

Seeds of solidarity



We thank all the volunteers and employees who contributed to the review of the Pépinière experience. The story and characters you are about to discover are fictional but freely inspired by their testimonies.

Special thanks to Quidora Morales from the Les Orageuses collective for leading this review.



WAS IT YOU WHO GOT OUR TICKETS FOR THE FESTIVAL? DO YOU HAVE THEM ON YOUR PHONE?

YES, YES, I GOT THEM!

PERFECT. BY THE WAY, I WANTED TO TELL YOU ABOUT SOMETHING!

GO AHEAD.



I'VE DECIDED TO GO TO AFRICA. I'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED IN A PROJECT TO HELP PEOPLE. I WANT TO FEEL USEFUL.

REALLY? WHY AFRICA THOUGH?

IT'S ALWAYS DRAWN ME, AND I'M SURE THERE ARE PLENTY OF ASSOCIATIONS WORKING THERE. I COULD HAVE CHOSEN LATIN AMERICA SINCE I SPEAK SPANISH... BUT AFRICA APPEALS TO ME MORE!

WHY NOT FRANCE THOUGH? IN MY STREET, THE TENTS ARE PILING UP, AND THE SITUATION SEEMS TO BE GETTING HARDER FOR MANY PEOPLE.

SOMETIMES, I FEEL SO POWERLESS...

I KNOW THERE ARE PROBLEMS HERE TOO, BUT I WANT TO LEAVE, TO DISCOVER OTHER CULTURES.

THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT CULTURES TO DISCOVER IN FRANCE! WE'RE AT THE SOLIDAYS FESTIVAL, LET'S TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET SOME ASSOCIATIONS. IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO ASK FOR ADVICE.



Welcome to Solidays





THAT'S PERFECT FOR YOU!
THEY'LL PROBABLY BE
ABLE TO HELP YOU.

LET'S TAKE A LOOK!

Hi, "FRÈRES DES HOMMES"!
ARE YOU A MEN-ONLY
ASSOCIATION, OR CAN I ASK
QUESTIONS TOO?



HAHAHA, HELLO! NO, AS YOU CAN SEE, THERE ARE WOMEN IN THE ASSOCIATION TOO. IT WAS FOUNDED IN 1965, SO THE NAME IS A BIT OUTDATED.

OK. AND WHAT DO YOU DO? HUMANITARIAN WORK ABROAD? BECAUSE I'D LIKE TO GO AND DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS.

ACTUALLY, WE DO MORE "WITH" OTHERS THAN "FOR" THEM. WE OFFER VOLUNTEERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN SOLIDARITY ACTIONS ABROAD WITH LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS.

HMM... I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO TRAVEL THE WORLD TO BE USEFUL.



WE DO A LOT OF WORK HERE TOO, YOU KNOW. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY CAN HAPPEN IN FRANCE.

HOW SO...?



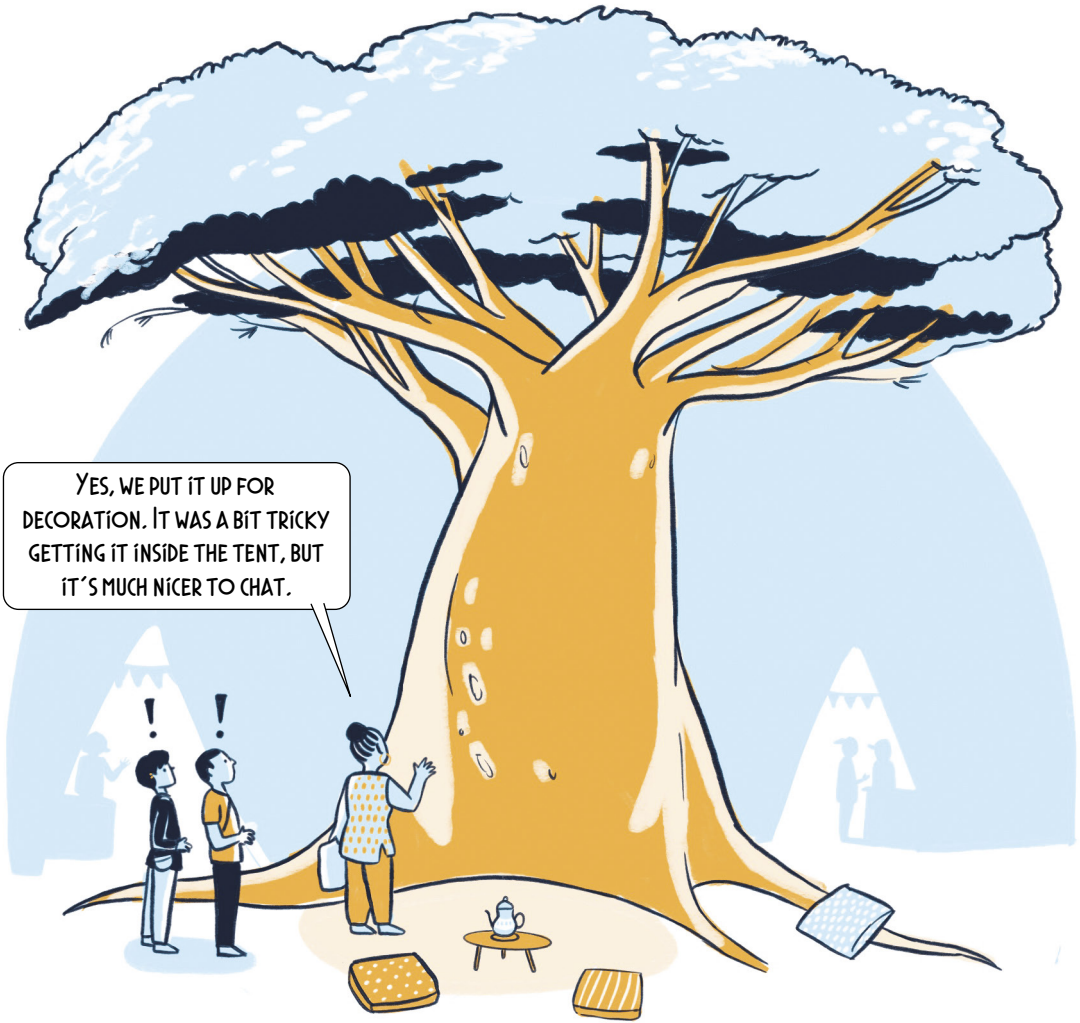
WELL... IT'S HARD TO SUM IT UP IN A FEW SENTENCES. IF YOU HAVE SOME TIME, COME HAVE TEA WITH ME. MY NAME IS AMÉLIA.

MARIANA

KARIM

LET'S CHAT UNDER THE TENT.

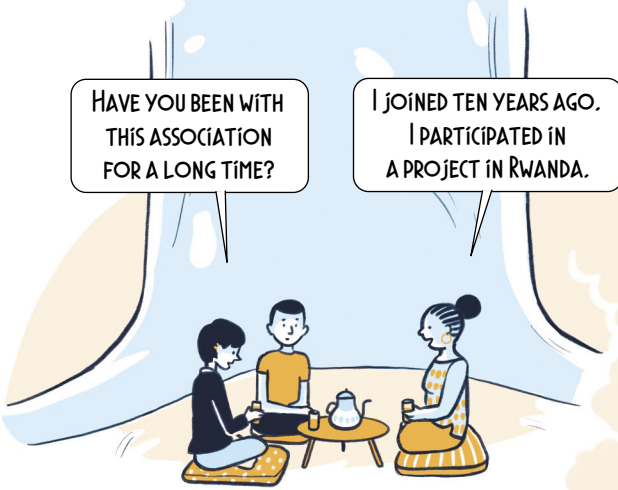




YES, WE PUT IT UP FOR DECORATION. IT WAS A BIT TRICKY GETTING IT INSIDE THE TENT, BUT IT'S MUCH NICER TO CHAT.

CAN I SERVE YOU SOME TEA?





HAVE YOU BEEN WITH THIS ASSOCIATION FOR A LONG TIME?

I JOINED TEN YEARS AGO. I PARTICIPATED IN A PROJECT IN RWANDA.



AMAZING!!! TELL US ABOUT IT!

OUCH, THAT'S HOT!!!

HAAAAHA

TOO IMPATIENT...



AT THE TIME, I WAS STUDYING TO BECOME AN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER.



BEFORE STARTING MY CAREER, I WANTED TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE. VOLUNTEERING ABROAD SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA.



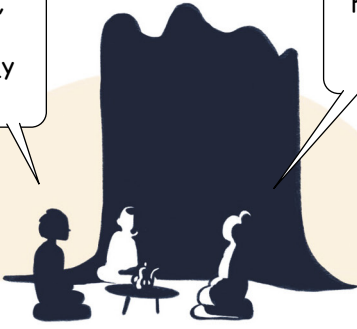
I HEARD ABOUT FRÈRES DES HOMMES. I LIKED THEIR APPROACH, AND I STARTED ATTENDING MEETINGS.

THEY INTRODUCED ME TO SYLVIE, MY MENTOR, A 54-YEAR-OLD NURSE VERY COMMITTED TO HUMAN RIGHTS, QUITE THE ACTIVIST.



AND I BECAME A "PÉPIN" (SEEDLING), WHICH MEANS SOMEONE WHO CO-CONSTRUCTS AN ACTION WITH A PARTNER ASSOCIATION ABROAD. I JOINED WHAT'S CALLED "LA PÉPINIÈRE DE LA SOLIDARITÉ INTERNATIONALE."

SO, IN THE END, "FRÈRES DES HOMMES" IS ONLY FOR WOMEN!



HAAAA NO, DON'T WORRY! BUT THE MENTORS AND PÉPINS DO HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: EVERYONE IS A VOLUNTEER!

SYLVIE LIVED IN THE MOUNTAINS. WE HAD NOTHING IN COMMON: I WAS 30 YEARS YOUNGER AND CAME FROM AN AFFLUENT, URBAN BACKGROUND. I DON'T THINK WE WOULD HAVE MET WITHOUT FRÈRES DES HOMMES.



WE BECAME FRIENDS. I VISITED HER OFTEN. WE WALKED FOR HOURS, TALKING ABOUT OUR LIVES AND COMMITMENTS.



SHE ENLIGHTENED ME ON THE IMPACT OF COLLECTIVE ACTION, POWER DYNAMICS, AND EMANCIPATION.



THROUGH HER, MY PERSPECTIVE EVOLVED. I STARTED ASKING NEW QUESTIONS. IN AFRICA, HOW SHOULD I INTERACT WITH THE LOCALS? WAS I GOING THERE TO "SAVE THE WORLD" OR TO BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER THAN ME?



FRÈRES DES HOMMES CONNECTED ME WITH AN ASSOCIATION WORKING ON FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN RWANDA.



TOGETHER, WE THOUGHT THAT A PROJECT TO BUILD DRYERS FOR PRESERVING VEGETABLES COULD BE INTERESTING.



AND THAT'S WHEN YOU LEFT?



OH NO. BEFORE LEARNING HOW TO BUILD DRYERS, I HAD TO LEARN PATIENCE.

ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL VALUES OF FRÈRES DES HOMMES IS "CO-CONSTRUCTION." IT BASICALLY MEANS WORKING WITH LOCAL PARTNERS, ASKING FOR THEIR INPUT, AND BUILDING THE PROJECT TOGETHER.



THERE'S NO ARRIVING AS A SAVIOR WITH A READY-MADE SOLUTION.



WE HAD TO ESTABLISH EXCHANGES WITH THE PARTNER IN RWANDA. BETWEEN INTERNET OUTAGES, PERIODS OF SILENCE, AND THE TIME IT TAKES TO UNDERSTAND AND TRUST EACH OTHER, IT WAS A LONG JOURNEY BEFORE LEAVING.



AND I'M NOT EVEN TALKING ABOUT THE FUNDRAISING WE HAD TO ORGANIZE TO FINANCE THIS ACTION...

FUNDRAISING?



YES! FRÈRES DES HOMMES DOESN'T COVER TRAVEL EXPENSES. FORTUNATELY, MY RELATIVES COULD HELP... BUT OF COURSE, I HAD TO CONVINCe THEM.

DAMN. MY FAMILY IS BROKE!



AND DO YOU KEEP GOING BACK TO RWANDA REGULARLY? YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT MUST BE HUGE...





NO, I HAVEN'T RETURNED. YET I EXPERIENCED UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS IN RWANDA. IT WAS HARD TO FIND MY PLACE AT FIRST, BUT WHAT A CELEBRATION WE HAD THE DAY I LEFT! WELL, THAT WAS TEN YEARS AGO. TIME HAS PASSED, AND MY VIEW OF COMMITMENT HAS CHANGED.

DURING MY LAST TRIP, A MAN ASKED ME: "IT'S GREAT THAT YOU'RE DOING THIS WITH US HERE, BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY?"

IT MADE ME THINK.



ONCE BACK IN FRANCE, I WANTED TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE FARMERS IN RWANDA.



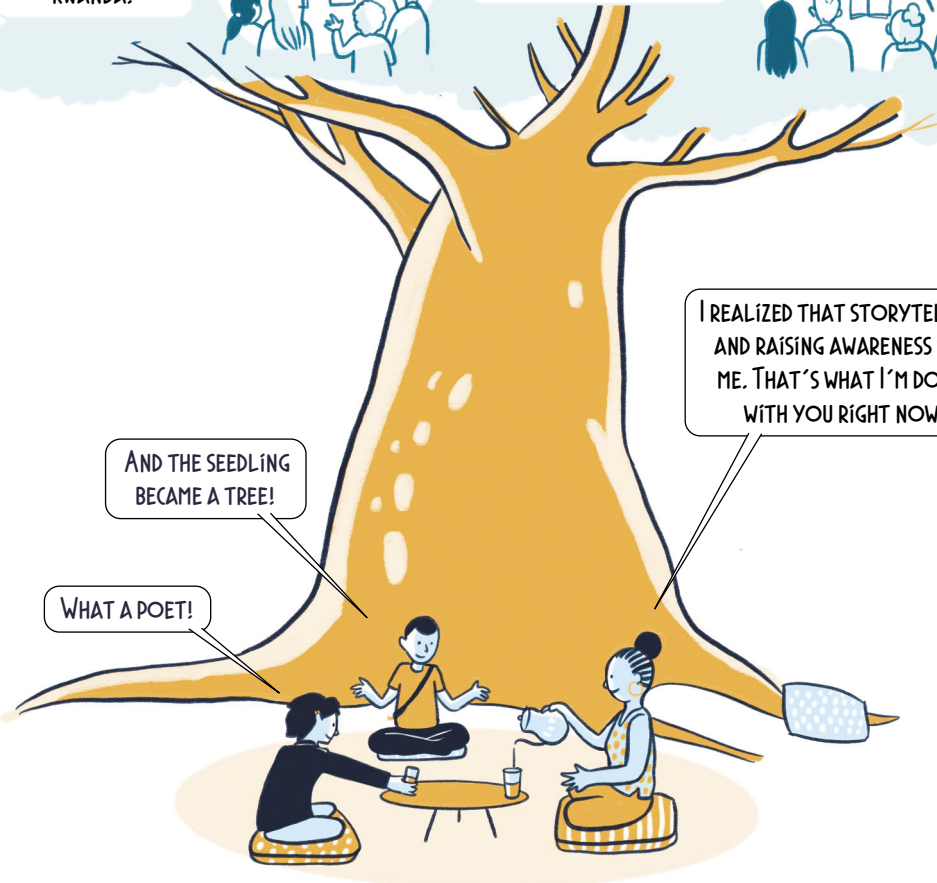
AND LITTLE BY LITTLE... I STARTED TALKING ABOUT POVERTY IN FRANCE, ISSUES OF RACISM, AND ISOLATION...



I REALIZED THAT STORYTELLING AND RAISING AWARENESS SUIT ME. THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING WITH YOU RIGHT NOW.

AND THE SEEDLING BECAME A TREE!

WHAT A POET!



WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT ACTIONS IN FRANCE, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU MEAN?



THERE'S SOMEONE HERE WHO CAN EXPLAIN IT BETTER THAN I CAN.

GÉRARD, DO YOU HAVE TIME TO JOIN US FOR TEA? MARIANA AND KARIM WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ACTIONS IN FRANCE.

HELLO! ARE YOU ALREADY PART OF AN ASSOCIATION?



NO, WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

WE THOUGHT "INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY" NECESSARILY MEANT "GOING ABROAD TO HELP."



THAT'S WHAT WE OFTEN THINK. IN ANY CASE, THE DESIRE TO HELP, WHEREVER IT MAY BE, IS ALWAYS A NOBLE GESTURE. I, TOO, WAS DRAWN TO PROJECTS ABROAD AT FIRST.



BUT EVENTUALLY, AFTER MEETING FRÈRES DES HOMMES, I REALIZED I WAS MORE INTERESTED IN THE QUALITY OF THE EXCHANGES THAN THE TRAVEL ITSELF.



WHAT I ENJOYED WAS RETHINKING HOW I INTERACT WITH OTHERS.

TRUSTING, ACTING COLLECTIVELY, REFLECTING ON MY ROLE WITHIN THE GROUP, EVERYTHING WAS NEW TO ME. AT MY AGE, WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT!

ANYWAY, ONE DAY THERE WAS A MEETING WITH YOUNG EXILES.



WHEN THE FRÈRES DES HOMMES VOLUNTEERS PROPOSED CO-CONSTRUCTING A PROJECT WITH THESE YOUNG PEOPLE, I HAD A SUDDEN DESIRE TO GET INVOLVED!

WHERE WERE THESE YOUNG PEOPLE FROM?



FROM ALL OVER, MAINLY AFRICA.



AT FIRST, WE ORGANIZED THE WORKSHOPS WITH THE VOLUNTEER TEAM. I LOVED THOSE MOMENTS OF EXCHANGE.



WE GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND BUILT TRUST, JUST AS WE DID WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

DESPITE EVERYTHING THEY HAD BEEN THROUGH, THEY WERE SO DYNAMIC AND CREATIVE... I WAS IMPRESSED.



AFTER MANY DISCUSSIONS TO CHOOSE OUR ACTION, WE DECIDED TO ORGANIZE AN INTERGENERATIONAL MEETING. THE IDEA WAS TO ENGAGE WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE THROUGH BOARDGAMING TOGETHER.



DID YOU REALLY IMAGINE AND SET EVERYTHING UP TOGETHER?



YES! IN FACT, WE WERE INSPIRED BY OUR PARTNERS IN SENEGAL WHO ALSO ORGANIZE COLLECTIVE ACTIONS.



IT WAS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE. WE DISCUSSED MANY TOPICS AND MANAGED TO TALK ABOUT RACISM AND SOLIDARITY.

AND ABOVE ALL, I SAW BONDS FORMING BETWEEN PEOPLE. I'LL NEVER FORGET THOSE MOMENTS, NOR WHAT THE STRENGTH OF THE COLLECTIVE ALLOWED US TO CREATE.



THAT'S AMAZING! IF I WANTED TO JOIN A PROJECT LIKE THAT, WOULD I BE GUIDED? HOW DO ONE BECOMES A VOLUNTEER WITH YOU?

THERE ARE ONLINE PRESENTATIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION EVERY MONTH—START WITH THAT! DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL BE WELL ACCOMPANIED. WE OFFER PLENTY OF TRAINING. HERE, I'LL GIVE YOU THE CATALOG.



WELL DONE... I'M LOST. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT ANYMORE!

DON'T LOSE YOUR DESIRE TO STAND WITH OTHERS. IF YOU WANT TO HEAR STORIES FROM FARAWAY PLACES, COME TO A SEMINAR THAT BRINGS TOGETHER OUR FOREIGN PARTNERS. YOU'LL UNDOUBTEDLY MEET GREAT PEOPLE.

GOODBYE AND ENJOY THE CONCERT!

AND THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING!

HURRY, WE'RE LATE!



DON'T WALK TOO FAST, I'M READING THE CATALOG... WOW, THERE'S A TRAINING CALLED "MIGRATIONS AND INTERCULTURALITY." THAT SOUNDS SUPER INTERESTING!

PFFF... TOO IMPATIENT!





Art workshop, India



Food preservation, Rwanda



Waste collection, Senegal



FDH stand, Solidays



Waste collection, France



Solidarity cooking, France



Games workshop, France

Like Mariana and Karim, you would like to learn more about Frères des Hommes, our actions, and our evolution? Here are some answers!

Who are we?

Frères des Hommes is an international solidarity association founded in 1965, non-religious and independent of any political party or union. Over 60 years, our way of operating abroad has evolved significantly! Since the 2000s, we have specialized in supporting the emancipation processes of vulnerable populations through training and collective action. We develop solidarity projects abroad with civil society associations in various countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These projects implement various actions aimed at transforming social relationships in areas such as agroecology, urban development, popular education, and access to rights... The salaried team of Frères des Hommes supports partner associations in project management and training dynamics. However, international solidarity is not just a matter for professionals! That's why, in 2015, Frères des Hommes created the International Solidarity "Pépinière".

The International Solidarity "Pépinière"

The Pépinière consists of volunteer teams in different cities in France that co-construct solidarity actions. Since its creation, the Pépinière has supported over a hundred Pépins (seedlings). As Amélia mentioned, the Pépins are volunteers who imagine solidarity actions with partner associations abroad, supported by volunteer mentors (community radio setup, vegetable dryers,

art workshops...). Since 2022, the Pépinière volunteers have also been co-constructing collective actions in France, as illustrated by Gérard's experience (intergenerational meetings, waste collection, solidarity cooking...).

This evolution was inspired by our partner associations! In 2017, Frères des Hommes and eight other associations created an international network for sharing experiences—the "Train to Transform" collective. Within this collective, the partner associations emphasized that they all worked within collective solidarity dynamics in their own countries... except for Frères des Hommes! So, why not launch similar projects in France by drawing on the experience of our partners? Today, the Pépinière's volunteer teams therefore build various actions: solidarity actions abroad, collective solidarity actions in France with vulnerable people, and awareness-raising actions for all kinds of audiences on topics like migration, the environment, youth, and gender relations. Volunteers from Frères des Hommes benefit from free training and can also participate in seminars, either remotely or in person, with members of partner associations abroad to exchange on these different solidarity action experiences.

Why this comic book?

In 2023, we collectively conducted a review of the Pépinière's eight years of existence. For several months, volunteers and employees

participated in group interviews and analysis sessions to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Pépinière and to imagine ways to improve. These reflections and findings are echoed in Amélia's presentation. Indeed, these months of investigation revealed that the co-construction of actions abroad was sometimes difficult to bring to completion because it heavily relies on individual motivation. Pépins, who are mainly students, sometimes have life or study plans that are not compatible with the long-term co-construction process. As a result, some mentorships did not always lead to an action. Additionally, the fundraising efforts, which were often based on the Pépins' personal networks, favored the participation of people from middle and upper classes. Finally, the ecological issue raised by Karim could also be questioned. Yet, whether or not it led to a concrete action, the co-construction of a project abroad has always had a significant impact on the volunteers involved, as it made them aware of essential issues in today's world. First, the fact that our worldview is largely influenced by our environment, social context, and the country we live in... But also the fact that the problems faced in different parts of the planet are interconnected, and that we all share a common destiny and the need to work together to reduce inequalities and build more social and environmental justice. Many people involved in the Pépinière, whether as Pépins or mentors, have thus continued and developed their civic engagement within Frères des Hommes or in other local initiatives.

powerful lever for emancipation, awareness, and transformation of our societies towards a fairer world. Becoming a volunteer within the Pépinière means joining a volunteer team that co-constructs collective solidarity actions and awareness-raising initiatives in partnership with other civil society associations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and France. Becoming a volunteer within the Pépinière means participating in training, discovering methods of action and facilitation, and making connections in France and abroad. It's an opportunity to realize the power that collective commitment brings us. Join us!

Our current volunteer offer

Building on all these experiences, we continue today the adventure of the International Solidarity Pépinière with the conviction that the co-construction of solidarity actions is a



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At a festival, Mariana and Karim meet the association **Frères des Hommes** and the volunteers of the **International Solidarity "Pépière"**. But what does the term «international solidarity» mean today? And what does it mean to get involved? Through meetings and discussions, Mariana and Karim will discover solidarity actions that neither of them could have imagined...

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En partenariat
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