comme la seule possibilité de nourrir leurs enfants. Les villageois voient la forêt comme une ressource sans fin et ne connais pas l'importance de la préservation de la forêt.

Il y a un gardien de la forêt qui lui seul a la responsabilité de gérer tout la terre couvert du bois dans la commune de Yaho. Il est une source très bien de connaissance sur les forêts et l'environnement et il a des idées et un désir à travailler avec les habitants. Le problème est que cette connaissance ne peut pas être transférée aux habitants partiellement en raison des difficultés de langage mais aussi à cause de niveau bas de l'éducation.

Par la décentralisation, la responsabilité de la gestion de la *Forêt classé de Tui* va être gérée aux Yaho et les trois communautés avoisinant dans lesquelles le forêt est située. Pour un futur système fonctionnel il y a plusieurs obstacles que doivent être éliminés. La théorie de la communauté a base de l'administration des forêts que a été utilisé dans plusieurs endroits avec une propagation sur le monde a évolué plusieurs systèmes fonctionnelles dans les situations ou la gestion a été transféré aux communautés. Le but principal d'une participation des communautés est d'introduire des règlements plus efficaces qu'allez aux besoins locaux et donne aux habitants une approche augmentée de la forêt.

Dans l'interaction entre la gestion national des forêts et la vie rurale de Burkina Faso, notamment de Yaho, Cinque faiblesses principales ont étai trouvées:

- **Le gardien de la forêt a un bas niveau de respect des habitantes.** Comme un part des employés de gouvernement le gardien ne fait pas partie de la hiérarchie du village. Les villageois ne connaissent pas son rôle est il y n'a pas un contact direct entre les deux.
- **Les villageois ne partage pas les avantages ni les responsabilités de la forêt.** La pauvre population de Burkina Faso est dépendente des ressources forestières dans leur vie quotidienne. L'accès de la forêt est très limité et les villageois ne voient pas la possibilité d'avoir les avantages de cela. Traditionnellement la forêt n'est pas vue comme un endroit délimité. Aujourd'hui les permis sont demandés pour entrer dans la forêt. La forêt est devenu une partie séparé de la reste de la

communauté et ne font pas partie des inquiétudes de tous les jours quelque chose que pouvait être différent si des avantages avait été trouvés.

Aujourd'hui la responsabilité de la gestion des forêts est totalement dans les mains de l'état. Dans les projets plus tôt accomplis de la théorie de la communauté à base de l'administration des forêts on a montré que la gestion a été améliorée quand la population a été impliquée.

- **Les villageois n'ont pas de incitant pour la conservation de la forêt.** Grâce à la surpopulation la priorité n'est pas la préservation de la forêt mais d'avoir la nourriture pour la famille par la culture traditionnelle de la terre. Il y a un grand manque de connaissance concernant l'importance de la préservation de la forêt. Les villageois ne voient pas la connexion entre les pauvres récoltes, la mangue de l'eau et la diminution de la forêt.
- **Il y a un système juridique et une personne pour l'impliquer mais la législation n'est pas adaptée pour les pauvres ruraux.** Ce n'est pas possible d'impliquer la loi comme elle est écrite. Pendant quatre ans dans le village le gardien des forêts n'a pas une fois puni quelqu'un. Le gardien est dans une situation très exposé comme le seul avec la responsabilité de tout le forêt avec personne à lui aider à implémenter la loi. En plus, les hautes amendes ne sont pas applicables pour une population pauvre comme celle de Yaho.
- **Il y n'a pas un plan d'aménagement de forêt.** Pour gérer la forêt comme une seule entité, avec les autres départements, il est nécessaire d'avoir un plan développement de quelque sort.

Il y en a des problèmes avec la gestion de la forêt, la plupart d'eux sont dépendent des problèmes de communication et des malentendus. Essentiellement les intérêts sont les mêmes pour tous mais la connaissance et les impressions sont différents.

Les deux systèmes doivent se fusionner et ça peut se faire par la nouvelle commune. C'est une bonne possibilité pour un nouveau début pour la gestion des forêts. Le Maire est une personne très respectée et il a le pouvoir d'engager les villageois. Les habitants de Yaho sont dociles aux personnes plus hautes dans la hiérarchie.

Le forestier a un intérêt d'une coopération avec le Maire. Le Maire, qui est très respecté pouvait être un lien important entre les villageois et le forestier et un part très important dans le transmettant de son connaissance. Ça pouvait prendre les villageois plus près de la gestion de la forêt et par ça contribuer à un intérêt augmenté de la forêt.

Un plan de gestion de la forêt sera essentiel pour une fusion des deux systèmes. La création d'un plan durable demande une coopération entre le forestier et la commune. Les rendez-vous entre les forestiers de la province est une source de connaissance et un forum pour un développement des idées.



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## Abbreviations

**AMBF**, *Association des Municipalités du Burkina Faso*.  
Municipality association of Burkina Faso

**CFA**, *Communauté financière d'Afrique*.  
Local currency in West Africa

**Collectivités territoriales décentralisées**  
The local institutions in Burkina Faso after the decentralisation.

**GDP**, Gross Domestic Product.  
Measures of national income and output for a given country's economy.

**NGO**, Non Governmental Organisation

**RDA**, *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*  
Former political party in West Africa

**UNDP**, United Nations Development Programme

**TOD**, *Textes d'Orientation de la Décentralisation*  
Law handling the decentralisation process

**WHO**, World Health Organisation





## **1 Introduction**

This chapter contains background, aim and method of this study as well as delimitations and criticism of sources.

### **1.1 Background**

More than two-thirds of Africa's population relies directly or indirectly on forests for their sustenance, including food security. For the agricultural population of Burkina Faso preservation of the forests is important in the aspect that the forests protect water and soil resources. Forests also house the greatest source of terrestrial biological diversity which is both a global and national heritage and resource.

Today the forests of Africa are threatened by a combination of factors. Agricultural expansion, inappropriate agricultural systems, inadequate tenure rights, increased firewood collection, heavy livestock grazing, drought and bush fires are some of the factors.

There is an ongoing decentralization in Burkina Faso with the goal to transfer as much power as possible to the municipalities this will also be the case concerning forest management. The process is far from being fulfilled and the roles of the municipalities and Mayors are still vague. The preserved forest *Forêt classée de Tui* is situated in four recently founded municipalities which will be responsible for the management of the forest in the future. One of the municipalities is Yaho where Zounkata Tuina is the Mayor. He contacted Lund University and was interested in collaboration with Swedish students concerning the development of his municipality and his approaching tasks.

In the early spring of 2008 a field study was carried out during a period of two months. Major parts of the time were spent in the village Yaho.

### **1.2 Purpose**

We want to examine how the system and life of the rural municipality Yaho harmonize with the way the forest *Forêt classée de Tui* is managed through the government and what weaknesses it conduce.

### **1.3 Methods**

The study is primarily based on literature, interviews and observations in the village of Yaho and the capital Ouagadougou. A big part of the knowledge and ideas for this report is gathered through conversations with locals and others with experience of the country in both Sweden and Burkina Faso.

#### **1.3.1 Literature**

The theoretical part of the report is based on studies of literature, primarily papers and reports. The legal framework of Burkina Faso concerning environment, land and forest management has been studied. The literature studies have been performed in Sweden.

### **1.3.2 Field study**

The major part of this report is based on a field study in Burkina Faso between the 12th February and the 15th April 2008. Five weeks were spent in the rural municipality of Yaho in the main village with the same name.

Prior to the arrival in Yaho we had studied the method Practical Rural Appraisal (PRA). The technique is based on focused ethnography, rapid field assessments, participatory discussions and research<sup>1</sup>. It focuses on group exercises such as illustrations, mapping, modeling and diagramming which all stimulates discussions and enthusiasm. This simplifies the sharing of information, analysis and activity among the parties concerned. PRA was originally formed to suit the needs for developing rural areas but has also been successful in wide range of settings<sup>2</sup>. This method was not applicable due to the wide spectrum of languages spoken in the village.

We held semi structured interviews<sup>3</sup> concerning daily life, forest use and notion of the village structure, see appendix. We interviewed local and official people in the municipality with different roles, ages, sexes and origins. All interviews were recorded and reviewed. To get a better insight of Burkina Faso in a global context we also interviewed people working with water and forest management in West Africa.

The observations were gathered whilst interacting with the villagers, participating in ceremonies and visiting neighbouring villages. A large part of the knowledge of the village life is obtained through spontaneous conversations with locals.

### **1.4 Delimitations**

The field study has been conducted in one of the ten villages of the municipality. Only the responsible administrative personal that could be found in the near surroundings have been interviewed due to difficulties with transportation and phone connections.

When reviewing the forest legislation, the sections concerning fauna, fishing and aquaculture have not been paid the same attention since it is not the purpose of this thesis. No profound studies of the law have been undertaken since there was no time to find any expertise on the subject while in the country. The recitals of the law given in this report should be read as a review.

### **1.5 Criticism of sources**

There is a lot of literature concerning forest management, primarily handling tropical forests, not the dry forests found in Burkina Faso where the concerns are different. The quantity of literature concerning Burkina Faso is limited although a lot of literature is found on West Africa.

The country is in the middle of a decentralization. It is difficult to determine whether the current information on how the country is governed is accurate and for how long.

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<sup>1</sup> Cezeaux, U; *How to conduct a Participatory Rural Appraisal for an engineering project*, page 2, 2007, The Connexions Project

<sup>2</sup> FAO *Land tenure studies 3: Land tenure and rural development*

<sup>3</sup>Höst, Regnell, Runesson; Att genomföra examensarbete; p. 34

There is a lack of statistics concerning Burkina Faso as a country as well as land and forest use in the region. Therefore, numbers used may be old and/or estimated.

The interpreters that were used in interviews with villagers not familiar with French were local people with no training and limited knowledge of the French language.



## 2 Community based forest management

This chapter gives a brief insight of how forest management can operate when local people is involved in the management. The text below gives ideas and thoughts from other projects to be born in mind when reading the report.

### 2.1 Basic principles

It is a big task laid in the hands of low-income communities, to be responsible for the forest assets, protect the environment, encourage participation, and distribute possible revenues justly. The main purpose of community participation is to introduce more efficient regulation that fits the local needs. In addition, to prevent degradation of soils in areas where there is open or uncontrolled access to the forest and to create awareness amongst the local inhabitants of the values found in the forest that needs to be protected. If forest communities are partners in decision-making, implementation and monitoring the activity in the forest, this will result in long term strong ecological health of the wood lands and increase the benefits for the forest communities and the larger society of which they are a part<sup>4</sup>. Participation empowers community organizations to control the use of natural resources by the local population<sup>5</sup>.

Forest management and deforestation are involved with complex political economy issues. Today the central government in many countries allocates permits, licenses and concessions for commercial exploitation, while communities' rights to exploit natural resources often are limited to production for domestic use and local markets. There is a fundamental contradiction in this system since the forest resources are the product of the actions of the rural people, but the fruits are collected by the government<sup>6</sup>. It is still unusual to find governments letting go completely and empowering communities to make fundamental decisions about their use of forests<sup>7</sup>.

In the long run it is intended that forests managed by the community will get an extensive responsibility, including all the economic matters. The extended responsibilities require a wide spectrum of skills and knowledge within the community. It includes capacities from the ability to negotiate and mediate with actors outside the immediate community to technical knowledge and an understanding of legal systems, markets and financial institutions<sup>8</sup>. Some skills might exist locally and other such as legal and marketing skills may be available at other institutions and agencies at high costs<sup>9</sup>.

Initially, community-level institutions do not have to take all burdens at once. Securing the access to sources of support and skills through partnerships with other communities and institutions may be more important than to use human and financial resources within each community to create those skills. It is not a purpose of its own that all

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<sup>4</sup>Menzies, *Our forest, your ecosystem, their timber*, 2007

<sup>5</sup>Amanor K S, *Natural and cultural assets and participatory forest management in West Africa*, 2003

<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> Menzies, *Our forest, your ecosystem, their timber*, 2007

<sup>8</sup> ibid

<sup>9</sup> ibid

community based managed forests are identical, more crucial is that the community-based institutions are flexible and reflect the plurality and cohesion of shared interests, norms and values<sup>10</sup>.

Conditions that have been developed through the evolution of community based forest management involve that<sup>11</sup>:

- The institution for management has a high amount of credibility and respect.
- The community shares the benefits in return of taking the burdens of responsibilities.
- The community has access to skills to manage the forest.
- The community can chose their partners and the conditions in which the trade takes form.
- The community has access to wider networks, social movements and other sources of political support.
- There is a formal governance and a legal system for the community to use and a police force that can impose sanctions on those who break the rules.

It is far from all communities that satisfy all of these conditions and they can not be seen as a guarantee for a good management but the more conditions fulfilled the better.

## ***2.2 Community based forest management in West Africa***

Most West African countries have undertaken decentralization programs where devolution of natural resource management is an important component. In many regions, national forestry services have realized the importance and advantages of community based forest management and have developed touchstones for managing the forests. Community forestry usually arises as a solution to solve ecological crisis as the result of prior poor forest management. Crisis is often blamed on overpopulation, poverty and unsuitable agricultural technologies.

Participatory forest management in West Africa can be traced to the late 1970s. State agencies in collaboration with NGOs have been supporting tree planting projects in rural areas to win the support of local people. These early examples of reforestation project did not always work out as planned. For instance in Mali, management plans for reforestation areas were created by the water and forestry service as a response to the severe drought. Villages were selected and were responsible for planting the species chosen by experts in the proposed areas. The local people were provided with commands, could not get through any creative inputs, got small wages or none at all and were not really involved in the future plans of how to maintain the plantations. As a result to this they had no incentives to manage these woodlands and in the end the investments and efforts gained few, if any, positive outcomes<sup>12</sup>.

The methods of today have changed during the last 30 years. The community forestry that exists for the present in the Sahel concerns lowering the transaction costs of

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<sup>10</sup> ibid

<sup>11</sup> Menzies, *Our forest, your ecosystem, their timber*, 2007

<sup>12</sup> Amanor K S, *Natural and cultural assets and participatory forest management in West Africa*, 2003

management and intensifying the efficiency. The savanna forests are major sources of charcoal and fuel wood, which are the dominant fuel sources in rural as well as urban areas. While communities gain some rights to exploit natural resources they are often limited to production for domestic use and local markets.

### **2.3 Examples on previous accomplishments**

In many West African countries community militias are in charge of environmental policing functions taking action in campaigns against bush burning. It is a common method used in cultivating for removing weeds and vermin, it can also prevent fuels building up that may catch on fire later on and result in even worse wildfires during the driest months of the year. In some countries local chiefs have even been empowered to create local by-laws banning the bush burning and penalize those who violate the regulations<sup>13</sup>

In Ghana during the 1970s the timber industry collapsed due to the heavy economic recession that put a lot of pressure on the forests since timber was one of the major exports. An investigation done by the government in 1987 revealed that malpractices in the way of governing the forests were frequently committed by the private forestry sector<sup>14</sup>. The government and international donors realized that sustainable development could only be reached by strengthening the capacity of the forestry service. This was mainly done by building inventory systems for monitoring forest resources, streamlining the allocation of timber permits, ameliorating the revenue collection and encouraging community participation in forest management. These motions recognized that the future of the forest industry was put in the hands on societies preserving and planting trees. As a result of these plans the forest reserves have limited harvesting and the revenues are distributed to the chiefs within the proximity of the forests to divide amongst his inferiors managing the forests. Also stated from this example is as Boateng put it: *It is only when the forests have a real value to the local people that we will be able to gain their cooperation and energy for forest protection and management*<sup>15</sup>.

During the early 20th century Kangra valley in India experienced times of population growth. The demand for timber increased and the agriculture intensified<sup>16</sup>. The forestry department enlarged its control over nonagricultural and forest lands impeded with erosion and desertification caused by overgrazing and deforestation. The rights of the local inhabitants concerning access to the forests diminished tremendously and provoked anger and conflicts between the people and the department. This was expressed in frequent people disregarding regulations and intentional outbreaks of bushfires. Poor financial returns from the Kangra forest and an untenable situation called for another solution. In 1935 a conference with Indian forest officers was held and the practicability of forming village forests was investigated. They constructed a solution bearing three thoughts in mind<sup>17</sup>:

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<sup>13</sup> Amanor K S, *Natural and cultural assets and participatory forest management in West Africa*, 2003

<sup>14</sup> ibid

<sup>15</sup> ibid

<sup>16</sup> Menzies, *Our forest, your ecosystem, their timber*, 2007

<sup>17</sup> ibid



- What difficulties are experienced from the local inhabitants' point of view as a result of the present forest management?
- How can the interest in conserving the forests be raised?
- How can the cooperation between the forest department and the locals be encouraged and preserved?

Some years later cooperative forest societies were founded. The forests were to be managed locally by an elected village core under governmental supervision.

The forest department agreed on giving the cooperative societies the profits from the sale of timber and other forest products. Each person involved in forest management was given a share associated with their property. Another way of rewarding the villagers was to entitle each household one tree from the forest every five years for building purposes. Every year the cooperative arrange an auction where they sell grass from the forest. The households bid for the right to harvest grass that they can use to be used for feed, thatching, rope-making or they can sell the right to a third party. There have been several other projects in Kangra in the past but few are still functional, but the cooperative forest societies continue to exist. They hold meetings where the villagers' voices are heard and they manage to maintain records and accounts.

### 3 Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country situated in West Africa. It is considered to be one of the poorest countries in the world where more than 80 percent of the inhabitants live in rural areas. Agriculture is the livelihood for the absolute majority of the population but the cultivation conditions are harsh due to the dry climate and unreliable rains. Burkina Faso is a former French colony which has had an impact on the governance of the country.



**Figure 1:** Localisation of Burkina Faso in Africa.

#### 3.1 Facts about the country

Facts about the country	
Area, km <sup>2</sup>	274 200
Capital	Ouagadougou
Neighbouring countries	Mali, Niger, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire
Population 2007, millions	12.1
Population growth per annum, percent	2.9
Life expectancy at birth 2007, years	47.5
Illiteracy, percent <sup>18</sup>	75.2
GDP per capita, USD <sup>19</sup>	1 200
Religion	Animism, Muslim, Christian
Languages	French (official), Moore, Dioula, Fulfulde (national), and many more local dialects
Currency	Communauté Financière d'Afrique (CFA) franc, 656 CFA to the euro

##### 3.1.1 Climate

Burkina Faso is divided into three different climate zones. The Sahel is classed as semi-desert and covers 25 percent of the country stretching from the north. Covering central Burkina Faso is the Sudano-Sahelian zone with savannah vegetation, but it is not as green and fertile as the Sudano in the southern parts. Since Burkina Faso is landlocked, it escapes the humidity of its neighbouring coastal countries. The dry season stretches from September to May, the first months the rivers are usually full and the agrarian Burkinabé are occupied in the fields with the harvest. The late dry season that runs from March to May is the toughest period of the year with temperatures topping 40°C daily. Many water supplies dry up and water rationing are common during this period<sup>20</sup>. The wet season starts in June bringing the monsoon front from the south west. Annual

<sup>18</sup>OECD, African Economic Outlook, *Burkina Faso*

<sup>19</sup> CIA, The world factbook

<sup>20</sup> Manson K, Knight J, *Burkina Faso*, 2006

rainfall varies from less than 250 mm in the north to 1000 mm in the south<sup>21</sup>. After a month the monsoon period gets established with frequent rains in the afternoon. The landscape changes dramatically with a profusion of herbage, colour and life. Meadow grass covers hills and valleys and the crops in the fields start to shoot upwards. Insect and parasite populations take advantage of the humidity and breed copiously and diseases such as malaria, cholera and meningitis increases during the wet period that ends in September.

### 3.1.2 People

Burkina Faso has a history of cross-African trade routes, invading people and changing country borders over time. It is not that surprising that more than 60 ethnic groups live in Burkina Faso speaking a cacophony of individual languages and dialects. Broad generalizations about where different people live can be made but migration is a fact of Burkinabé life<sup>22</sup>. The landscape has few natural obstacles and the traditional livelihoods require some degree of migration.

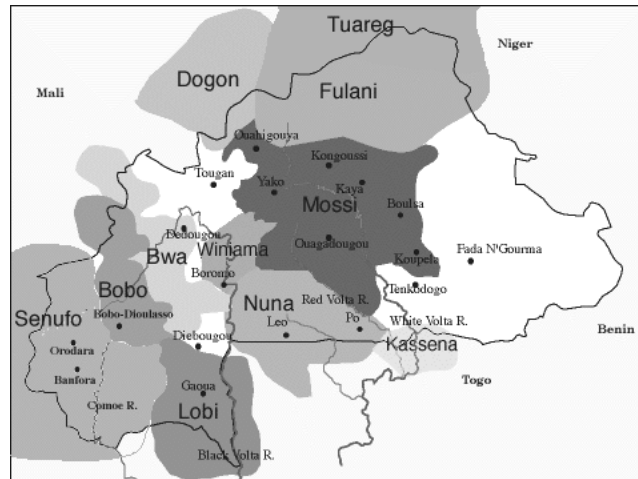


Figure 2: Geographical spread of the main ethnical groups of Burkina Faso.

The Mossi represents almost half the population. They have never been occupied by other groups and have had the central plateau as their residence for centuries. Most of the population in Burkina Faso is engaged in agriculture but the Mossi are also traders taking advantage of the profitable routes between the desert and coast, negotiating across the borders to other countries<sup>23</sup>. The Mossi were united by a common language and an ideology based on hierarchical division of labour between farmers, craftsmen, warriors and chiefs where the system of power and authority is centralized<sup>24</sup>. Weekly ceremonies are held in Ouagadougou to honour the *Morho Naba*, the king of all Mossi-controlled land<sup>25</sup>.

The Fulani is the second largest group in Burkina Faso and form about 8 percent of the population<sup>26</sup>. Traditionally Fulani are nomadic herdsmen found spread through 16 countries in West Africa and arrived to Burkina Faso in the 17th century. As land has become scarcer with population growth and the advance of the desert gradually spread, more Fulani began to settle and cultivate. The livelihood is dependent on the varying seasons since they cultivate during the wet season and live in permanent settings and moves south when it gets drier. Fulani were the first people south of Sahara who took to

<sup>21</sup> Britannica 2:a bandet: *Burkina Faso*, 15th edition 1994

<sup>22</sup> Manson K, Knight J; *Burkina Faso*, 2006

<sup>23</sup> ibid

<sup>24</sup> Speirs, M; *Agrarian change and the revolution in Burkina Faso*, 1991

<sup>25</sup> Manson K, Knight J; *Burkina Faso*, 2006

<sup>26</sup> ibid

Islam and were responsible for spreading the religion throughout West Africa in the 18th century.

### 3.1.3 Language

French is the official language of government, academia and media. It is generally spoken in all urban areas but only to small extent on the countryside. There are three national languages; all originates from different ethnical groups. *Moore* is spoken by the Mossi, *Fulfulde* by the Fulani and *Dioula* has evolved as a Muslim trading language throughout West Africa. There are as many local dialects as ethnicities in Burkina Faso<sup>27</sup>.

### 3.1.4 Economy

Burkina Faso is often regarded as an unfortunate country because of its shortage of minerals or energy wealth. The country's economic performance is heavily dependent on what happens outside its boundaries since it lives mostly off export agriculture. About 90 percent of the population are farmers. Burkina Faso is considered as one of the world's poorest countries and in 1997 it became one of the first eligible for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative which resulted in debt reliefs in July 2000. In the recent years the country has been affected by lower cotton prices, higher oil prices, poor rainfall and political and social tensions in neighboring Cote d'Ivoire<sup>28</sup>. The manufacturing sector is only 13 percent of GDP and consists mostly of cotton ginning and food processing. Burkina Faso is a landlocked country with poor infrastructure which aggravates the trade expand. Imports are mainly machinery, semi-processed goods, oil and food products.

Cotton is the backbone of the economy, introduced by the French in the early 20th century. It represents almost 70 percent of the export earnings of the country and is sold as a primary product to the rest of the world. In Burkina Faso cotton is regarded as "white gold". There are three cotton companies in the country with a monopoly of their area; basically they have split Burkina Faso in equal big parts where they run their business. The economy is predominantly agricultural, dependent on good harvests and the international interest in cotton and is therefore fragile. For instance, in 2004 the world price for cotton dropped by 30 percent, in US dollar terms, which affected Burkina Faso immensely<sup>29</sup>. Beside cotton gold, livestock, zinc, manganese and handicrafts conduces to exports.

## 3.2 History

In the 1400s several tribes and kingdoms appeared in Burkina Faso. The two largest ones were the Mossi in the east with the head seat in Ouagadougou, and the Gourounsi in the central parts seated in Yatenga. These kingdoms managed to stand up to the great powers from Mali in the north until the end of the 19th century<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Manson K, Knight J; *Burkina Faso*, 2006

<sup>28</sup> OECD, African Economic Outlook, *Burkina Faso*

<sup>29</sup> Manson K, Knight J; *Burkina Faso*, 2006

<sup>30</sup> National Encyklopedin, tredje bandet, 1990

### 3.2.1 Colonisation

The French arrived in 1896 to claim the area but the kingdoms managed to resist for another five years. In 1901 the French managed to conquer the capital and Mossi court Ouagadougou and the battle ended. The area was divided and became parts of the two French colonies Upper Senegal and Niger until 1919 when the area founded an individual colony. Due to several reasons, mainly to simplify the trading manners concerning the coastal plantations, the colony was divided in three and different regions and were placed under the jurisdiction of Sudan, Niger and Cote d'Ivoire in 1932. Burkina Faso did not have a lot to offer the French in terms of goods but it was an important geographical bridge to conjoin the other colonies. The division of the colony was especially opposed by the Mossi since the colonial rule had already undermined the power of the Mossi chiefs. Their political unity was further threatened by this division of their territory<sup>31</sup>.

The colonial power gave rise to urban growth, establishment of a trade union and a French educated civil service. This combined with colonial taxation and attempts to strengthen agricultural production by introducing imported technology increased the tension between the traditional structures of authority and the colonialists' new tactics. Elections to the National Assembly in 1945 gave newly formed political parties in West Africa a chance to get their voices heard and this was a starting point for their activities. The most significant of these parties was the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA). The Mossi chiefs were suspicious about the ways of RDA because they represented a non-unification position<sup>32</sup>. The French were still dominating the area and in 1956 *Loi Cadre* was introduced through which the self-administration of the French colonies was recognized. This was the final drop for the Mossi and others and RDA slowly but surely gained more sympathizers. RDA won the election of 1959 and the republic of Upper Volta obtained independence 1960. The name was given because of the upper course of the three rivers that runs through the country, the Black, Red and White Volta that feeds into Lake Volta in Ghana<sup>33</sup>. The region was once again reunited under presidential rule with a single party government.

### 3.2.2 After independence

The independence from France was followed by a turbulent period in Burkina Faso's history. The Burkinabé were left a country that lacked most of the French investments that had been poured into its neighbouring countries. During a period of 20 years there were 6 coups, the most significant was "the popular and democratic revolution" lead by Thomas Sankara in 1983.

Sankara had taken part in former coups and was already well known as a charismatic leader. Short before his revolution he had been named prime minister by his predecessor at the presidency. Sankara and his government wanted to mobilize the peasants and workers in a social transformation of Burkina Faso. They established a social welfare program, worked for women's rights and tried to strengthen the domestic production by forcing state employees to wear clothes produced from local cotton. Sankara wanted to

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<sup>31</sup>Speirs, M; *Agrarian change and the revolution in Burkina Faso*, 1991

<sup>32</sup>Manson, K; Knight, J; *Burkina Faso*

<sup>33</sup>ibid

put an end to the antagonisms between the different tribes and as a lead to this he renamed the country in 1984. Burkina Faso, "Land of Honourable Men", combines three of the main languages, Moore, Dioula and Fulfulde.

There were several radical changes during Sankara's four years of governance including the agrarian reform in 1984 where all previous land property in Burkina Faso was abolished and became property of the state<sup>34</sup>. A consequence of the reforms was a decrease of the living standard of the urban population which played an important role in Sankara's decreased popularity. While Sankara's wish to radicalise ordinary people grew stronger, conflicts aggravated. Among others, the trade unions and the teachers were groups that reacted strongly. In 1987 Sankara was killed in the last coup up to the present. Blaise Campaore, his friend and ally in the previous revolution, was the one to organise the coup and he also took the power. Campaore has since then been re-elected three times and is still the president of the republic<sup>35</sup>.

Burkina Faso has been put under several reforms since Campaore took the power, both economic and democratic. During the last five years the economic growth has been over 6 percent<sup>36</sup>. Despite this growth UNDP ranked Burkina Faso as the second poorest country in the world in their Human Development Index 2007/2008<sup>37</sup>. Although, Burkina Faso is considered one of the most stable countries in Africa both socially and politically<sup>38</sup>.

### **3.3 Governance**

The Mossi maintained a strong social and political identity throughout the years of colonization and revolutions. They are still the superior amongst the multitude of ethnical groups in Burkina Faso and have great impact on the Burkinabé. This is only one example of structures that still are important for the Burkinabé; there are several systems within the country which go alongside the governmental and official system.

#### **3.3.1 The structure of the central government**

Burkina Faso underwent a series of political changes during the 1990's and is today a parliamentary republic with Blaise Campaore as President since 1987. The President is supported by the Prime Minister. A multiparty system was introduced at the same time as the new democratic constitution was approved in 1991 and political pluralism has been a reality henceforward. Since then, several presidential as well as legislative elections have taken place on a regular basis. The President and the functioning National Assembly is elected by popular vote for a five-year term. The Assembly consists of 111 deputies of which 17 are women, each one of the provinces has a fixed number of deputies<sup>39</sup>. A Constitutional Council ensures that other legal instruments and decisions coincide with the constitution<sup>40</sup>. The President of Burkina Faso is moreover

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<sup>34</sup> OECD; *Land reform processes in West Africa: A review*, 2006

<sup>35</sup> Manson, K Knight, J; *Burkina Faso*, 2006

<sup>36</sup> SIDA, Varför ger Sverige stöd till Burkina Faso?

<sup>37</sup> UNDP, *Human development report 2007/2008*

<sup>38</sup> Regeringskansliet, *Burkina Faso*

<sup>39</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in national parliaments*

<sup>40</sup> Somé, K, A; *Burkina Faso Legal Information and Research*

the President of the Constitutional Council, the chief of the Executive and the Supreme Commander of the national armed forces.

The main forces of the government are the executive, legislature and judiciary. The legislature is made up of the National Assembly, supervised by the cabinet. They are assigned with legislative power and pass laws, fix taxes and monitor the government action<sup>41</sup>. The judiciary is the guardian of individual and collective freedoms with the task to ensure respect for the rights and freedoms defined by the constitution. The highest jurisdiction of the judicial order is the Supreme Court of appeals, the state council deals with jurisdictions on administrative matters. When it comes to controlling public finances, the courts and tribunals instituted by law, the court of accounts is the highest jurisdiction. The judiciary is independent for which the President of Burkina Faso is the guarantor. All levels of jurisdictions apply the existing laws. The legal system of Burkina Faso is based on civil law and emulates the French legal system but local laws also apply to some extent<sup>42</sup>.

### 3.3.2 Decentralization

The now ongoing decentralization process started with the foundation of the constitution in 1991. In fact the government has tried to decentralize the country ever since the independence in 1960 without any success.<sup>43</sup> In 1998 the *Textes d'Orientation de la Décentralisation* (TOD) were introduced<sup>44</sup> and has since then been changed twice in 2001 and 2003. The goal with the decentralization is to diminish the gap between the government and the people through a transfer of powers and resources to local governments.

The first step of the decentralization was to found urban municipalities that were to be self governing. In 1995 municipal elections were held in 33 urban municipalities and in 2000 there were reelections in these municipalities and at the same time 16 more were created.<sup>45</sup> In 2006 local elections were held in rural areas and the amount of municipalities increased to 351.<sup>46</sup>

Through the decentralization process the state wants to transfer 9 head responsibilities to the municipalities and regions.

- Land-use and urbanism
- management of natural resources
- Economic development and planning
- Health
- Education
- Culture and sports
- Civil protection
- Water
- Electricity

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<sup>41</sup> Somé, K, A; *Burkina Faso Legal Information and Research*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*

<sup>43</sup> CONNED, *Rapport de l'Etat sur l'Environnement au Burkina*

<sup>44</sup> Groupe de Recherche et Action sur le Foncier; *Challenges for a viable decentralisation process in rural Burkina Faso*

<sup>45</sup> Sebahara, P; *Monitoring and evaluation of support for decentralisation and local governance: A case study on Burkina Faso*

<sup>46</sup> NDI, Central and West Africa: Burkina Faso

The process is still far from being fulfilled since most of the rural municipalities were created in 2006. The work has just started and most responsibilities still lie on the government. The main function of the rural municipalities is preparing for the prospective responsibilities.<sup>47</sup>

There are now two levels of local governing, the regions and municipalities and four administrative units, the region, the province that in 2003 was abolished as a local government unit, the department and the village.

### 3.3.3 Administrative division in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is divided into different sectors that represent various fields of responsibilities. The land is divided in three categories that form territorial, local or administrative districts.

The different types of administrative entities are regions provinces, departments and villages. These entities represent the authority of the central government and therefore coordinate central government services at a local level<sup>48</sup>.

There are 45 provinces in total in Burkina Faso. They distribute central government services to the underlying administrative entities and to the municipalities within the provincial boundary lines. Each province is administrated by a *Haut-commissaire*. The provinces are subdivided into 351 departments which coordinates services at village and municipality level. Each department is administrated by a *Préfet*, consequently he represents the *Haut-commissaire*. The villages are assigned their status by decree and administrated by a delegated assistant from an overhead instance called *Le conseil de village*.

So far, the administrative decentralization is limited and the central government has a strong controlling role on most decisions that should be taken by the local governments<sup>49</sup>. However, Burkina Faso has chosen a gradualist approach of decentralization and the nine activities mentioned above will eventually be completely transferred to local governments<sup>50</sup>. The central government states that the reason for the administrative entities lingering on to these tasks is that if some of the local municipalities do not yet have the financial and technical capacity to fulfil the responsibilities assigned to them. The local municipalities do not have the authority over the staff transferred to them by the central government, as part of the transformation of the new responsibilities.

### 3.3.4 Local governance

The political and administrative decentralization is to go hand in hand with local management in order to give more say to local management of those services<sup>51</sup>. This is done by empowering local citizens and by public participation in the management of

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<sup>47</sup> Tuina, Z

<sup>48</sup>United Nations DESA DPADM; *Republic of Burkina Faso Public Administration Country Profile*, 2004

<sup>49</sup>World Bank; *Decentralized urban capacity building project*, 2007

<sup>50</sup>ibid

<sup>51</sup>United Nations DESA DPADM; *Republic of Burkina Faso Public Administration Country Profile*, 2004



public affairs. The legislation<sup>52</sup> on this subject has the objective to create more autonomy among the local municipalities. Local municipalities are defined as provinces and communes. Local governments have legal and financial autonomy and they can undertake any activity intended to promote economic, social, and cultural development of the municipality or province. The province is both an administrative entity and a local governance district.

There are 49 urban and 302 rural municipalities in Burkina Faso at the present<sup>53</sup>. For securing the ability of the local municipality to mobilize financial means and to run the local government there are different criteria for rural and urban municipalities. The criteria are based on population and the size of the municipality budget. A rural municipality has to have at least 5000 inhabitants and should have the potential of generating CFA 5 millions<sup>54</sup>. The threshold values for being an urban municipality are 10 000 inhabitants and CFA 15 millions. If a commune has been unable to collect 75 percent of its budget for three years in a row it will lose its status of independent local government. Each rural commune is administered by an elected Mayor. The 2006 local elections marked a complete communalization of Burkina Faso, both urban and rural municipalities included<sup>55</sup>.

AMBF, *Association des Municipalités du Burkina Faso*, was founded in 1995. It is an apolitical organization created to support the municipalities during the decentralization process. 48 Mayors from different municipalities all over Burkina Faso form AMBF and their activity stretches widely. The main objectives for AMBF are to:

- Contribute to the strengthening of the decentralization by informing its members on all matters of communal interest.
- Participate in implementations of national innovations and strategies in strengthening the capacities in districts of varying autonomy, by training elected representatives.
- Coordinate and harmonize the municipality leveled work with the national, regional and provincial authorities.
- Promote participation and coactions amongst all local actors in the villages
- Develop, capitalize and allocate the profits made of experiments in communal management to strengthen the capacities of the municipality members.
- Represent and defend municipality matters to authorities, national and international partners.
- Promote solidarity, partnership and collaboration among villages within Burkina Faso, as well as connections with villages in other countries.
- Favor the municipality development in particular, but foremost favor networks between villages and the municipality.

The means for running the organisation are received partly as funds from the state and a annual membership fee from all municipalities. AMBF is to be seen as a forum to which the Mayors from all over Burkina Faso can apply to broach their problems, plans and

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<sup>52</sup>Loi N°041/98/AN *Portant organisation de l'administration du territoire au Burkina Faso*

<sup>53</sup>[www.ambf.bf](http://www.ambf.bf)

<sup>54</sup>United Nations DESA DPADM; *Republic of Burkina Faso Public Administration Country Profile*, 2004

<sup>55</sup>World Bank; *Decentralized urban capacity building project*, 2007

thoughts and get advice in return<sup>56</sup>. The means are limited so AMBF chooses which municipalities that will be supported mostly depending on the municipalities' different needs and propositions.

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<sup>56</sup> Tuina, Z



## 4 Land management in Burkina Faso

Over 80 percent of the population of Burkina Faso live in rural areas, that makes it the highest percentage of rural population in Western Africa<sup>57</sup>. The country is facing a situation where the soils and natural resources are degrading and where the risk for desertification is stated as high or very high in a major part of the country<sup>58</sup>.

### 4.1 History

After independence in 1960 Burkina Faso maintained the statutory land legislation that was introduced by the French during the colonial time. In practice most rural land were governed according to the customary system where local chiefs were responsible for the allotment and settlement of disputes.

Sankara's revolution meant an end to all previous land legislations in the country and all private property were exchanged for land use rights. All influence of former local chiefs were rejected which caused an opposition within this group. The new law provided secure pastoral rights but failed in things such as creating development plans and establishing new wells.

Sankara's Agrarian reform was maintained until 1991. Due to the problems with interpreting the law and growing land disputes the way of managing land related questions undertook some major changes. There was redistribution concerning the management of natural resources, until then they had all been a part of the same land act. Private property was re-established even though the main principle with land use rights still stands. Local committees, that were to be responsible for land allocation and land use control, were established.

In 1996 the reform from 1991 was further revised since the changes made were not held as enough to adjust the problems. The main objectives with this reform were to create a code that was understandable and relevant for the general population and not to hand over a complete control over the land to the traditional authorities through ownership<sup>59</sup>.

### 4.2 Land use

Two different kinds of land use dominate in the country. On the dessert border in the north people are traditionally herders and in the south where the soil is better for cultivation, people live out of agriculture.

Over 90 percent of the population live out of agriculture and the majority of small family run exploitations where the main production is for household purpose only<sup>60</sup>. It is estimated that Burkina Faso only has a growing season of 75 days per year<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Sawadogo, L; *Adapter les approches de l'aménagement durable des forêts sèches aux aptitudes sociales, économiques et technologiques en Afrique. Le cas du Burkina Faso*, 2006

<sup>58</sup> United States Department of Agriculture; [soils.usda.gov/use/worldsoils/papers/desertification-africa.html](http://soils.usda.gov/use/worldsoils/papers/desertification-africa.html)

<sup>59</sup> OECD; *Land reform processes in West Africa: A review*

<sup>60</sup> FAO, *Programme Workplan for Burkina Faso*, 2006

As the need for sustenance is growing with the population, the soil becomes more and more strained. The strategy for augmentation of agricultural production is, due to lack of financial means, to expand the cultivation areas. This together with other factors has contributed to a drastic reduction in vegetation cover and the soils in Burkina Faso that are generally poor are now suffering from wind and water erosion.

There are several different reports on environmental degradation in Burkina Faso; the majority agrees that this is a severe problem in the country. It is difficult to estimate the extent of the damage but numbers from the ministry of agriculture show that erosion each year accounts for a loss of 60 million tons of arable soil and rainwater for 1 billion cubic meters. The ecosystem is very fragile and the vulnerability for desertification is high. Due to reduced agricultural land the fallow practice has been abandoned. Together with the low use of fertilizers causes a fast mining of the agricultural land.<sup>62</sup>

### 4.3 Legislation

There are two main laws handling land management in Burkina, the real estate property and agrarian law, *Loi No 14/96/ADP du 23 mai 1996, portant organisation agraire et foncière au Burkina Faso*, and the environmental law, *Loi No 05/97/ADP du 30 janvier 1997, portant code de l'environnement au Burkina Faso*.

The TOD, *Textes d'Orientation de la Décentralisation*, is the gathering of texts that organizes the transfer of power from the government to the *collectivités territoriales décentralisées*, the decentralized region. Naturally they play an important role in land and environmental management as they lay the foundation of the division of power.

#### 4.3.1 The environmental law

The environmental law aims to reach an enlargement of the fundamental environmental management principles and protection measures. The intention is to fight all kind of pollution, promote natural resources and through this ameliorate the living conditions of the inhabitants. The environmental law has four major objects<sup>63</sup>:

- Fighting the desertification
- Ameliorating the life of urban and rural inhabitants
- The adoption of international agreements ratified by Burkina Faso
- Prevention and management of natural disasters

It is the environmental ministry that has the absolute execution responsibility. When the law was introduced in 1997 a number of tools for a preservation of the environment were introduced:

- An obligation of an impact-control concerning certain activities settled as harmful for the environment.

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<sup>61</sup> Amanor K S, *Natural and cultural assets and participatory forest management in West Africa*, 2003

<sup>62</sup> Sedogo, L G *Integration of Local Participatory and Regional Planning for Resources Management Using Remote Sensing and GIS*, 2002

<sup>63</sup> faolex.fao.org

- Environmental education at all different levels<sup>64</sup>.
- Establishment of a fund of intervention for the environment
- A discussion and orientation forum for evaluation and follow ups for the fundamental principles in social, economical and cultural development.

### 4.3.2 The real estate and agrarian law

The back bone of the law is presented in the introductory article as stated below.

*The present law determines the fundamental principles of the land settlement, the management of the rural and urban lands, the regime of water, the forests and the fauna, fishing, the substances quarries and mines, as well as regulation of the real-estates.*

The base of this law lies in the so called national real estate domain, *domaine foncier national*. According to article 4 the state is the owner of all land in Burkina Faso, it is a so called eminent domain<sup>65</sup>. The state issues land-use rights that are obligatory and subordinated to development of land and payment of the right and taxes requested. The exception from this is found in article 52 which withdraws unexploited rural land needed for food or habitat from the obligation and article 53 lays out that this use is free of charge. The unexploited rural land is also excluded from all kind of protection of land-use rights<sup>66</sup>.

There is an exception from the absolute state ownership of land. Since the adoption of the new law in 1996 private property is allowed and is seen as a transfer of ownership of state property. It is still possible for the state to expropriate for public purposes.

A condition for the transfer of state property is that the piece of land is object to a user right. To be able to obtain a user-right you have to fulfill the conditions of increase of value. The condition concludes that an investment in land of at least 20 times the taxes requested has to be done<sup>67</sup>. Besides these taxes, the price for the land itself<sup>68</sup> has to be paid. In practice rural inhabitants are excluded from the possibility of both private property and user rights. The fact that rural land is not object to any kind of user right and the high cost and complexity of the process makes private ownership impossible for rural inhabitants<sup>69</sup>.

## 4.4 Land management and decentralisation

Since year 2000 the government has changed its strategy and are now working for a decentralised rural land management<sup>70</sup>. There is an ongoing work to elaborate a land

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<sup>64</sup> NSSD, *Burkina Faso The NCSD Sustainable Development Report*, 2004

<sup>65</sup>FAO *Land tenure and rural development*

<sup>66</sup>UNEP, UNDP; *Background to environmental law and institutions in Burkina Faso and sao Tome & Principe*, p. 102

<sup>67</sup> According to article 229 in décret 97-54 du 6 février 1954 portant application de la RAF

<sup>68</sup> 10 times the tax paid for the user-right according to article 231 décret 97-54 du 6 février 1954 portant application de la RAF

<sup>69</sup> UNEP, UNDP; *Background to environmental law and institutions in Burkina Faso and sao Tome & Principe*, p. 105

<sup>70</sup>Ouédraogo, M; *Land tenure and rural development in Burkina Faso: Issues and Strategies*, 2002

policy together with experts, farmers and local committees. When this work is done the government will prepare a new land law. There are some head issues that needs to be discussed, among those are<sup>71</sup>:

- How to protect the land rights of women and poor
- Which customary land rights that should be recognized and how these should be secured
- How land management can be developed locally
- How access to natural resources can be secured and protected.

By means of the TOD:s the *collectivités territoriales décentralisées* were introduced. The decentralization process will have a large impact on the land management in Burkina Faso as all land in the country is governmental since Sankara's time. Even though all land in Burkina Faso is still the property of the state it is no longer the government that has the main responsibility for land management. It is now a commitment of the *collectivité territoriale décentralisée*. Through the decentralization it is now possible to privately own land in Burkina Faso even though it is a onerous process.

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<sup>71</sup> Ouedraogo, H; *The Land Policy Process in Burkina Faso: Building a National Consensus*, 2006

## 5 Forest management in Burkina Faso

Population growth and human access to resources and contemporary management strategies have always influenced land use and land cover changes in general, and deforestation in particular<sup>72</sup>. The theoretical underpinnings for forests and deforestation are considered to be historical, political and cultural, for developing countries even well after reaching independence.

### 5.1 History

Current forest use is a direct result of contemporary management strategies. During the 18th century the colonial trading expanded and the interest in tropical forest resources grew stronger all across the world<sup>73</sup>. By the middle of the 19th century it had become clear that the forests of the colonies were not an undrainable resource. Institutional and jurisprudential models to protect the forests were developed and implemented, initially in Asia, and reached Africa in the early days of the twentieth century. Colonial administrations in West Africa, the French in Burkina Faso, usurped the local inhabitants' rights to woodland resources and named them *forêts classées*, protected forests.

New national laws suspended customary communal use rights which were regarded to contradict rational forest management. Three processes that were distinctly negative for the wellbeing of the woodlands were shifting cultivations practices, bush fires and extensive pastoral land use systems. They were described as *Les trois luttés* (the three evils) already in 1937<sup>74</sup>. After 1940, 119 853 ha of land had been labelled *forêt classée*. This resulted in that more than 20 percent of the cultivated areas were taken out of agricultural production<sup>75</sup>. The forest reserves were foremost founded so the colonists could reign over the territory and being able to protect the woodlands from deforestation and desiccation. The majority of the *forêts classées* in Burkina Faso stretch along the larger rivers, Mouhoun, Nazinon and Nakambe.

Depopulation or repopulation fluctuations of cultivable areas have affected the regeneration of adjoining savannah woodlands, but the vegetative river valley surroundings have to a large extent remained intact. Vectors such as human and livestock diseases have been crucial for the survival of some forests in Burkina Faso. Severe illnesses such as sleeping sickness and river blindness have influenced land and forest use. People avoided the areas where the flies that spread the diseases bred, in the forests and humid areas for several years. As former habitations were abandoned and cultivation declined in the vicinity of the river, the woodlands regenerated to recolonise these areas. Although the river blindness disease is extinct nowadays after major efforts by WHO some people still avoid these areas with fear of getting ill<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup>Reenberg, A, Tøttrup, C, Wardell, D. Andrew; *Historical footprints in contemporary land use systems: forest cover changes in savannah woodlands in the Sudano-Sahelian zone*, 2003

<sup>73</sup> ibid

<sup>74</sup> ibid

<sup>75</sup> ibid

<sup>76</sup> Tiveau. Daniel, CIFOR interview 2008-04-03



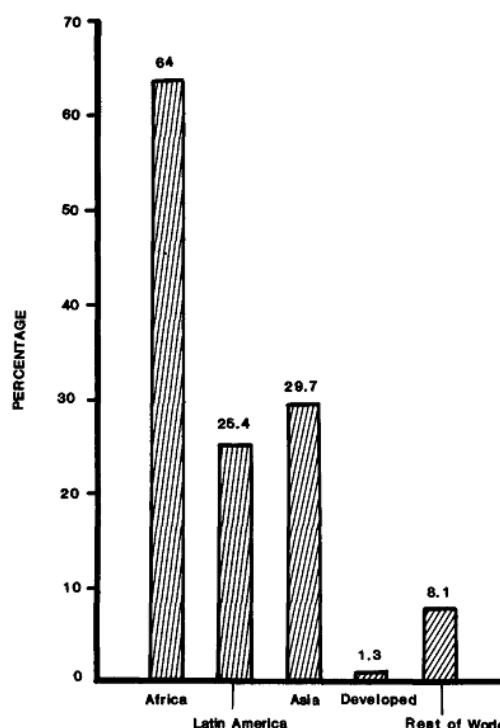
After independence, when the colonists had returned to France, the administration of the forest changed. In 1985 the central government of Burkina Faso took the expression *Les trois lutttes* under its wings again and discussed the issues in journal articles, project and programme documents and contemporary environmental planning to create awareness of these problems.

## 5.2 Forest use

It is somewhat difficult to find statistics on these matters and read them properly. Numbers can be found on Africa as a whole but it is more troublesome with Burkina Faso. The country is situated in the middle of a semi-arid belt that crosses all of West Africa where forests are more frequently found in the southern regions. The West African dry forests are mainly composed of steppe vegetation, thorny bushes and open savannah woodlands. The forests in this area are intensively influenced by human activity.

Forests have a range of ecological, economic, social and cultural values vital for human beings<sup>77</sup>. More than two-thirds of Africa's population rely directly or indirectly on forests for their susistence, including food security<sup>78</sup>. For the agricultural population of Burkina Faso, preserving the forest is important in the aspect that the forests protect water and soil resources<sup>79</sup>. Forests also house the greatest source of terrestrial biological diversity which is both a global and national heritage and resource. Non-timber forest products such as shrubberies, leaves, bark, flowers, seeds, fruits, fungi, bushmeat play an important part within the local villages and rural households used as food, medicines and building materials. These greener areas are also used for grazing the livestock. During the dry season the nomads from the north of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger move to the southern more uberous areas in search for better grazing lands to return again when the rain comes. It is difficult to estimate the economic magnitude of these utilities but it is an important source of trade income, especially for women<sup>80</sup>. The majority of the wood harvested in Burkina Faso, as

well as entire Africa, is used to meet local energy needs. For Africa as a continent,



**Figure 3:** Consumption of traditional fuels (firewood charcoal, animal dung and agriculture residues), 1986

<sup>77</sup> Hennig, Rainer Chr; *Forests and deforestation in Africa - the wasting of an immense resource*

<sup>78</sup> CIFOR; *Contributing to African development through forests- Strategy for engagement in sub-Saharan Africa, 2005*

<sup>79</sup> Marunda, Kowero, Tiveau. *Stimuler le dialogue en matière de politique sur les forêts sèches d'Afrique : une initiative de l'ASDI/CIFOR,*

<sup>80</sup> Hennig, Rainer Chr; *Forests and deforestation in Africa - the wasting of an immense resource*

wood is the main source for energy and consumes considerably more traditional fuels than any other continent which is shown in figure 3<sup>81</sup>. It is estimated that fuel wood contributes to no less than 91 percent of the total energy used in Burkina Faso<sup>82</sup>.

### 5.3 Main problems

Today the forests of Africa are threatened by a combination of factors. Agricultural expansion, inappropriate agricultural systems, inadequate tenure rights, increased firewood collection, heavy livestock grazing, drought and bush fires are some of the factors<sup>83</sup>, although the forest are indispensable for the population of Burkina Faso. The afforestation is far less than the rate of deforestation. For every 28 trees cut down only one tree is replanted<sup>84</sup>, it should also be noted that logging is not counted as deforestation since logged-over areas in theory can regrow to fully functioning forests. In reality logging often does degrade forest quality, worsening soil, increasing nutrient losses and reducing the forest's value as habitat<sup>85</sup>. In forested areas, even minor patches of logging, agricultural advance and unsustainable collecting of natural resources fragments and degrades the remaining forests. The dismemberment of the forests leads to loss of contact with part of the ecosystem vital to maintain regeneration and full biodiversity<sup>86</sup>.

The forest plantations that have taken place in Burkina Faso have been mainly for non-industrial use. The protected zones that exist in the country have been established to freeze or reverse the desertification which is the main ecological problem<sup>87</sup>. Presumably climate change will have an impact upon already scarce water resources in Burkina Faso and therefore also the forests, for which reason management of these resources will be even more crucial in the future.

Forests could contribute considerably more to wealth creation but the dry forests of Burkina Faso are hampered in its potential by limited access to finance, low investment in the forestry sector poor infrastructure, high transportation costs, poor market access and inappropriate macro-economic policies<sup>88</sup>. The challenges are not so much about technical forestry issues as for economic and land use policies in particular.

### 5.4 Legislation

The main law concerning forest management is the *Code Forestier* that was issued in 1997. Its primary aim is to conserve and manage forests and fauna as well as water.

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<sup>81</sup> Weaver J.N, Brownfield M.E, Bergin M.J; *Coal in sub-Saharan countries undergoing desertification*, 1990

<sup>82</sup> Sawadogo, L; *Adapter les approches de l'aménagement durable des forêts sèches aux aptitudes sociales, économiques et technologiques en Afrique. Le cas du Burkina Faso*

<sup>83</sup> Hennig, Rainer Chr; *Forests and deforestation in Africa - the wasting of an immense resource*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid*

<sup>85</sup> *ibid*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid*

<sup>87</sup> CIFOR; *Contributing to African development through forests- Strategy for engagement in sub-Saharan Africa*, 2005

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*

The law consists of 272 articles organised in five sections.

1. Forests
2. Fauna
3. Fishing and aquaculture
4. Violations and penalties
5. Transitional and final disposition

The introductory part concludes that forests, fauna and water resources are part of the national heritage. They are therefore protected and everyone has a responsibility to contribute to their preservation<sup>89</sup>. It continues that the state is the guarantor of the preservation of these resources and exercises this responsibility through the technical forest service<sup>90</sup>.

### 5.4.1 Forests

This section consists of regulations of how the forest area in the country is divided and managed as well as a review of certain activities that requires permission or are prohibited.

According to article 11 the forest area in Burkina Faso consists of either public or private forests. The public forest in turn consists of either a state domain, *domaine forestier de l'Etat*, or a domain of a decentralized region, *domaine forestier des collectivités territoriales décentralisées*. All forest areas within the country's borders is part of the decentralized region domain unless it is privately owned or classified in the name of the state<sup>91</sup>. The *collectivités territoriales décentralisées* was introduced in the TOD and consists of provinces or municipalities<sup>92</sup>.

The forest management is based on forest management plans produced by the forestry workers or under their control<sup>93</sup>. To specifically protect a forest it is possible to classify the area<sup>94</sup>. This can be done to both state and regional forests<sup>95</sup>. Forests that are not classified are called protected forests.

As stated above it is possible to privately own and manage a forest. It is submitted to the regulations in the real estate and agrarian law that says that a user right is obligatory prior to ownership<sup>96</sup>. The privately owned forests are managed freely by its owner unless a declaration of exploitation or imposed restrictions for the preservation of the natural environment<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> Article 4

<sup>90</sup> Article 5

<sup>91</sup> Article 22

<sup>92</sup> UNEP,UNDP; *Background to environmental Law and Institutions in Burkina Faso and Sao Tome & Principe*,2004

<sup>93</sup> Article 41

<sup>94</sup> Article 26

<sup>95</sup> Article 25

<sup>96</sup> Article 33

<sup>97</sup> Article 34

Forest management in Burkina Faso is under the control of the state or the region<sup>98</sup>. It is possible to transfer the right of exploitation of state land. This is made through a contract that settles the conditions of the operation and the sharing of products<sup>99</sup>. The administration is arranged according to the forest management plans that are elaborated by the public forestry workers<sup>100</sup>.

According to article 43, forests are protected against all forms of degradation and destruction, natural or provoked. The responsible institution for the administration is authorized to take all necessary measures for all kinds of specific needs in the nature. Specially pointed out is the fixation of sloping grounds, prevention of erosion and protection of rare species or fragile biotopes as well as springs and water-courses<sup>101</sup>.

Traditional use of forests requires a permission which can be authorized through the forest management plan<sup>102</sup>. Domestic use of forests, such as collecting fruit, dead wood and medical plants is free of charge and does not request permission as long as it does not imply any kind of commercial interests<sup>103</sup>. Felling always requires a permit<sup>104</sup> and the payment of a tax<sup>105</sup>. All kinds of commercial use require payment of taxes and license fees<sup>106</sup> and have to conform to the prescriptions in the forest management plan<sup>107</sup>.

The exploitation of the regional forests must consider the forest resources in the rural development and contribute to an optimal and sustainable management of all resources, agrarian and forestial<sup>108</sup>. The exploitation can be transferred to smaller groups through a creation of a *forêt départementale* or a *forêt villageois*, department or village forests. This is made through a contract that states the rights and duties<sup>109</sup>.

#### 5.4.2 Fauna

Similarly to the previous chapter, animals and vegetation are protected according to this law. This section contains regulations concerning protection of animals and vegetation in Burkina Faso. Fish, molluscs and crustaceans are excluded.

There are a number of tools to realize this protection. It is possible to create protection areas in the name of the state, the *collectivités territoriales décentralisées* or the world heritage. There are also rules concerning exploitation of the fauna such as hunting and breeding of wild animals.

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<sup>98</sup> Article 37

<sup>99</sup> Article 39

<sup>100</sup> Article 41

<sup>101</sup> Article 48

<sup>102</sup> Article 58

<sup>103</sup> Article 59

<sup>104</sup> Article 63

<sup>105</sup> Article 64

<sup>106</sup> Article 60

<sup>107</sup> Article 61

<sup>108</sup> Article 66

<sup>109</sup> Article 69

### 5.4.3 Fishing and aquaculture

All living organisms in the water are protected according to this section. Most use of non-private waters in Burkina Faso is under governmental control and dependent on different kinds of permissions.

A number of tools have been introduced to enable protection of waters in Burkina Faso. There are a number of forbidden techniques of fishing<sup>110</sup>. The minister in charge of fishing and aquaculture can introduce periods or zones where fishing is forbidden or limited or take all other necessary measures to protect the aquaculture<sup>111</sup>. The local authorities can only in case of emergency take decisions of this kind. There are also regulations concerning repopulations and stock enhancements.

### 5.4.4 Violations and penalties

All violations of this law is sought out and ascertained by the forestry workers and by the police authority<sup>112</sup>. This is an exemption from the criminal code where only the judicial police have the authority of ascertainment<sup>113</sup>. There are two different kinds of forestry workers, the certified, *assermenté*, and the non-certified. According to the law the non-certified forestry workers only have the authority to establish rapports which serve until the opposite proved<sup>114</sup>. In practice there is no difference between the authorities<sup>115</sup>. The forestry workers are permitted to do house and vehicle searches if needed<sup>116</sup>.

As for the forestry workers the *code forestiere* makes an exemption also for the General Director of water and forest that has the authority to execute the penalty<sup>117</sup>. This authority is shared with the public prosecutor for a more efficient application of the law<sup>118</sup>.

The basis in this book is that all products gathered in the forest in a fraudulent way are confiscated<sup>119</sup>. All penalties have to be proceeded by a hearing. When this is made clear the more specific penalties are laid out for each of the three books mentioned above. The setup is the same for each of the chapters. The penalties for the violations of the forest regulations are the following:

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<sup>110</sup> Article 169

<sup>111</sup> Article 173

<sup>112</sup> Article 241

<sup>113</sup> UNEP,UNDP; *Background to environmental Law and Institutions in Burkina Faso and Sao Tome & Principe*, 2004

<sup>114</sup> Article 246

<sup>115</sup> UNEP,UNDP; *Background to environmental Law and Institutions in Burkina Faso and Sao Tome & Principe*, 2004

<sup>116</sup> Article 242 and 243

<sup>117</sup> Article 247

<sup>118</sup> UNEP,UNDP; *Background to environmental Law and Institutions in Burkina Faso and Sao Tome & Principe*, 2004

<sup>119</sup> Article 250

- A fine of 100 000 to 1 000 000 CFA and prison 6 months to 3 years or one of those<sup>120</sup>.
  - For intentionally ignite an uncontrollable fire in a *forêt classée*, national park or other protected areas.
  - For destroying a reforestation or restoration.
  - For realising industrial exploitation of forest products without authorisation.
- A fine of 50 000 to 500 000 CFA and prison 3 months to 2 years or one of those<sup>121</sup>.
  - For igniting a incontrollable fire in a *forêt protégé*.
  - For by negligence or imprudence ignites a incontrollable fire in a *forêt classée*.
  - For non-authorized clearance in a *forêt classée*.
  - For essential destruction of a *forêt protégé*.
- A fine of 20 000 to 200 000 CFA and prison 1 months to 1 years or one of those<sup>122</sup>.
  - For realising commercial exploitation of forest products without authorisation.
  - For leaving livestock in a forest not open to pasture.
  - For transporting or stocking forest products without authorisation.
  - For cutting green wood without authorisation.
- A fine of 5 000 to 50 000 CFA<sup>123</sup>.
  - For branching or mutilation of trees.
  - For circulating in a forest in a touristic or scientific purpose without authorisation.
  - For moving or destroying a sign-post or other marking of the boundary of a *forêt classée*.

The tribunal can in a educational mean substitute the punishment in article 261 for a job of interest for the municipality.

### **5.5 Forest management and decentralization**

The forest decentralization is still in its outset. An action plan<sup>124</sup> was approved in 2006 and has three main goals:

- To define the different institutions with authority and competence to manage the forest in a sustainable way at different levels (national, regional and municipal).
- To define technical management solutions for a sustainable management of the forest resources at different institutional levels.

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<sup>120</sup> Article 258

<sup>121</sup> Article 259

<sup>122</sup> Article 260

<sup>123</sup> Article 261

<sup>124</sup> Ministère de l'environnement et du cadre de vie. *Plan d'action de mise en œuvre des reformes institutionnelles et juridiques pour la decentralisation dans le secteur forestier*, 2006

- To make the forest decentralization a powerful tool in the struggle against poverty and the work for a decentralised local development.

Through this plan the rural municipality has been assigned a participation right in the management of national and regional forest land as well as all natural resources situated on the municipality territory.

It is not yet clear in what direction the forest management in Burkina Faso will develop. The goal of the decentralization process in general is to transfer as much power as possible to the *collectivités territoriales décentralisées*. This will also be the case concerning the forests.

## 6 Yaho – a rural municipality

This chapter is a description of the social structure of a rural municipality. It is based on interviews and interactions with the local inhabitants and observations of the village life. To get an understanding of how the rural life is led follows a description of the village Yaho, a typical village in Burkina Faso. The chapter contains a geographical description of the municipality as well as the village, roles and characters, services and livelihoods found, land management, administration and important traditions in the village.

Facts about the municipality	
<b>County seat</b>	Yaho
<b>Villages</b>	Bono, Fabri, Grand Balé, Kongoba, Madou, Mamou, Mangoura, Mina, Moni, Yaho
<b>Population</b>	14 257 inhabitants
<b>Daily consumption of an average inhabitant<sup>125</sup></b>	250 CFA
<b>Ethnical groups</b>	Bobo, Mossi, Fulani
<b>Languages</b>	Bwamo, Dafi, Fulani, More, Dioula, French
<b>Region and Province</b>	Boucle de Mouhon and Balé
<b>Area</b>	N.A.

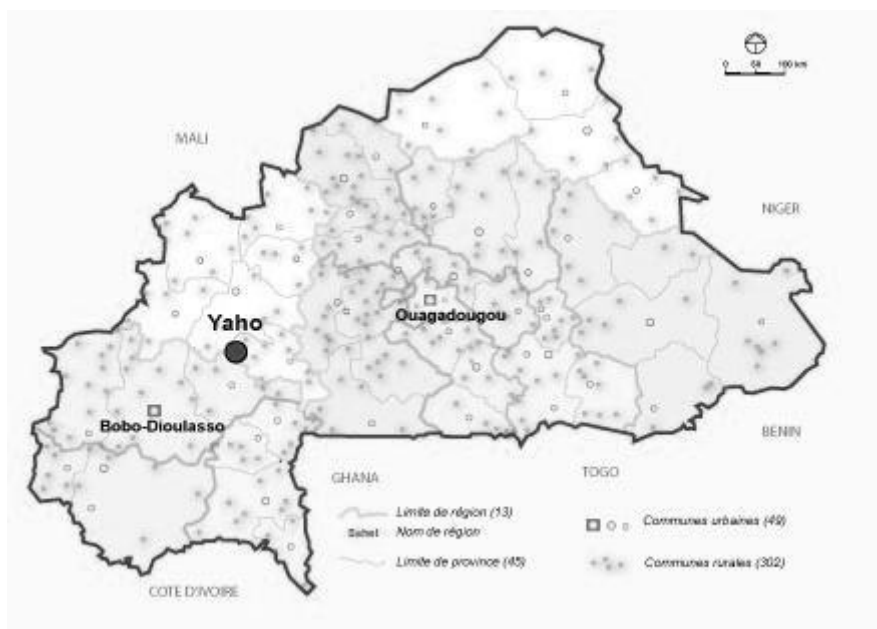


Figure 4: Localisation of Yaho.

### 6.1 Orientation and history

Yaho is a rural municipality in central west Burkina Faso in the southern part of the region Boucle de Mouhon where the river Mouhon bends. The river is dessicated during

<sup>125</sup> The authors estimation



the dry season but the land surrounding Mouhon has forest vegetation and is more arable in comparison to many other parts of Burkina Faso, especially in the north. Yaho is situated in the Sudano-Sahelian zone. The municipality lies within the boundaries of the province Balé and the principal village has the same name as the municipality. Yaho is the largest village within the municipality with its 4,000 inhabitants. This is where the municipality office and the administrative power has its seat. The municipality was founded after the elections in April 2006 with Zoukanta Tuina as Mayor.

Yaho is growing steadily. The railway that runs through Burkina Faso from Abidjan in the Ivory Coast in the southwest to Ouagadougou northeast was built 1954 and a station was built in the village Grand Balé in the municipality Yaho. This affected the village Yaho in terms of villagers moving from Yaho to the other village. The population of Yaho decreased radically at that moment but increased even more when the station in the village Grand Balé was removed some years ago<sup>126</sup>.

Yaho can be reached by traveling on the tarred road N1 between the two largest cities Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. When reaching the village Ouahabou, about 20 km west of the provincial capital Boromo, turn up north onto the gravel road R26 that takes you to Yaho after about 50 km. The road is not heavily trafficked and is only used by people getting to and from Yaho or any of the other villages found in the municipality. It is rare to see a car just passing by and everybody on the road has a purpose for being there. Means of transportation found on the roads are mainly bicycles, mopeds, donkey charts, minibuses or lorries owned by the cotton companies. The majority of the people using the road travel by foot and carry their goods on their heads. During the rainy season the road is often flooded at several places along the way and it is poorly maintained.

There are ten villages in total within the municipality out of which Mina is the eldest. The legend tells the story of two brothers both born in Mina. One of them headed off to find a nice place of his own where he could settle down and cultivate the fertile grounds. He found himself a nice spot some 10 to 15 km away from Mina close to the river *Grand Balé*. This man is the forefather to the majority of the Yaho villagers of today<sup>127</sup>. The areas surrounding the village used to be covered by forest vegetation many years ago. The oldest man in Yaho tells about how he was afraid of lions and elephants that used to live in the wooded lands when he was a small boy. Today the animals are almost completely gone, the wooded areas are fewer and the ground is used for cultivating instead. Since the population of Yaho is growing steadily, the supply of fertile soils are getting scarce.

There is an ongoing migration in Burkina Faso, people are leaving the north where the dessert is spreading out and wandering south to be able to provide for their families. This migration has had its impact on Yaho by a growing population and an increase in the number of ethnical groups.

Yaho's contact with the rest of the world is limited. A large majority of the inhabitants have never left the municipality. Those who have, just to visit a neighboring village.

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<sup>126</sup> Dao, I

<sup>127</sup> Tuina, H

Yaho have always been isolated as an inner part of a rather isolated country. Not even the colonization reached its borders according to the older villagers that remember that time. Only two changes are remembered that had an impact on the villagers' life. The Catholic Church was introduced and once every third year the French came to the village to make sure that the boys attended school<sup>128</sup>.

## **6.2 Rural livelihood- agriculture**

The climate and soil conditions vary in north Burkina Faso compared to the south, but also the amount of rainfall which already is limited and unreliable. The opportunities for cultivating are better in the south, although it is very harsh throughout the country. A definitive majority of the villagers of Yaho, as goes for all Burkinabé, are cultivators. The average land area for a married man is 10 ha<sup>129</sup>.

Cultivation of cotton is favored to food crops since the pay off is better and therefore occupies most of the fields. It is the cotton companies' responsibility to provide the cultivators with seeds, fertilizers and pesticides before the rainfall comes and to collect the harvested cotton. Since the fertilizers and pesticides are expensive, the companies give the villagers these materials in advance in exchange for the risen and harvested cotton. The farmers are guaranteed minimum floor pricing at the beginning of the planting season, just enough to cover the cost for fertilizers and pesticides, followed by a bonus if the harvest is good and how the world crop prices stand. If the growth is bad one year the revenues are small or none at all for the villagers<sup>130</sup>. After the cotton is harvested it is stored in specially built containers that are common for all inhabitants. To make sure the cotton is not destroyed or stolen there is a guardian of the cotton that is responsible for all the cotton stored within the village. Further more the heavy usage of the grounds leads to exhaustion of the lands. Since the fields never get the chance to recover even more fertilizers will be needed to attain good harvests for the years to come. The villagers refer to the business of the cotton companies as projects. From time to time other companies come with new projects and other crops to grow such as beans and sesame seeds.

Food crops that are being cultivated are principally beans and maize, millet, and sorghum which is the base of the main dish *tô*. Since the cultivation of cotton could be a good source of income if all conditions are right, food crops are only grown to a self-sufficient extent.

In March and April the fields are cleared and prepared by burning the fields. In May all the seeds are sowed before the rain comes. The cotton is sowed followed by maize and beans. The harvest starts in September with the maize, then beans and cotton. Due to lack of water during a large part of the year it is only during this period that agricultural use of the land is possible.

If there is enough water after the main harvest vegetables and fruits may be cultivated. Within the boundaries of the village there is a handful of gardens, often with a big

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<sup>128</sup> Tuina, H

<sup>129</sup> Tuina, A

<sup>130</sup> Dao, A

mango tree in the centre to create shade and a well to gratify the water needs. Tomatoes, pumpkins, onions aubergines, courgettes and other are grown in the garden plots. The rural life is strongly shaped by rain periods, harvests, availability of natural building elements and agrestal plants for eating. There are plans on building a pond in connection to the river; this would have a big impact on the possibility to extended cultivation. There is no fixed date or plan of when this project would start.

### 6.3 Village life

When entering the village Yaho from the main road that runs through the village there are some buildings that are noticeable in a way that they differ from the traditional architectonics. The mosque shoots out like a hedgehog from the village center. The church, all houses built by the government such as schools and residences for the governmental employees are built of concrete and are more modern. The clinic is the result of Mr Tuina's master thesis in architecture from Chalmers, Gothenburg Sweden. These buildings are connected with narrow pathways and surrounded by households.



Photo 1: The mosque, view over Yaho, woman carrying water.

#### 6.3.1 The household

The household comprises one family each that dwells in a rectangular house built of adobe blocks with walls that are pargeted with clay, has a beaten earth roof and usually a defensive outer wall. Some households have their own lavatories and washrooms. Since polygamy is accepted in the village, the family structure is a bit complicated. Men are allowed to have several wives and there is no limit of the number according to the traditions or by the law of Burkina Faso. A man normally has one to three wives in Yaho. This is not bilateral; a woman can only have one husband. Most commonly each wife has a house of her own, where their children live. The man normally has a house of his own and frequently moves around between his different residences sharing his time between his various wives and children. It is the man's duty to construct the house but the woman's duty to parget it. In the village the responsibilities are distinctly divided amongst men and women.

**Men** are specialized in different areas and are for example cultivators, construction builders, tailors or craftsmen in varying fields. As long as there is work to be done in their special field they work hard. For example, it is the men or boys that produce the adobe blocks that are used for constructing the houses. They are made of clay from

areas that are being covered by water during periods of the year. The area can be used over and over again for producing more bricks as long as there is enough rainfall. The production is limited to a couple of months when the weather conditions and soil humidity are right, access to water is crucial for making the adobe blocks but at the same time it has to be sunny so the blocks can dry. The bricks cost 10 CFA a piece and no tax or other costs are being paid to the municipality or others for using the land in producing the bricks<sup>131</sup>. In general, men in Yaho consider their work to be the "real work" since it is their responsibility to gain money to their wives and children. When the men's period of work is finished it is most likely to find them sitting in the shade under the trees in small groups of five to fifteen people.



**Photo 2:** Men making adobe bricks.



**Photo 3:** Women pounding corn.

**Women** in Yaho are responsible for all of the domestic tasks that need to be done in the household. A typical day starts with pounding the corn which is needed for cooking the traditional corn porridge *tô* which is accompanied by a sauce made of vegetables and sometimes meat. After this is done by hand she goes to the privately owned mill where the corn is treated once again. The mill is privately owned and the cost for grinding five liters of corn is 25 CFA. She has to be back home to prepare breakfast to her children before they wake up and some of them head to school which starts at 7:30 in the morning. If there is enough food she sometimes prepares small bundles of vegetables to sell at the small market or by knocking on doors. The porridge is cooked over an open fire outdoors and the wood is collected from the forest about 8 km from the household<sup>132</sup>. It is a long walk,

especially on the way back when she carries the big load on her head. She has to go to the forest several times a week since wood is the only energy source she uses. If she has got a small stock of firewood she sells it to others to earn some money for being able to buy paraffin and new certificates for collecting wood. This work is followed by washing the dishes, cleaning the household and washing clothes.

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<sup>131</sup> Tuina, S

<sup>132</sup> Dao, S

The domestic tasks require a lot of water which she gets from the wells. The pump is always crowded and she might have to wait for hours until she can fill her buckets and large metal bowls. All women gathered at the pump cooperate and takes turn in pumping, washing clothes, rinsing vegetables and lifting up the buckets on each other's heads before returning home to prepare dinner for their children and husband. Along with this she takes care of the children in the family and the smallest one is at all times carried on her back in. The average woman has at least five children. When the rain comes and it is time to cultivate the lands she also works hard in the fields as everyone else in Yaho.

**Children** in the ages from approximately two to eight years of age who do not go to school more or less take care of themselves and each other during the day. The smallest children are being carried around on the backs of their older sisters. They drift around in the village in smaller groups and play football, twist and skip rope. Older boys guard the family's cattle in areas outside the village and the girls help the women with their daily tasks. When the time for cultivation starts the children are needed working in the fields as everybody else in Yaho.



**Photo 4:** Girl carrying her sister.

In Yaho you can find many different kinds of **animals**.

Cows are used when cultivating the fields, donkeys are used for transportation, and goats, pigs, hens and guineafowls are for eating. All animals walk around freely in the village and eat what ever they can find. There are several sheds built for the animals where they sleep during night time. On top of these roofs the villagers keep grass, hay and leftovers from the fields that are kept for the animals to eat during the driest periods of the year, before the rains in may. This spare supply is not enough for the larger animals so the cattle often wander off to other greener areas further away from the village where they can find food all year around. In these cases there is always a cattle keeper who guards the animals where ever they go<sup>133</sup>. When the rain comes and the period for cultivating begins, all available areas are being used for growing crops, both inside and outside Yaho. Corn and other growths can be found even in the small empty areas between the houses in the village centre. During approximately six months of the year, May until October, all cattle are kept inside fences so they can not wander of in the fields destroying the crops. They are kept inside small areas fenced with wood from the forest.

### **6.3.2 Services and other practicalities in Yaho**

In the **daily market** you can find about fifteen women, selling their goods from small stands or often right form the ground. They sell tomatoes, onions, garlic, peppers, sun dried fish, home made bullion, salt, oil, soap, peanuts and on some occasions seasonal fruits such as bananas and mangoes. More exclusive items are being sold by women walking around in the village knocking on doors. Every fifth day there is a big market in the centre of Yaho where permanent stalls or sun shades are found. On this day traders from surrounding villages and towns come to sell their goods. They sell articles that can

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<sup>133</sup> Dao, A

not be found in Yaho on a daily basis such as textiles, second hand western clothes, cookware made of metal or plastic, bread, fruit etcetera. Different kinds of handymen appear as the shoe-mender and bicycle mechanic.

There are some smaller **shops and bars** open on a daily basis. The stores holds basic provisions and items with long best before date such as batteries, sacs with corn flour and rice, sugar, tea and instant coffee, drinking water in 500 ml plastic bags, paraffin and petrol used for mopeds sold in one-liter bottles. The bars serve Burkinabé beer, coca cola, sprite, fanta, spirituous beverages and the local beer *dolo* which is made of sorghum. The beverages are rarely chilled since the bars have limited or no power supply. One of the bars has got a TV set which is turned on during nighttime where the spectators are seated in front the TV set on the ground, underneath the starry sky to the sound of the generator.



**Photo 5:** Woman at the daily market.

Yaho does not have any access to external **power supply** system. Paraffin lamps and battery charged torches are used at nighttime when the moon is the only source of light. Solar panels are not common since they are still very expensive but there are some in the wealthier households, as for the gas stoves. There are some technical devises though that needs electricity such as the mill, the computer in the municipality building, the VCR at the "cinema" and the bar's fridge that are operated by petroleum generators. If you would like a cold beer in the biggest bar *la Pirogue* in the evening you would better make an order a couple of hours in advance so they can start the generator and cool the fridge and the beverage in time.

The lack of electricity has been made into business by some, for instance there is a man who sells electricity from his car battery by the hour for charging cellular phones. The network for cellular phones is still quite poor but in some spots, for example on top of the hill near the municipality building, you can make phone calls. There is one telephone booth with a cellular connected to a car battery that can be used when paying a fee. There is another man whose business is refilling cell phones by transferring credit from his own cellular, which he has refilled in one of the bigger cities, to other phones. Another service found, if wanting to get your voice heard, is the village's bellman. When paid he goes around the village shouting out the message that is to be come across so that everybody can hear. He often shouts to promote big ceremonies, to make awareness of somebody's death and if something has been stolen.



**Photo 6:** *Different ways to convey your message.*

There are three **daily transports** from Yaho, all at 6.30 in the morning. The minibuses head for the village Ouahabou by the tarred road and on to the town Boromo and returns in the evening or late afternoon. As Mr Tuina said *“If you are lucky you can manage to go from Yaho to Boromo and back again in one day, all the 104 km”*. There

are a lot of bus connections from here further on to Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou since the N1 is the most trafficked road in the country and is the foremost junction on this road. One of the minibuses goes directly from Yaho to Bobo-Dioulasso but it stops at many places, at least once in every village to let off and get new passengers and goods aboard. The buses are always crowded and hold about 20 people inside the bus and five to ten others on top of the roof. There does not seem to be any limitation regarding what objects to take on the bus and you can find anything from goats and chickens to mattresses, sacs of onions, motorbikes, timber and so on.

There are some **public latrines and showers**, though they are very few considering the size of Yaho. They are located where there is most circulation in the village, close to the schools and the center close to the market stalls. They are all of the same kind as the ones found in the households. The shower is basically a cubicle without roofing with a small hole through the wall where the residual water runs directly out in the pathways. There are no doors to neither showers nor toilets but a wall extension that takes a turn as to overlap one of the sides to assure some privacy. The latrines are not more than a hole in a concrete slab on top of a deeply dug hole. There are no lids covering the hole when the latrine is not in use. Hence, flies and other insects have free access to the excrements and are great disease carriers.

Although there are no sewer drains, ditches or other facilities to handle the waste water Yaho comes across as clean village. As the ground in Yaho is not covered with tarmac or any other material the water is quickly absorbed by the dry soil. Only in rare cases pools of water can be found in the village. When there are, you will most likely find a pig in it taking a mud bath. During the rainy season larger area gets flooded. This can create problems in the village if the waste water gets contaminated since the risk of spreading diseases increases. The only garbage disposal system there is in Yaho is to set it on fire. All litter is gathered in a heap outside the houses, after being inspected by birds and pigs who have taken what they want to eat the leftovers is put on fire. Since most of the products consumed in Yaho come from the nature, the products are easily

returned to nature. Those that are left lying around are very few but include plastic materials and batteries.

There are several **wells** in the village with varying water quality used for different purposes. Four of them are constructed by the government, they are deep-drilled and functions by pumping by hand or foot. This water is of high quality and is good enough for drinking<sup>134</sup>. There is a score of additional wells in the village of traditional kind that are dug by hand. To fetch water a bucket is attached to a rope which is thrown into the stone encircled well and drawn up by hand. Most of the wells are surfaced at ground level without protection of any kind to prevent children or animals to fall into them or protect the water from contamination. This water is of poorer quality and is not for drinking. The supply is seasonal and some of them desiccate during the driest months.



**Photo 7:** Two different kinds of wells.

Except for the showers and latrines there are almost no private spheres in Yaho. Both people and animals move freely in the village, crossing each other's yards and fields. The villagers, and people of Burkina Faso in general, are very sociable. Whenever you pass another person you take time to greet each other by shaking hands, asking if you have had a good night sleep, how the morning has past and if the family is at good health. You are most likely to be asked to sit down in the shade for a chat. Big trees, most often mango, are found frequently in Yaho and serves as important gathering points for the villagers. They give the shade necessary during the hottest hours of the day and every family aims for having a tree of their own in their yard. Another important gathering point in Yaho is the big open field, *la clairiere*. It is used when in need to gather all the villagers on occasions of varying kind such as the local football cup and traditional ceremonies. Without doubt, the mosque, catholic and protestant church are natural places for gatherings for those who practice these religions.

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<sup>134</sup> Tuina, Z



### 6.3.3 Traditional power

Aside the visual division of the households, village centre and common areas there are other clear structures that are very important for the village life. Yaho is divided in different blocks that each symbolizes a group. They are assemblies of households within the same extended family or of household with friendly connections. Within each large family or block there are smaller families or groups of households which also has a leader, the oldest man within this group. This does not necessarily mean the oldest man by age but the oldest man in the oldest generation in the group. Each block has a representative called *Chef du quartier*, the block chief. His role is inherited by the oldest son within the family. All chiefs in the village form a significant group called *Les vieux*, **the elders**, which has a great impact on the life in Yaho. The leader of the elders is called *Chef des terres*<sup>135</sup>. The villagers regard him as the most powerful person in the village.

The elders are in charge of all the traditions in the village and are responsible of passing on important stories of how life was led in the past and the history of Yaho. One ceremony takes place in November after the harvest. The elders decide a specific date for the ceremony which allows the villagers to consume the harvested crops. Another event that is set by the elders is the start of the fishing in the lake near by. All the elders go to the lake to see if there is enough fish before the date for fishing is set. A couple of chosen people from each block are set out to fish on this specific date. The caught fish are then equally divided to all the families in the village and the oldest man in each family provides the rest of the family with the fish<sup>136</sup>.

In the traditional system the elders has the principal part in keeping order in the village. Since the elders are highly respected and the animism still is very strong their system goes alongside the official powers. For instance, if something in the village is stolen the victim goes to the bellman that cries out the loss three days in a row and gives the thief a chance to return it. If this does not solve the problem the victim can turn to the elders and ask for justice in search for the thief. The elders crush an egg and thereafter summons the rain, thunder and lightening. If the thief then does not confess the lightening will haunt him down and kill him. If he does confess the elders' crushes yet another egg, apologizes to the rain that will recede<sup>137</sup>. Since the villagers believe in the elders connections with Mother Nature and fear their power it is rare that they have to call for the rain at all.

There are no feuds within the village based on status or hierarchies since the structures are strong, accustomed and all villagers are aware of them. For example, the division of the caught fish is almost automatic. The structure in the village built up on respect amongst the inhabitants in the village. This is even visible in the gatherings under the trees where discussions often are found. If for example a well educated man joins the group or one of the elders, it is most likely that a less respected person in the group, for instance a woman or younger man, will give its seat in the shadow to this person. The elders are highly respected in the village by everybody. It is a well known fact in Yaho

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<sup>135</sup> Tuina, K

<sup>136</sup> Tuina, H

<sup>137</sup> Dao, I

that each star in the sky is the spirit of a living person. When a shooting star is spotted it means that a person has died. The brighter star dust there is, the more important and powerful was that person. The brightest stars belong to *Chef des terres*, royalties and presidents<sup>138</sup>.

The strength of the animist religiosity has decreased to some extent since Islam and Christianity was introduced in the village<sup>139</sup>. The customs are still important but the religious features have faded. One example of how the animist religiosity has diminished is the *forêt sacré*, the holy forest. Earlier on the forest was one of the most important places in the village for acting out local traditions and rituals. The elders used to go there to ask for good health, harvest and rain by heave offering. Today this roll has been succeeded to the mosque and the church. Nowadays the *forêt sacré* is contracting and is instead the home of the Mossi and is used for making adobe blocks<sup>140</sup>. There is no noticeable division between the different religiosities in the way people live their lives in Yaho and the different religiosities coexist in Yaho. There is a saying in Burkina Faso that the country is half Muslim, half Christian and 100 percent animist<sup>141</sup>. As a Moslem man in Yaho said concerning *Chef des terres* "Il est le père de tous, même les animaux" (he is the father of everyone, even the animals).

For the time being there is no *Chef des terres* in Yaho as he passed away December 2007. His role is shared by his three sons until a new leader is appointed after three



**Photo 8:** Villagers honoring the former *Chef des terres* by collecting branches from the holy forest to put on his grave.

years. The lapse of time is sufficient to find a person who is qualified enough and for showing respect to the former leader. In principle it is the oldest man in the family according to generation who will be chosen. When the new *Chef des terres* is nominated he is placed inside a house under a hole in the ceiling. A red hat is dropped through the hole and if it lands correctly on his head he is the chosen one to be the new *Chef des terres*. If the hat falls the nominated man will die shortly after the ceremony<sup>142</sup>.

#### 6.4 Land management in the village

All land within Yaho belongs to *Chef des terres* according to traditional rules. The usufruct belongs to the large families and blocks. Land is never sold to another person

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<sup>138</sup> Dao, I

<sup>139</sup> Tuina, H

<sup>140</sup> ibid

<sup>141</sup> Manson K, Knight J, *Burkina Faso*, 2006

<sup>142</sup> Tuina, B; Tuina, H; Tuina, V

but given away to those in need<sup>143</sup>. If a settler comes to the village he has to go to one of the chiefs of the families and ask for a land parcel. The settler does not have to pay for the parcel but a symbolic gift is often given, for example a sack of corn or a couple of hens. If the chief decides to give the piece of land to the settler he goes to the *Chef des terres* to tell about the deal so that he can decide if the settler is appropriate. *Chef des terres* checks this by cutting of the head of a hen and reads signs seen in the blood. It rarely happens that a stranger is neglected a piece of land since the *Chef des terres* wants his village and people to grow<sup>144</sup>. Some land remains untouched and is used for ceremonies.

If problems occur concerning land management the Prefect can be contacted. One reason for the nationalization of land in Burkina Faso was that the state would gain the right to interfere if a settler was neglected land by violence from the villagers<sup>145</sup>. Another reason is that it enables the state to get land more easily without resistance from the *Chef des terres* if land is needed for building schools, roads or other public purposes.

## 6.5 Official power

The old traditions and ceremonies are important and have a strong impact on the villagers in Yaho. Aside the traditional power there is the people seated in the municipality building with other strengths and powers. Since the decentralization is in its first stage it is not very clear what the main goals, tasks and roles are for the powers in the municipality building or the government employees in the future.

### 6.5.1 The Prefect

The prefect is in charge of the administrative work of the department Yaho. The department of Yaho is a part of the state administration whereas the municipality is a part of the local governance. Therefore, the prefect is the link between the municipality and the state. The Prefect takes care of contacts that the municipality has with other units which are governed by the state, as he is a representative for the state. Since the decentralization still is in a period of experimentation, the roles of the department and municipality are not completely set. For instance, at the moment the state is responsible for the school and health care that will be transferred to the municipality. Since the prefect and the Mayor have different competences the department has a supervising role over the work being done at municipality level<sup>146</sup>.

The Prefect is an adviser and mediator and in easier trials he has the role as a judge. He handles all juridical issues found in the national law but is not empowered to judge in criminal cases. When these occur or the trial lies beyond his competence in another sense, he passes them on to *La Tribunale* set in the town Boromo. At the end of every month he writes a report where he presents all the decisions he has made. It is sent to the *Haut-commissaire* in Boromo for confirmation before it is reported further on to *Le Gouverneur*, the highest regional representative in Dedougou. The most common trial

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<sup>143</sup> Tuina, B; Tuina, H; Tuina, V

<sup>144</sup> *ibid*

<sup>145</sup> Compaoré, P

<sup>146</sup> *ibid*

case that the Prefect has to deal with in Yaho is men stealing each others wives<sup>147</sup>. Most marriages in Yaho are arranged according to the old traditions and are not officially approved by the state. In matrimonial disputes the parties can not get any support from the national law. In cases like this the only way the Prefect can act is to mediate to get the wife back.

The Prefect visits the other villages in the department on occasions but is mostly to be found in his office in the municipality building where the inhabitants of Yaho can get his advice. He is the chief of all the government employees in Yaho and helps them in their work when his expertise is needed. During the vaccination that takes place once a year, he has a supervising role. He controls that the villagers getting injected are in the correct age group and has not been vaccinated before.

Before the municipality was formed the Prefect was also responsible for all the work that today is the responsibility of the municipality such as municipality development, raising taxes and census of the population. The Prefect of Yaho has been working in the department since October 2007 when he was appointed the position. In 1982 the first prefect was installed in Yaho, the same year as the department was founded<sup>148</sup>. Regularly the state rotates all the prefects in the country and they can not refuse to be replaced.

In the past there was also a Village Chief, *Chef du village*, in Yaho who had the role as a police and judge. This role was inherited by the oldest son of the former Village Chief. The Village Chiefs were taken away in the years of Sankara and were replaced by a Prefects appointed by the state.

### 6.5.2 The Mayor

In connection to the elections and the establishment of the rural municipalities the Mayor was supposed to take over some of the responsibilities that the prefect used to hold. The role of the Mayor in Yaho is not yet fully established in practice. His role is vague, not only among the villagers but even the Mayor himself seems to be hesitant of his responsibilities.

There is a division in the sense that the prefect has the responsibility for the administration and the Mayor for the development of the municipality. The major mission at this introductory phase has been to make the budget break even. It is not an easy task since the municipality has no means, such as taxes, to get an income at the moment<sup>149</sup>. To ameliorate the prerequisites of the village the government has given the task to all rural municipalities to create a development plan. This is work in process and a responsibility of the Mayor. The work-load of the Mayor is very high. He has two deputy Mayors, one secretary and one archivist to his assistance and even those roles are vague but a support in his work.

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<sup>147</sup> Compaoré, P

<sup>148</sup> Dao, Y

<sup>149</sup> Tuina, Z

The current Mayor of Yaho, Mr Tuina, had a very important role in the village even before he won the elections. His father was the ancient *Chef du village* and as Mr Tuina is well educated with an architect degree from a Swedish University he has a very high status in the village. At the present he has the whole responsibility for the work within the municipality. Even other Mayors around the country are waiting for his resolutions as the credence for his competence is widely spread. As Mr Tuina is a member of the municipality organisation AMBF he is also well informed of the development on a national level and has an opportunity to spread his ideas.

## **6.6 Impact from the government**

The government has not had a big impact on Yaho and has never had much of an activity in the village. The only sign of governmental influence are the few educated people that have been sent here after finishing their studies.

### **6.6.1 The government employees**

The government employees are the teachers, the doctor, the accoucheuse, the veterinarian, the forest keeper and the prefect. They live in houses built by the government in the outskirts of the village. They have been out located to Yaho by a lottery and are only allowed to return to their home towns if they get a permit<sup>150</sup>. They are not originally from Yaho; therefore they often do not speak the same language as the villagers and communicate with each other in French. Socially, they seem a bit isolated from the rest of the village.

### **6.6.2 Clinic**

At the clinic you can find an accoucheuse, a doctor and an assistant nurse. It is the only clinic in the municipality and if people from other villages need medical care they have to go to Yaho by them selves. The doctor and accoucheuse do home visits only on rare occasions. At times, the staff at the clinic holds vaccination campaigns arranged by the government to the villagers for meningitis or other severe epidemics. There is also a veterinarian in Yaho and one of his early morning daily tasks is to check that the slaughtered animals are not marred. If they are not, he rubberstamps them before the meat is sold from a bicycle carrier.

Sanitation is a big problem in Yaho according to the staff at the clinic. The latrines are too few and the villagers do not use toilet paper, sometimes leaves are used but more commonly the left hand and water. Many people do not even use the latrines and go freely in the fields. There is not a single baby in Yaho using diapers. In spite of that most people wash their hands before eating with them the hygiene is poor due to that the diners all use the same water for cleaning. The animals that wander without restraint in Yaho are transmitters of infections and parasites. The doctor at the clinic claims that poor sanitation is a result of lack of education. As he does not speak the same language as the villagers he finds it hard to get his knowledge through to the inhabitants of Yaho.

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<sup>150</sup> Compaoré, P

### 6.6.3 School

There is a primary school for the children in the village and an upper secondary school for the whole municipality. The ages in the classes varies depending on the age of the children when their parents could afford to pay the school fee on 2 500 CFA<sup>151</sup>. The youngest children in the first grade are seven years old. One third of the pupils are girls in the average class. There are often three students on each bench in the classrooms and the classes vary in sizes from about 75 to 115 pupils. The government decides how many teachers there will be in each municipality and school. The literature is also sent out by the government but the pupils have to bring their own writing material, some children use black boars and chalk. The school year is based on the French system with three terms. All lessons are in French since it is rare that the teachers speak the local languages in the village. It seems that the education given in school is not purposed to encourage an individual personality, rather to integrate children into the civilized social environment experienced in more urban societies. For those grownups in the village who did not go to school when they where younger, there is a possibility to take a one month course which is a short version of what the children learn during the elementary years in school. Numbers, alphabet and the basics of writing, reading and counting are taught.

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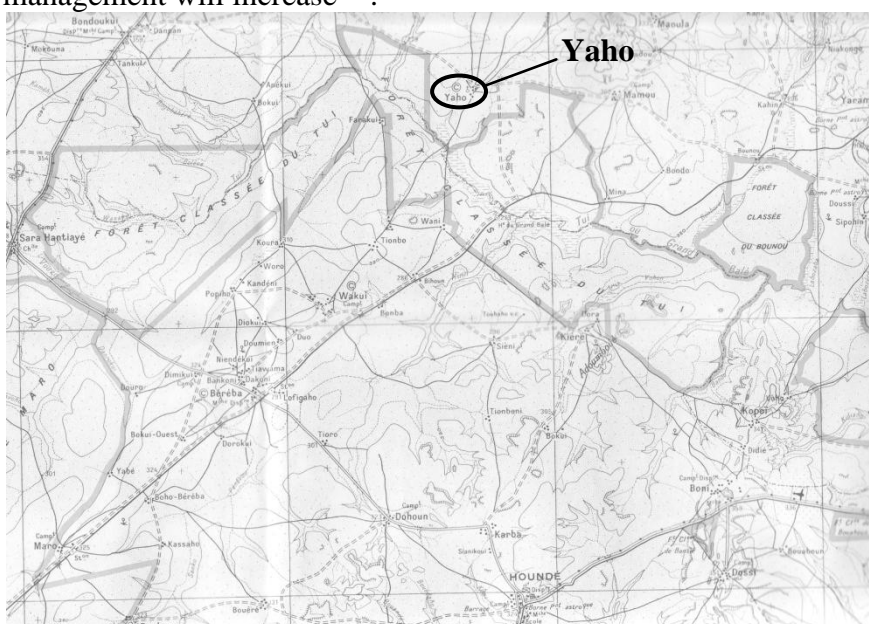
<sup>151</sup> Dao, S



## 7 Forêt classée de Tui - a degrading forest

The *Forêt classée de Tui* has been protected since the colonisation and is the only remain of the forestland that, according to the inhabitants of Yaho, covered the area halfway through the last century. The forest provides fuel wood for four municipalities with a total population of approximately 180 000<sup>152</sup>. This chapter is based on interviews with the forest keeper and inhabitants of Yaho as well as our own observations in the area.

In connection to the ongoing decentralization the management of the *Forêt classée de Tui* will be devolved to the municipalities in which it is situated. It is unclear when this is going to happen but as the local power grows stronger the municipality's influence on the forest management will increase<sup>153</sup>.



**Figure:** Map over *Forêt classée de Tui*., the green line shows the boundaries of the forest. The map is only shown in an illustrative purpose.

### 7.1 Description

*Forêt classée de Tui* is a so called dry forest and stretches along the river *Tui* or *Grand Balé* which is the French name. It is situated in four rural municipalities in the regions of *Boucle de Mouhoun* and *Hauts Bassins*. There are no fixed limits of the forest, due to lack of money the efforts to estimate the limits were abandoned, 500 km<sup>2</sup> is the estimated area<sup>154</sup>. There used to be signs informing about the status of the forest but they have been removed by the inhabitants who sees a better use of the metal.

The height of the vegetation is about three meters with a few higher trees which can be up to 15 meters. There are a few small plants and at its thickest places there is about one

<sup>152</sup> AMBF

<sup>153</sup> Tuina, Z

<sup>154</sup> Yacouba, S



tree-trunk per square meter. During the dry season there is no grass or other covering since most parts of the forest sometime has been taken by fire and there is no water in the river. On the contrary the ground is covered with high grass during the rainy season.

The forest was first classified to protect the inland waters<sup>155</sup>. The river *Tui*, the main water course within the forest, is desiccated during the dry season and flooding is



common during the rainy season. There used to be more wildlife in the area, animals such as lions and antelopes were to be seen<sup>156</sup>. As the forest area has diminished and the access to water with it, most animals has abandoned the region. Elephants that wander the forest can be seen when there is water in the river, apart from that there are only smaller animals such as rats, bush rabbits and birds.

The forest is totally surrounded by cultivated land where the main growth is cotton. It is a part of a larger forest area together with other protected forests.

**Photo 9:** *Forêt classée de Tui and the forest keeper next to the dried out river.*

## 7.2 Main problems in the forest

The forest is in a very poor condition mostly due to the numerous fires that haunt the forest during the dry season. Most fires are set by boys that herd their cattle in the forest while cooking or haunting rats or bush rabbits out of their holes. Another problem is the farmers burning their land preparing the fields for cultivating. Those problems are common in other departments of the region as well and cause frequent discussions at the monthly meeting among the forest keepers<sup>157</sup>. It is not possible to prevent those fires; it is a question of planning the time of their appearance<sup>158</sup>.

Other problems that need to be solved are cattle wandering the forest as they destroy the small plants and prevents the needed rejuvenation. During the driest time of the year

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<sup>155</sup> Silva, R

<sup>156</sup> Tuina, H

<sup>157</sup> Yacouba, S

<sup>158</sup> Tiveau, D

there is not enough feed or water in areas other than in the forest, therefore the herdsmen trespasses in spite of the regulations. As mentioned above the absolute majority of the energy used in the village comes from fuel wood and women has to walk far to find the dead wood they have the right to collect according to the law. This combined with the scarcity and cost of wood for house constructions makes people cut down trees, leave them and then collect them later when dead. It is mainly the bigger trees that are cut down as these are the best suited for house construction.



**Photo 10:** Two problems often occurring in the forest.

A big threat against the forest is the poverty amongst the villagers and the fast growing population. As the soil becomes poorer and poorer by the hard cultivation it gets harder for the farmers to feed their families by the harvest. The cotton fields occupy big parts of the available land since this is the traditional way to make money in the region. The village has now come to a stage when there is no more land available for cultivation. As the knowledge is very poor among the villagers about the importance of the forest, a majority sees an exploitation of this area as the only way to survive.

### ***7.3 Forest management in Yaho***

As the population of Yaho has grown the cultivated land has expanded rapidly at the expense of the land covered by forest. The wooded areas are now concentrated to the holy forest close to the main village and the *forêt classée*. In connection with the introduction of the new forestry legislation in 1997 the use of land around the river *Tui* was further restricted and the forestry workers were introduced in the region for the first time<sup>159</sup>. This resulted in cultivated land taken away from the farmers in the villages situated close to the forest.

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<sup>159</sup> Yacouba, S

### 7.3.1 The forest keeper

Since the forest is a *forêt classée* which is a part of the *domaine forestier de l'Etat* it is considered a property and responsibility of the state. This implies that it is the forestry workers in each of the four municipalities that, alone, have the task of maintenance, development and protection of the forest, fauna and water.

The forest keepers are sent out to preserve the diversity of the local fauna and in addition to the actual forests they are also in charge of the animal life and water resources in their department. It is a large responsibility to handle. To their help they have the local prefect and the forest director of the region. The forestry workers within the region have a certain degree of cooperation; in case of need it is possible to get help from one of the other forest keepers in the region. As a support in their work, there is also a monthly meeting held among the forest keepers in the region of Balé. Here they get information from higher instances and discuss common problems and possible solutions.

As in other parts of the country, there is one forest keeper in Yaho that alone is responsible for the whole forestage within the department. At the moment he also works at the upper secondary school as biology and sports teacher since there is a shortage of educated people in the village. He has worked in Yaho since 2004 when he was appointed here after finishing his two year education in technical forest management. He is now a certified, *assermenté*, forest worker. He is from the Northwest of the country and he does not speak the local languages of Yaho. Therefore there are problems in communicating with the inhabitants.

The forest keeper lives just outside the core of Yaho in a house built by the government. His main contact with the villagers is through the permits to collect dead wood that is to be bought at his office. Occasionally he has briefings for the villagers to augment the understanding of the importance of maintenance of the forest. Those briefings are optional and held in French and are not well attended. The forest keeper is concerned but does not know how to solve it.

When the budget allows it he organises re-plantations and employs locals to do the job under his supervision. It has been a long time since the last attempt. The previous plantation was cut down by the villagers<sup>160</sup>. Besides the re-plantations he is looking in to the possibility to create a municipality or village forest. This is something that has to be done in cooperation with the Mayor and has not yet been up on the agenda. He has also an idea of forming a group of people that he would train. They could relieve some of his burdens. With additional economic means he would like to further instruct a group of people by taking them to areas where the deforestation is in a more advanced phase to increase the awareness of the possible future for their own village.

### 7.3.2 The forest and the villagers

It is primarily the women that are in direct contact with the forest since it is their task to collect dead wood for the household. Even the younger boys visit the forest while herding the animals when there is water in the river. The inhabitants remember when

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<sup>160</sup> Yacouba S

the forest covered the whole village area, water was not scarce and they had a reason to fear lions and other animals, this is no longer the case. There is a big group of the villagers that still avoids the forest out of fear for animals<sup>161</sup>. The only reason a man should enter the forest would be to find wood for house construction.

The forest is now a specific, delimited area; this is not the traditional way to regard the resource. For the villagers wooded areas are only parts of land where trees happen to grow. The villagers consider the access to the forest as very restricted. According to the villagers, this kind of restriction first started with the arrival of the first forest keeper in 1998. This is also when the inhabitants of the smaller villages closer to the forest borders, such as Mina, had a big part of their cultivated land taken away.



**Photo 11:** Woman carrying wood

The fast-growing population and the degradation of the soils results in an increased need of cultivable land. Yahoo is now in a situation where the land resources are diminishing rapidly. The inhabitants are looking for possible solutions for a prospective shortage of food. An overwhelming majority of the villagers sees an exploitation of the forest as the only possibility for their children to survive in the future. There is still a wish to preserve the forest and ideas like moving the forest to areas that today are cultivated but with poor results have emerged.

Besides the *forêt classée* there is also the *forêt sacré* right outside the village core. The *forêts sacrées* exist in most villages. This forestland is traditionally very important as this used to be the place for worshipping of the holy forces and ancestors. This role has diminished even though the forest is still used in ceremonies and by parts of the population. This forested area is now partly used by the Mossi immigrants since this is where they have been given land for construction of their quarter.

As far as the villagers know the work of the forest keeper is to collect the payments for the various permits. The knowledge of his work is very poor as is the knowledge of the importance of preserving the forest. There is no direct conflict between the forest keeper and the inhabitants as is the case in other departments in the country<sup>162</sup>, the contact between the two parts is actually very limited.

### 7.3.3 Implementation of the law

An elementary part of the *code forestière* is the forest management plan. The management is supposed to be based on this plan and permissions given established from decisions taken in the plan. The current forest keeper in Yahoo has not heard of a forest management plan while working as a forest keeper. He has not had any education in how to work with or develop such a plan. This is a common situation found all over

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<sup>161</sup> Tuina, Z

<sup>162</sup> Thieba, D; *Conflicts et gestion des ressources naturelles*, 1997

Burkina Faso. Most forest management plans were established by the French in the 1950s and have not been updated since<sup>163</sup>.

During his four years in the village the forest keeper has not once penalized anyone even though there are daily fires and other trespasses of the law. The explanation for this is multifaceted.

The forest keeper is the one who, on his own, has to make sure that the law is followed. It is a large area to cover and it is only possible to reveal a bare minimum of the violations committed within the forest. If not caught red-handed by the forest keeper it is very hard to prove that a crime has been perpetrated. Even when a crime is proved the forest keeper has not seen any possibilities to penalise the perpetrator due to lack of financial means among the villagers<sup>164</sup>.

As for the penalties given by the law they are not realistic in Yahoo. The inhabitants live out of less than 250 CFA per day so it is not possible to sentence someone to a fine of 100 000 CFA which is the lowest penalty for igniting a fire in a *forêt classée*.

It is hard to implement the law as it is written in Yahoo due to numerous factors. One is the strong traditions in the commune. Many of the traditions include forestland or can be a threat to the survival of the same. Another factor is the poverty among the inhabitants.

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<sup>163</sup> UNEP,UNDP; *Background to environmental Law and Institutions in Burkina Faso and Sao Tome & Principe, 2004*

<sup>164</sup> Yacouba, S

## 8 Analysis

### 8.1 Village life

The village life is tough, or as the locals put it: *C'est d'ûr*. The absolute majority of the villagers of Yaho are farmers and their economy depends on good harvests. They live for the day and do not have any money to spare. Far from all children go to school and knowledge in the official language French is poor. As a result to this, traditions and customs are very important in Yaho. The villagers live their life the same way their parents and grand parents did. The hierarchies in Yaho are strong, great respect is shown to those who "deserve" it. There are some groups in the village that are recently supervened and for different reasons do not have a natural place in existing structures of Yaho.

#### 8.1.1 Poverty

Burkina Faso is a poor country where about 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas, such as Yaho. It is estimated that the daily consumption of a villager in Yaho is about 250 CFA (0.40 euro). The budget does not allow any other expenses than those essential for the daily life; those with some extra savings are few. Money is spend on certificates for collecting wood, paraffin for lamps, fees for using the mill, additional food and on buying adobe blocks for construction. The villagers are almost self-sufficient in their way of producing or collecting most of the food they eat, leaves, roots and fruits are used for eating and in medical care.

The villagers are in a difficult dilemma where they desperately need the money that they could earn by cultivating cotton. The revenues for the villagers as well as for Burkina Faso as a country are unpredictable from year to year as mentioned earlier. Even if they wanted to switch line of business to grow some other crop, or even do something completely different than cultivating, they do not have any investment capital. They can not even afford new seeds and are completely dependent on the companies. The only investments found in the village are the animals that can be sold in desperate times to get money for food.

One cost many families can not afford is the annual school fee 2 500 CFA. If there are several children within the family the first born is selected to get an education. The illiteracy in Burkina Faso is more than 75 percent which is strongly reflected in the poor knowledge of the French language in Yaho. For the absolute majority of the children who goes to school it is the first time they get in connection with the language. The learning process takes a lot of time since all lessons from first grade are taught in another language than their mother tongue, the teachers do not speak their local language, most of the children can not get the help needed from their parents since the possibility that they have been educated is small and the classrooms are overcrowded.

The villagers live a decent life and have what they need for the day. There are no savings to invest in such things as education or development of the cultivation. The fact that they do not have this possibility results in a situation where they are totally dependent on the agriculture.

### 8.1.2 Traditions

When you talk to the inhabitants of Yaho, specially the elders, it is quite clear that life in the village has always been the same. The villagers have been farmers since Yaho was founded. They have never seen much, if anything, of the world around them. Even the colonization and slave trade passed without making much of an impact. Since there is no one passing by and very few people leaving the village to return later on, there are very few chances to bring new ideas and approaches into the village.

The traditions in Yaho are very strong and affect the village and its inhabitants in many separate ways. There is no police in the village, partly because there are very few crimes committed. The crimes are solved by the elders as mentioned in chapter 6.3.3. There is usually a lack of food in the village before the harvest and meat is a rare luxury. Despite this, the inhabitants wait for the permission from the elders to start fishing in the nearby lake and to consume the new harvest. There is an immense credence in the knowledge and power of the elders and the villagers are very obedient.

There are strikingly strong hierarchies in Yaho, even apart from the elders. It is easy to, just by observing one of the groups under a tree, to determine the exact status of everyone present. The gender roles are very strong and are a part of this hierarchy. Life has always been the same in the village and there is no one questioning or even, what we noticed, reflecting over the system.

### 8.1.3 Seclusion among groups with other origins

The majority of the inhabitants have lived in the village all their lives and their families originate from the surroundings as far back as is known. These people all have the exact same way of living. They have the same traditions, the same family structure and the majority can communicate with one and other, maybe not by their mother tongue but by the common language Dioula.

There are other groups that are not in full extent part of the village life. One of these groups is the Mossi, the largest ethnical group in Burkina Faso. They have come from the north to look for agricultural land for their survival. This group is very well received but in some extent a secluded part of the village. They have their own quarter in the outskirts of the village where the houses look somewhat different. They are welcome to take part in different traditions but as they come from another culture the traditions are not as important for them. They respect the traditions and have a large faith in the traditional leaders since the system with *Chef des terres* is used all over Burkina Faso.

The group that is most evidentially excluded from the village life is the governmental employees described in chapter 6.6.1. This group differs from the villagers in several ways. They are educated, often come from one of the cities, speak French and do not understand the local languages. They live in houses built by the government situated in the outskirts of the village and they can afford some luxury such as solar panels, different food and most have employees to help them in their daily work. In all they are not used to the village life and has no real desire to fit in. Since Yaho is a small village, far away from the closest city where most educated people prefer to work. An absolute majority of the governmental employees was assigned this place in a lottery and their goal is to leave the village to get closer to one of the cities.

This distinct division between the villagers and the governmental employees as two separate groups is not necessarily a problem but has to be seen in a context with the strong traditions. They are placed in the village as representatives for the government in purpose of holding some degree of headship. They have no natural place in the villagers' life and are therefore not part of their hierarchy. Consequently they do not have the benefit of the obedience of the villagers that the traditional leaders have. As stated above in chapter 3.3.3, the Prefect is officially the most powerful man within the department. But, as the Moslem man said concerning *Chef des terres*, "he is the father of everyone, even the animals".

## **8.2 Land shortage versus *Forêt classée de Tui***

Life has always been the same in Yaho. Changes in the surrounding world do not have a big impact on the village life. The village is almost self-contained, the priorities totally lies in providing for the family through small family run holdings. The population is fast-growing and the village has reached a point where cultivable land is diminishing rapidly. Adding degrading lands result in a situation where the sustenance is a growing problem for the villagers.

The forest land around Yaho has been diminishing steadily and *Forêt classée de Tui* is now the only remains of the forest that used to cover the area. The degrading soils and the growing population results in a lack of agricultural land. The villagers are now looking towards the forest land as their only way to nourish their children.

### **8.2.1 Customary way of life**

When tracing back in time to the first man set his foot on the grounds of Yaho, he settled down because the place was nice and the grounds were fertile and good for cultivating. From that day onwards the lands have been cultivated by the inhabitants of Yaho. The same crops are cultivated today as they were in the past and the same methods are being used. The only exception would be the cotton that was introduced in the early 20th century covering vastly areas around Yaho.

As all the villagers have the same living conditions and have equal living standards, they are all well aware of the rules and hierarchies. Ceremonies for celebrating natural forces, spirits and honoring traditional leaders and respected people are very important for the villagers of Yaho. The gender roles are fixed and follows the footprints of earlier generations, everybody are familiar with the division of the daily tasks.

The foremost priority is to cultivate their land to provide for the family. Life has always been the same and since all the villagers are in the same situation they help each other out when problems arise. The generosity and desire to help your neighbors also counts for strangers. The inhabitants are generous and welcoming, wanting the village to grow and be strong. Famine is a great danger that is a daily concern for all villagers. The daily life in Yaho is strongly affected of the cultivation situation. If the harvests turn out good it will be a good year if not, a year of famine lies ahead. Cultivating and collecting food have always been highly prioritized by the villagers. Most of the villagers live alike the previous, one day at a time.



### 8.2.2 Lack of agricultural land

The living conditions in Yaho are totally dependent on a successful harvest which makes the society very fragile. As the soils are degrading and the rain periods are unreliable the agricultural possibilities deteriorates. As water supplies are only sufficient for a limited period per year, the period of cultivating is also finite. Due to the climate (chapter 3.1.1) lands can only be used for one crop per year since the growing season is estimated to 75 days per year. Yaho is still in some sense to be considered a fortunate village. Soils can still produce a sufficient harvest, the village has good wells and some amount of services compared to many other smaller villages.

The population of Yaho is fast-growing, to a large extent because of the polygamy. The families become very large; a man with three wives usually has to provide for about 15 children. Besides the polygamy the migration from the north is a contributing factor. The soils are degrading all over Burkina Faso and the dessert is gaining space in the north. People that can no longer use the soils in their areas are wandering south to search for a place where they can provide for their families. Out of generosity and probably as a status symbol, the inhabitants of Yaho are giving parts of their land away for others in need. None of the laws concerning land management mentioned above are used when allocating land to new settlers.

The rapid population growth has generated overpopulation which is the main cause to the extended use of agricultural land. Up until now there has been land to give away even though this has been made on the cost of forest land. They have now reached the point where there is no more land for agricultural use. There are even parts of the village that have been cultivated too harshly where the soils have been degraded to the extent that not even weeds can grow there today.

The oldest man in Yaho remembers times when the surroundings of Yaho were green and covered with trees. Water supplies and lands for cultivating were sufficient for all the villagers and the resources seemed endless. As the population increased, wooded areas were cut down to enable crops to grow since food for the day always has been prioritized. This way of living is a big threat to the forest; some of the villagers realize the beneficial effects of the forest but would rather sacrifice some trees than to see their children starve. The same goes for the cattle in need for grazing lands. If there are no edible plants for the cattle the herdsman would rather go into the forest in search for foods than to see their livestock hunger.

Although, *Forêt classée de Tui* is a protected area many inhabitants would rather use the area for cultivating. Since the boundaries of the forest are not visible it occurs that fields adjoining to the forest are being enlarged at the expense of the forest.

For other villages in the municipality with direct connection with *Forêt classée de Tui* the lack of agricultural land is even more severe. When the new forest legislation was introduced in 1997 large parts of cultivated land was taken away from the villagers. Their fields are very restricted to the absolute surroundings of the households. The villagers of Mina for example have a cumbersome relationship both to the forest and the forest keeper.

With degrading soils that provide less sustenance than earlier and the fact that such a large part of the agricultural land is used for cotton cultivation makes it hard to feed a family out of a parcel of land. The majority of the villagers see an exploitation of the forest as the only solution.

### **8.2.3 Lack of education**

According to the elders in Yaho forest land has diminished vastly, as is the case in all of Burkina Faso. Among the villagers this is considered to be unfortunate but not a problem that needs to be considered. The dry forests have a range of assets crucial for the rural poor as stated by Henning, Tiveau and Sawadogo to mention a few, referred to in chapter 5.2. The only one within the municipality that has any knowledge considering the forest and its importance is the forest keeper.

A consequence of the polygamy is that it is common that each man has to provide for a family of about 20 people. The cost of school attendance results in a situation where only the eldest children are sent to school. Since the teachers do not speak the same language as the children a major part of the education is sacrificed on teaching the French language. Children spending longer time in school, reaching upper secondary school, often leave the village to find a job in urban areas. This situation entail that a large majority of the villagers only know their own way of life since this is the way people have always lived in the village. It is first at this point that their way of life is threatened and the villagers may have to revise their way of doing things. The villagers are conscious of the diminishing forest, the lack of rain and the degrading soil but they do not see the connection.

There is a good source of knowledge in Yaho of this connection and of how the forest should be managed to be able to ameliorate the living conditions of the villagers. The forest keeper does have ideas and ambition to work with the inhabitants. The problem is that this knowledge can not be passed on to the villagers partly due to language difficulties but also as an effect of the generally low level of education.

## **8.3 Forest management**

There is one forest keeper that alone has to manage all land covered with forest within the municipality of Yaho. It is a large area and the inhabitants of Yaho see the forest as an endless resource. Traditionally the access to forest land is not limited and in the eyes of the villagers the arrival of the forest keeper implied delimited agricultural land and exclusion from forest resources.

### **8.3.1 Villagers and Forest**

The knowledge among the villagers considering the forest management is narrow. They see the forest as the only, economically accessible, provider of energy and do not analyze the importance of the forest any further. The villagers consider the forest an endless resource and are not aware of the importance of preserving the forest.

Traditionally forest land is not considered as being a defined area in Yaho. The villagers are not aware of the status of the forest. They regard the classification and the presence of the forest keeper as a total debarring from all land covered with trees. The unconcern towards the forest keeper and his effort are apparent in the way the villagers not attend his meetings as mentioned above. Most inhabitants never visit the forest, partly out of

fear but also because they do not have any errands in that direction. Earlier accomplished community based forest management projects have shown positive results when the local inhabitants have been involved in managing the forests (chapter 2.3).

In connection with the new forest legislation and the arrival of the forest keeper, agricultural land was taken away from the inhabitants. This turned out to be a disadvantage for the forest keeper in his future work. In the eyes of the villagers the forest keeper is the one that excludes them from the forest and prevents them from using the land for agricultural purpose. Besides the collection of permit fees they do not understand the role of the forest keeper. For the villagers the forest keeper is one of the governmental employees and is not a part of their society. According to Menzies (chapter 2.1), it is important that the institution for management has a high amount of respect for a successful forest management.

### **8.3.2 The forest keeper**

The work for the forest keeper of Yaho stretches widely from maintenance, development and protection of the forest. He covers approximately one-fourth of the *Forêt classée de Tui*, the part that lies within the boundaries of the department. He has only been working as a forest keeper for some years and graduated a couple of years ago. He gets some support in his work and can learn from other forest keepers in other departments at their monthly meetings.

His work in developing and maintaining the forest is rather difficult since the groundwork and documentation of the forest is very poor or non existent. He has never heard of or seen a forest management plan, which is said to be an elementary part of the *Code forestière*. Worse is that he did not get any training concerning forest management plans during his education. However, the *Code forestière* states that it is the forestry workers that are responsible for the development of those plans. The present forest keeper has a lot of knowledge of the environmental benefits of a well functioning forest and has inventive ideas concerning how the forest management can improve.

As the role of the forest keeper is quite new in Yaho he does not have a natural position in the hierarchy of Yaho. Therefore he is not as respected as the elders or other persons in the village that the villagers look up to. The villagers are familiar in following rules and taking advice, and doing so willingly, if the regulations are set up by those they respect. Another disadvantage when making himself heard among the villagers is that he does not speak the local languages of Yaho.

When trying to implement the rules from the *code forestière* he faces other problems. There are times when he has taken a villager red handed committed a crime in the forest. He charged him with a penalty but this villager, as all other in Yaho, did not have the money to pay him and persuaded him to let him go with a warning.

### **8.4 Merging the two systems**

Through the decentralization the responsibility for the forest management will be passed on to Yaho and the three other municipalities situated in connection to the *Forêt classée de Tui*. For a functioning future system there are several obstacles that have to be eliminated.

### 8.4.1 Separate systems

In Yaho there are two different systems, both functioning on their own. There is the traditional and customary system that the villagers have always used and then there is the new system that is in constant change.

As the village is very isolated not much of the changes in the surrounding world reach the village to effect their daily life. The villagers have always lived the same way and with a growing population, degrading soils and diminishing forests they are about to reach the point when this way of life is no longer possible. The customary system no longer provides all the tools needed for a continuing prosperous life of the villagers. The understanding for the necessity of a prospective change of life has not yet reached the villagers.

Beside the customary system there is the official system run by personnel sent out by the government. This system is well functioning on its own and do provide some tools needed in the development of the village but it is not established among the villagers. Another issue is the ongoing decentralization; it is not obvious to define the roles and responsibilities.

Through the decentralization the rural municipality has been introduced. This function lies somewhere between the two systems and can become a very important entity in a prospective merging of the two systems. At this moment the function of the municipality is very fuzzy and as a newly established part of the village life the Mayor has not yet found his place. When the municipality gains credibility and further responsibilities, including the forest, funds will be needed for the management. The life of the villagers must change in some sense since the Mayor has to raise funds from taxes and other fees in order to enable development and maintenance of the municipality.

### 8.4.2 Common interests but different insight

These two systems are not connected due to several reasons discussed above. They do however have some interests in common but the insight to them differs.

- **Preserving the fertile soils**

The villagers realize the importance of fertile soils since agriculture is the livelihood for the majority of the villagers and the land shortage situation is a fact. They see the problem arising but does not see the benefits of a long term solution that is to preserve the forest. The villagers rather see a solution that solves the problem straight away since they live their life one day at a time and see their children starving today. The elders remember when the surroundings were green and fertile and how life was easier at that time. This is seen as a historic fact, the villagers do not reflect over the possible causes. The villagers know about the problems but does not have a solution or see the linkage.

The Forest keeper is the one who knows partly how to solve their problems whilst preserving the forest. He has knowledge of the connection between water, trees and fauna. The trees need water to grow, the leaves are nourishment to the animals that fertilize the soil, the soil and roots of the trees prevent water

supplies to desiccate. If the forest will continue to degrade, so will the soils and water supplies.

- **The villagers need access to the forest.** Fuel wood is the foremost source of energy in Yaho. Every woman needs it on a daily basis in running the household. Trees are used when building houses and when the animals to protect them from destroying the fields. The women have to walk further distances to gather wood than they used to due to increasing population and resource shortage.

The forest keeper wants to create a village or municipality forest where fuel wood and trees used for construction work can grow. This would partly satisfy the needs of the villagers and at the same time the *Forêt classée de Tui* will be unburdened.

- **Increase the access to water.** The Burkinabé only have 75 days of cultivating in a year due to the harsh climate conditions and unreliable rains. During this time each family has to bring in the entire annual income. If the villager had secure access to water during a longer period of time they would have bigger opportunities to succeed. They could maybe even be able to cultivate different crops in the same field in one year. The Mayor has economic interest in engaging the people within the municipality during larger parts of the year. He even has plans of constructing a dam for securing the water supplies.

Water is one of the main concerns in the forest keepers' field of responsibilities. He also knows about the linkage between water a forest. No water no forest, no forest no water.

To be able to preserve the *forêt classée de Tui* it is necessary that the different systems close in on each other so that a cooperation and understanding can be reached between the villagers and at a first step, the forest keeper. If the forest keeper would manage to communicate his knowledge and create cooperation with the villagers it would be easier for them to appreciate the values of the forest. As Boateng says: *It is only when the forests have a real value to the local people that we will be able to gain their cooperation and energy for forest protection and management* (chapter 2.3). If a cooperation and understanding could be reached here the prerequisites are good for a familiarization of an approach to other personnel sent out by the government.

### 8.4.3 Management failures

Community based forest management as a method and examples from practical uses imply a number of conditions for a successful local management of a forest. There are a number of areas where the management in Yaho fails according to these principles.

- **The forest keeper has a very low amount of respect from the villagers.** As a part of the governmental employees the forest keeper is not a part of the hierarchy in the village. The villagers do not know what his role is and do not have any direct contact with him.

- **The villagers do not share any benefits from the forest nor do they have any responsibilities or say in the planning of the future of the forest.** The poor population of Yahoo is dependent on the forest resources in their daily life. The access to the forest is very limited and the villagers do not see that they could draw any benefits from it. Traditionally the forest is not seen as a delimited area. Today permits are requested for entering the forest which debars a large part of the population from the area. The forest becomes a separate part of the municipality and is not a part of the villagers' daily concerns which could have been the case if benefits could be found.

Today the responsibility of the forest management lies completely in the hands of the government. In earlier accomplished community based forest management projects, the management has improved when the local population has been involved.

- **The villagers do not have any incentive for the conservation of the forest.** Due to the overpopulation the priority is not to preserve the forest but to provide for their families through traditional cultivation of land. There is a large lack of knowledge concerning the importance of preserving the forest. They do not see the connection between the poor harvests, the lack of rain and the diminishing forests.
- **There is a legal system and a police force to impose sanctions but the legislation is not suited for the rural poor.** It is not possible to implement the law the way it is written. During his four years in the village, the forest keeper has not once punished anyone. He is in an exposed situation being the sole responsible for the entire forest area not having anyone to help him implement the law. An addition to this is the high fines that are not applicable on a population as poor as the one in Yahoo.
- **There is no forest management plan.** To be able to manage the forest as a whole, together with the other departments, it is necessary to have some kind of plan for the development.

#### 8.4.4 Prospective possibilities

There are problems that need to be solved in managing the forest. A lot of those issues are due to communication problems and misunderstandings. Essentially the interests are the same for all parties but the insight and knowledge differ.

The two systems are bound to be merged through the newly founded municipality. This is a great opportunity for a new start of the forest management. The Mayor is a highly respected man and has the power to engage the villagers. The inhabitants of Yahoo are obedient to people higher up in the hierarchy.

The forest keeper has an interest in cooperation with the Mayor. The respected Mayor could be an important link between the villagers and the forest keeper and an important part in the conveying of his knowledge. This could bring the villagers closer to the forest management and therefore contribute to an increased interest of the forest.

Menzies states that a sharing of benefits and responsibilities is important for a functioning forest management.

To create a forest management plan would be a help in the merging of the two systems. A creation of a long lasting plan requires cooperation between the forest keeper and the municipality. The monthly meetings among the forestry worker are a good source of knowledge and a forum for developing ideas.

## 9 Conclusion

In the interaction between national forest management and rural life in the village Yaho we have found five principle weaknesses:

- The forest keeper has a very low amount of respect from the villagers.
- The villagers do not share any benefits from the forest nor do they have any responsibilities or say in the planning of the future of the forest.
- The villagers do not have any incentive for the conservation of the forest.
- There is a legal system and a police force to impose sanctions but the legislation is not suited for the rural poor.
- There is no forest management plan.

There are problems concerning forest management in Yaho but also prospective possibilities. The two systems that today are governing the village need to be merged. The villagers need an incentive for preserving the forest. The forest keeper with his knowledge and the respected Mayor have decisive parts in this process.





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### ***Photos***

Taken by Malin Gustafsson and Lina Norman

## Appendix, Interview questions

### Questions to all interviewed people

- Qu'est-ce sont ton nom et ton âge ? Tu as une famille?  
*What is your name, age and do you have a family?*
- Est-ce que tu as des enfants? Ils ont quel âge? Ils vont à l'école? Ils habitent ici à Yaho?  
*Do you have any children? How old are they? Do they go to school? Do they live here in Yaho?*
- Est-ce que tu es né ici à Yaho? Combien d'années ta famille a habité ici?  
*Were you born here in Yaho? For how long has your family lived here?*
- Qu'est ce que c'est ton travail? Un jour ordinaire, qu'est ce que tu fais ?  
*What do you do for a living? What does an ordinary day look like?*
- Est-ce que tu as des animaux? Comment tu te débrouille d'eux? Est-ce que il y en a quelques changements dans le travail avec les animaux pendant l'année?  
*Do you have any animals? How do you take care of them? Are there any changes of how you handle the animals during a year?*
- Tu es de quelle religiosité? Tu es un membre de quel groupe d'ethnique? Tu parles quelles langues?  
*What is your religiosity? Which ethnical group are you a member of? What languages do you speak?*
- Est-ce que tu es un membre d'une autre association?  
*Are you a member of any other associations?*
- Est-ce que tu as louer quelque chose pour utiliser dans ton travail?  
*Do you rent something to for your work?*
- Qu'est que c'est le travail de ta femme? Tu as plusieurs femmes, combien?  
*What does your wife do? Do you have several wives, how many?*

### Questions concerning the forest

- C'est quand que tu vas a la forêt et qu'est-ce que tu fais là dedans?  
*When do you go to the forest and what do you do there?*
- Est-ce que ce tu vas dans la forêt souvent, combien de fois dans une semaine?  
*Do you go to the forest often, how many times per week?*
- C'est quelle forêt que tu visites?  
*Which forest do you visit?*
- Est-ce que il y a quelque chose d'autre que le bois qu'est important dans la forêt?  
*Is there something else than wood that is important in the forest?*
- A ton avis, qui est le responsable de la forêt?  
*Who is responsible of the forest in your opinion?*
- C'est quoi ces responsabilités?  
*What are their responsibilities?*
- Est-ce que tu as vu des changements dans la forêt? Tu dois aller plus loin pour ramasser le bois?  
*Have you seen any changes in the forest? Do you have to walk further to collect wood?*
- Est-ce que tu crois que la forêt va exister dans la future?

*Do you think the forest will exist in the future?*

- C'est comment que vois la différence entre la forêt classé et les autre terres et forêts? Est-ce que tu utilise les forêts dans les différentes manières?  
*How do you tell the difference between what is the forêt classé and what is not?*
- *Do you use the different forests in different manners?*
- Est-ce que tu utilise le bois ramassé toi seul ou tu le vends?  
*Is the wood for private use or do you sell it?*
- Est-ce que tu connais quelques règles concernant la forêt?  
*Are there any rules concerning the forest that you know of?*
- A ton avis, est-ce que tu trouve que le système avec la forêt classée marche bien? Qu'est-ce que tu voulais faire avec la forêt classée?  
*Do you think the system with the forêt classé works well? What would you like to do with the forêt classé?*
- Est-ce qu'il y a des péages ramassé par la commune ou d'autres organisations que tu dois payer?  
*Are there any fees that you have to pay to the municipality or other organizations?*
- A ton avis, c'est qui qu'est le personne avec le plus de pouvoir a Yaho?  
*Who is the most powerful person in Yaho in your opinion?*

#### **Questions to the farmer**

- Comment l'année d'agriculture est arrangée?  
*How is the agricultural year arranged?*
- Qu'est-ce que vous cultivez?  
*What are you cultivating?*
- Est ce-que tu vends un part de ton récolte et que est-ce tu dois acheter?  
*Are you selling anything of your harvest and what do you have to buy?*
- Est ce-que t'as des animaux et comment tu t'en occupe d'eux? Ils peuvent se balader comme ils veulent?  
*Do you have any animals and how are they attended to? Can they wander where they want?*
- Est ce-que tu as une coopération avec quel qu'un concernant ton agriculture ou tes animaux?  
*Do you cooperate with anyone concerning agriculture or your animals?*
- Ici on cultive surtout le coton et le maïs, est ce-que t'as essayé de cultiver quelque chose d'autre?  
*You cultivate mainly cotton and corn here in Yaho, have you ever tried to cultivate anything else?*
- Est ce-que tu laisse le village parfois et pour faire quoi?  
*Do you ever leave the village and to do what?*
- Que est-ce que tu fais quand tu n'as pas de travaille avec l'agriculture?  
*What do you do when you do not have work with the agriculture?*
- Ta combien de terre pour cultiver?  
*How much land do you have for cultivation?*
- Comment tu es payé pour le coton?  
*How do you get paid for the cotton?*
- Est ce-qu' on a toujours cultivé le coton ici?  
*Have you always cultivated cotton here?*

### Questions to the Mossi

- C'est quand que vous êtes venues et pourquoi?  
*When did you move here and why?*
- Comment vous avez eu votre terre? Est ce que vous avez payé quelque chose?  
*How did you get your lands? Did you pay anything?*
- Est ce que vous avez des animaux?  
*Do you have any animals?*
- Est-ce-que vous avez toujours des traditions d'eux même que vous exercez ici?  
*Do you still have any of your own traditions that you practice here?*
- Est ce-que vous faites partie des traditions du village?  
*Do you take part in the village traditions?*
- Est ce-que vous parlez la même langue que les gents de Yaho?  
*Do you speak the same language as the people from Yaho?*

### Questions to the forest keeper

- Est-ce que tu travail tout seul?  
*Do you work all by your self?*
- Est-ce que ce tu vas dans la forêt souvent, combien de fois dans une semaine?  
*Do you go to the forest often, how many times a week?*
- Est-ce que tu travail avec les deux forêts? Quelle sont les différences de votre manière à travailler dans les deux forêts? Quelle sont les règles les plus importants dans ton travail?  
*Do you work in both the forests? How does your work differ in the separate forests? Which are the main rules in your work?*
- Est-ce qu'il y a des règles que tu dois poursuivre dans ton travail? Qui as décidé d'eux?  
*Are there any regulations that you have to comply with in your work? Who has decided on these rules?*
- Qu'est-ce que tu peut trouver dans la forêt classé de Tui?  
*What can you find in the forêt classé de Tui?*
- Est-ce que tu as vu des changements dans la forêt classé pendent ton temps ici?  
*Have you seen any changes in the forêt classé since you arrived here?*
- Quelles sont les problèmes les plus graves dans la forêt?  
*Which are the most severe problems in the forest?*
- Ca fait combien de temps que tu as été responsable de cette forêt? Comment tu as obtenu cette travaille?  
*How long have you had the responsibility for this forest? How did you get this job?*
- C'est l'état qui à crée les forêts classées, de quel but?  
*What is the purpose for the state to create the forêts classées?*
- Si tu voulais changer quelque chose dans la forêt, qui est la personne que tu pouvais contacter?  
*If you would like to change something in the forest, who would you contact?*
- Est-ce que tu as du contact avec les autres forestiers qui travaux avec la même forêt? Comment fonction la coopération?



*Do you have any contact with the other forest keepers working in the same forest? What does the cooperation look like?*

- Est-ce que tu as des suggestions pour des façon a développer ton travail?  
*Do you have any suggestions of how to develop your work?*
- Est-ce que tu es responsable des animaux et de l'eau dans la forêt?  
*Are you also responsible for the animals and the water in the forest?*
- Est-ce que tu as fait des replantations des arbres dans la forêt? Est-ce que il y a des règles concernant les replantations?  
*Have you planted any seedlings in the forest? Are there any regulations concerning this?*
- Est-ce que il ya certain arbres qui sont plus important que les autre?  
*Are there trees that are more important than others?*
- Pour avoir l'information le plus détaillé sur la forêt, on doit parler avec qui?  
*To get the most detailed information about the forest, who does one have to talk to?*
- Sur le plan de la région il y a des limites de la forêt et la commune, ils existes en réalité? C'est possible de les voir?  
*On the map there are boundaries showing the forest as well as the municipality, do they exist in reality? Are they visible?*
- Est-ce que c'est permit de pêcher dans la forêt classée quand il y a de l'eau dans le fleuve?  
*Is it allowed to fish in the forêt classé de Tui when there is water in the river?*
- Qui c'est qui ramasse l'argent pour les admis qui permetts les habitants de ramasser le bois mort dans la forêt classé?  
*Who gets the money for the permits allowing people to collect dead wood from the forêt classé de Tui?*
- Est-ce que c'est souvent que tu notifies le bureau principal de Boromo?  
*Do you notify the head office in Boromo often?*
- A ton avis, si il y avait des ressources, qu'est-ce que sera les changements les plus importants pour améliorer la condition de la forêt?  
*If there were enough resources, what would be the most important changes to be done to ameliorate the condition of the forest in your opinion?*
- C'est quand que la forêt classé de Tui est devenu une forêt classé?  
*When did the forêt classé de Tui become a forêt classé?*
- C'est quelle question qu'est le plus discuté dans les rencontres à Boromo? Vous avez des solutions aux problèmes?  
*What are the questions most frequently discussed during the meetings in Boromo? Do you have solutions to the problems?*
- C'est pourquoi que les gents étains des feux dans la forêt?  
*Why do people set up fires in the forest?*
- C'est quand que les forestiers sont introduis à Burkina Faso? C'est quelle année que le premier forestier est installe a Yaho?  
*When were the forest keepers first introduced in Burkina Faso? At what time did the first forest keeper arrive in Yaho?*
- Est-ce que le bois mort est rare?  
*Is the dead wood a scarce commodity?*
- Est-ce qu'il y a des forêts privés au Burkina Faso?  
*Are there any privately owned forests in Burkina Faso?*

- C'est quel crimes que tu peux juger? Quels crimes sont passés au tribunal?  
*Are you the judge when crimes are committed? Which crimes are passed on to the court?*

### Questions to the elders

- Pour combien de temps as tu été le vieux te ta famille?  
*For how long have you been the elder of you family?*
- Qu'est que sont les traditions et cérémonies de les quelles vous avez la responsabilité? Est ce-que tu as un autre rôle dans ta famille?  
*Which are the traditions and ceremonies for which you are responsible? Do you have any other role in your family?*
- Est ce-que vous avez une collaboration avec l'église où la mosquée?  
*Do you have any cooperation with the church or mosque?*
- C'est quoi que vous décidez concernant les traditions?  
*What do you decide concerning the traditions?*
- Est ce-que tu pouvais raconter l'histoire du village?  
*Could you tell us about the history of the village?*
- C'est pourquoi que le village est situé ou il est? C'est quand que les premier habitants a déménagé ici, ils étaient de quelle famille?  
*Why is the village situated where it is? When did the first inhabitants move here and of what family were they?*
- Est ce-qu'il y a certains événements qui a influencé la vie au village dans l'histoire?  
*Are there certain events that have influenced the village in the history?*
- Est ce-que la colonisation a influencé Yaho? De quelle façon?  
*Did the colonization have an impact on Yaho and how?*
- Comment l'indépendance a influencé la vie au village?  
*How did the independence influence the village life?*
- C'est quand que l'église et la mosquée a gagné leur place a Yaho? Est ce qu'ils ont pris la place des vieilles traditions?  
*When did the church and mosque come to the village? Have they taken any place from the old traditions?*
- Vos traditions, ils existent seulement ici à Yaho où dans d'autre village aussi?  
*Do your traditions exist only in Yaho or in other villages as well?*
- Est ce-que la forêt a été important pour le village?  
*Have the forest been important for the village?*
- Est ce-que vous avez vu que la forêt a changé pendent ta vie?  
*Have you seen that the forest have changed in some way during you lifetime?*
- Est ce-que t'as vu que la forêt a changé depuis Yaho est devenu une communauté?  
*Have you seen that the forest have changed since Yaho became a municipality?*
- Quel changement au village aurait eu le plus importance a ton avis?  
*What change in the village would have had the greatest impact in your opinion?*
- Comment tu crois que le village va évoluer?  
*How do you think that the village will develop?*
- Que signifie la forêt sacré, qu'est que c'est que vous honorez et comment ca c'est fait?

*What does the holy forest signify, what is it you are honoring and how is this done?*

**Questions to the Chef des terres**

- Les Mossis, ils ont fait comment pour avoir de terre pour cultiver et habiter? Ils avaient payé pour son terre?  
*How did the Mossi get the land for their blocks? Did they have to pay for their land?*
- Qu'est-ce que sont les qualités que vous cherchez chez le nouveau chef des terres? La procédure pour choisir un nouveaux chef des terres est fait comment?  
*What qualities do you look for in the coming chef des terres? What does the election process look like?*
- Quelles sont vos obligations dans le rôle comme chef des terres? Est-ce que le rôle a changé pendant l'histoire?  
*What are your duties as chef des terres? Has the role ever changed?*
- Est-ce que vous avez beaucoup de contact avec les vieux où le Maire a Yahoo? La coopération, elle marche comment?  
*Do you have any contact with the elders or the mayor of Yahoo? What does the cooperation look like?*
- C'est vrai que vous êtes responsable de la division de la terre a Yahoo? Qu'est-ce que vous faites?  
*Is it true that you are responsible for the division of land in Yahoo? What do you do?*
- Est-ce qu'il y a des terres communes dans le village?  
*Are there any common spaces within the village?*
- Vous êtes responsable de quelles cérémonies a Yahoo?  
*Which ceremonies are you in charge of in Yahoo?*
- Qu'est-ce que vous voulez faire avec la terre située dans la forêt classée?  
*What would you like to do with the grounds that include the forêt classé?*
- Vous croyez que votre rôle va changer dans la future?  
*Do you think your role will change in the future?*
- Votre famille, ils font quoi comme travaille?  
*What does the members of your do for a living?*
- La vie du nouveau chef des terres va changer beaucoup quand il va etre élu?  
*Will life be a lot different for the coming chef des terres?*
- Est-ce qu'il y a un salaire où d'autres privilèges pour le chef des terres?  
*Does the chef des terres have some kind of salary or other privileges?*
- Le rôle comme chef des terres toujours a été dans votre famille?  
*Has the role of chef des terres always been held in your family?*
- Est-ce que le rôle comme chef des terres toujours a existé au village?  
*Has the role of the chef des terres always existed in the village?*
- Est-ce qu'il y a le même system à d'autres villages?  
*Does the same system exist in other villages?*
- Maintenant quand il y n'a pas un chef des terres spécifique, vous travaillez comment?  
*How do you work for the moment when there is no specific chef des terres?*

**Questions to the prefect**

- Combien de temps a tu travaillé à Yaho?  
*For how long have you been working in Yaho?*
- Qu'est que c'est ta fonction principale?  
*What is your principal function?*
- Est ce que, pendant ton temps ici cette fonction a changé?  
*Has this role changed during your time here?*
- Comment as tu eu ton travaille ici?  
*How did you get assigned for this job?*
- Est ce que tu a l'autorité de prendre des décisions, ils doivent être reconnu par un plus haut cas?  
*Do you have the authority to make decisions; do they have to be recognized at a higher instance?*
- Qu'est que sont les règles que tu dois suivre?  
*What are the rules that you have to follow?*
- Est ce-que différent décisions sont embauchées dans les différents niveaux du gouvernement?  
*Are different kinds of decisions taken on different levels of the government?*
- Est ce-qu' on a compris bien que tu es un juge dans certain cas? Comment ca c'est fait?  
*Is it correctly understood that you are a judge in certain cases? How is this organized?*
- Quesque sont tes chef?  
*Who are you higher chiefs?*
- Pourquoi il y a un partage dans deux niveaux, le département et la communauté?  
*Why is there a division in both departments and municipalities?*
- Nous avons entendue qu'il y a des groupes pour le brassage de bière et le coton, est ce-qu' il y a plusieurs de ces groupes?  
*We have heard that there are beer brewing and cotton groups; are there more groups of this kind?*
- Est ce-que tu ramasse des taxes où d'autres paiements?  
*Do you collect any taxes or other payments?*
- Est ce-que tu des personnelle qui t'aide dans ton travaille?  
*Do you have any employees that help you in your work?*
- La Mairie a une fonction de pouvoir, les vieux un autre. Est ce-qu' il y a un autre groupe un rôle similaire?  
*The Mayor and his co-workers has a power function, the elders an other, are there other groups with this kind of power?*
- Est ce-que tu as une responsabilité pour la forêt classé?  
*Do you have any responsibilities for the forêt classé?*
- Est ce-que tu pense que l'administration va fonctionner mieux maintenant avec les nouvelles communautés?  
*Do you think that the administration will work better now with the newly founded municipalities?*
- Qu'est ce que sont les plus grande problèmes avec les quelles tu travaille a Yaho?  
*What are the biggest problems that you have to work with in Yaho?*
- Qu'est que sont les frais que le département doit payer a l'état?

*What are the fees that the department has to pay to the state?*

- Est ce-que les préfets ont eu d'opposition quand les chefs du village ont été enlevés?

*Did the prefects meet any resistance when the village chiefs were removed?*

- Combien de contact as tu avec les habitants du village?

*How much contact do you have with the villagers?*

- Est ce-que tu es le chef de tous les employés de l'état?

*Are you the boss over all the governmental employees?*