



OGCEYOD

NEWS

LETTER

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No 1

Visit of the German Development Service (DED) Cameroon

The assistant technical coordinator of volunteer programs in Cameroon, Miss Sonja Bataune visited the organization's office on the 09th of April 2009 to discuss partnership between our organizations especially in the area of volunteering. She made a brief assessment of OGCEYOD capacity and left for Yaoundé.

Upcoming Events

OGCEYOD will be commemorating the World Environment Day on the 5th June 2009 by sensitizing Youth and Women religious groups in Limbe the South West Region of Cameroon from the 1st to the 7th of June 2009. They will also organize a radio talk show on the issue.

OGCEYOD'S THRIVING COMMITMENT TO MAKE EDUCATION REACHABLE AND ATTAINABLE TO THE SOUTH WEST REGION'S NEXT GENERATION



Book Donations at G.H.S Limbe



Book donations at S.B.C Limbe

During the months of January and February, OGCEYOD was proud to be a part of a major book distribution project, in collaboration with **Teach-A-Dream**, a **United States** based charity organization. "Teach A Dream" is a non-profit organization which seeks to improve the quality of education for children in Sub-Saharan Africa by improving the quality of training for teachers and provide teachers with much needed professional support and classroom materials. For their *Winter 2008 Project*, **Teach-A-Dream** donated about 5,000 textbooks & books as well as other teaching materials to several schools, NGO's and a library in the South West Region of Cameroon.

Making these books available to students, teachers and the community, the organization hopes it will not only enhance the scope for teachers but foster research and develop a much needed reading culture especially in young Cameroonians. Recipients of donations included: Saker Baptist College, Government High School, Kulu Memorial Comprehensive High School, Kofele Luma Memorial Academy, Carl Steane Memorial School, Lura May Bustin Memorial Christian Academy, NHISS Limbe, CCAS Kumba, CKC Tiko, First Choice Bilingual Nursery and Primary School Kumba, CCCHS Kumba, The African Alliance for Development Action (ADA), Global Network for Good Governance (GNGG), Elyon Rock Foundation, The Global Foundation for Environmental Education (GLOFEED) and The Regional Pilot library, Limbe. **OGCEYOD** and **Teach-A-Dream** will continue to work together to ensure the continuity of this project. We will leave you with words from a visionary leader-Nelson Mandela who cautions "Education is the great engine of personal development."

By Cecile Edie Etoke

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A FIVE DAY INTERACTION LEADERSHIP, PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TRAINING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION. ORGANIZED BY BRITISH COUNCIL



Participants at the Workshop



Participants brainstorming during workshop

A five day training workshop sponsored by the British High Commission was held at the Pan African Institute for Development Buea, South West region of Cameroon from the 09th to the 13th of February 2009. The workshop was aimed at building the Leadership, IT and project management skills/capacities of civil society organizations in five regions of Cameroon. It also offered an opportunity for participants to network amongst themselves on matters of common interest. During the training one of the facilitators from the University of Yaounde, Dr Emelda Samba Ngufer stressed on the fact that participants should learn best from what is working and they should be the change to enable others in their organizations. She went on to introduce the significant influences of communication which entail time, internal and context (TICing model) which is an excellent tools used in communication. On his part the Secretary of the British Council, Mr Giles Montagnon said that another aim of the program is to encourage partnership between the British Council and grass root organizations in Cameroon, a partnership which entails the British Council assisting local organizations in protecting their environment so as to limit the effects of climate change which has greatly affected other continents in the world. Also present during the workshop were representatives of local Civil society organizations like Reach Out, Peer Education Program Cameroon, Rural Development Centre, Global Network for Good Governance and a host of others.

By Elvis WEPNGONG



THREE DAY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP *By Elvis WEPNGONG*

During a five training workshop held at CERUT Limbe organized by Reach out Buea and sponsored by PASOC an international Non governmental organization based in Cameroon, participants dialogue on effective tools in the management of Civil Society Management. Participants had the opportunity to assess different accounting techniques and simple principles to promote accountability and transparency in their day to day activities. Leadership and good communication expertise were also a topic of discussion at the workshop. The workshop saw the participation of 15 civil society organizations in Limbe and Buea, South West region, Cameroon.

Late one evening, around 10.00pm, as I was returning from a beauty saloon, I came across a group of girls in different sizes and shapes, but their dressing was similar; short tight skirts and belly tops, body hugging clothes barely reaching their laps. Some of these girls were smoking and I asked myself what these beautiful girls were doing dressed like that at that time of the night when suddenly a car approached and they all gathered around it like a swarm of bees and one finally got into the car and the driver took off. Although I have heard a lot about prostitution, witnessing it was degrading since I am also a woman and most of these girls were of my age and even younger.

This cankerworm has eaten deep into the fabric of our society and many young girls have seen it as a viable option. When families and friends fail them, when our society fails them, all they say is “I have no other option and since this business requires no capital and all I need is my younger sister’s dress to reveal my curves and a pair of slippers, some cheap makeup to enhance my facial beauty, some scented spray to make me smell good and feet to take me to my sales point, I’ll be in business. I once listened to a vox pop my colleague carried out a few years ago on why girls engage in prostitution and what I realized was their opening statement went thus ‘na condition make njanga e back bend’ meaning **“This is a necessary evil.”**

What condition will make a girl sell her body for less than nothing? For money that can barely feed her, clothe her, pay for medications when she is sick or meet any basic need? Are these girls merely being lazy or has our society degenerated in such a way that it is willing to sacrifice its future? Who are those encouraging them? These and more are the questions that come to mind when we see them. Many girls who have succeeded in life today may have had worse experiences in life but did not turn to prostitution yet they weathered the storm. Yes, these young girls think they are trying to survive forgetting that the very act will ensure their demise.

Everyday we hear of the deadly pandemic HIV/AIDS but many still consider it a textbook or Hollywood story until it knocks on their doors. It is surprising that there are persons who still go in for unprotected sex with ‘people they just met in a club’. You meet a girl/boy and without knowing the person’s social/sexual habits or HIV/STD status, you hop into bed with him/her throwing all caution to the wind, forgetting you are putting your life at risk. Is it worth it?

Some of these prostitutes are more cautious because they are aware of the disease and protect themselves, but when a client proposes to pay a high sum of money some turn to accept the client’s condition. I also panic younger generation. Teenage girls, girls whose parents can vouch for their honor and integrity are those who now maintain a string of boyfriends and man friends. These men deceive them with little gifts and have their way with them and they in turn go back and date the younger ones. So the trend becomes alarming. An infected man infects a young girl who then infects her young boyfriend who finally infects his other girlfriends and the trend goes on and on. What a sick cycle. One must not stand along the street at night before she can be deemed a prostitute. Young girls dating old men and married men, that to me is prostitution because they are not dating these men with positive intentions but with the aim of extracting money from them forgetting what they are losing is greater than anything money can buy.

What is the society doing to curb this practice? We are all aware that to solve a problem one must get to the root of it. If love can be rekindled in families and parents especially mothers educate their children on the path they should follow and teach them the values of womanhood; If children can obey their parents and guardians like in the days of old; If our leaders can put in place measures to curb this practice by building structures that provide options for these girls being that a majority are homeless and lack skills in any trade or craft; If prostitution can be illegalized in our society; If the society can wake up from slumber and begin to do their work instead of amassing wealth for themselves; If the men who pick up these girls start respecting themselves and recognize that they predators driving our future into extinction; and If these girls begin to realize the pride of being a woman, a pride which must be protected and safeguarded with dignity, then we can begin to talk of change. Yes we can.

By

Cecile Edie Etoke

Recognition of the inherent human dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948)

Preparatory meeting for the World Environment Day (WED) celebration on the 5th of June 2009 with the Divisional Delegation of the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection (D.D.MINEP) Limbe.



Delegate taking notes during the meeting



Delegate and NGOs present at the meeting

A meeting aimed at planning activities to commemorate the World Environment Day, took place on Friday the 22nd of May, 2009 at the Divisional Office, Limbe. The meeting that brought together members of the civil society, was presided over by the Divisional Delegate of Environment and Nature Protection, Mr. Mr Nchia Peter Ghong who revealed that this year's activities to mark the day will be commemorated on the 4th of June by the divisional delegation, Limbe at the Limbe City Council Hall, and on the 5th of June by the provincial Delegation. He went on to say that the meeting was an opportunity for the organizations present to network with one another and was also the beginning of a long lasting partnership between these organizations and his department.

During the meeting, representatives of participating organizations were called upon to share their programmed activities to mark the day so that together, they could come up with a harmonized program of activities or partner with other organizations with similar activities to celebrate the World Environment Day. It is in this light that Mr. Ayuk Raphael of Africa Alliance for Development Action (AADA) highlighted some activities his organization has been putting in place which are geared towards the protection of the coastal line from strollers who misuse the resources from the sea, thereby depriving local fishermen their daily catch.

He further mentioned that their organization had already made T-shirts to that effect. He was advised by Mrs. Rose O. Mukete of the Divisional Delegation on the measures the government is already taking to address the situation, so it was needless trying to create chaos. She proposed that AADA should instead organize a talk with the women who dry fish in this area since they use Mangrove wood to perform that activity thereby causing deforestation.

On his part, the CEO of the Organization for Gender, Civic Engagement and Youth Development, Mr Elvis WEPNGONG, elaborated on their 7 day sensitization program on "Climate Change" starting from the 1st to the 7th of June 2009, with focus on youth and women religious groups in Limbe, as well as a talk program on the Ocean City Radio Limbe on the 5th of June. Madam Sofie Meilvang of the Limbe Wildlife Centre said that the zoo will have gorilla talks, tree planting and radio talks between the 1st to the 5th of June, with visitors of the zoo being the target group. She also mentioned that the Wildlife Centre has been carrying out programs with schools around the municipality on environment and the hunting of endangered species.

The Association of Tourism Guides proposed waste disposal talk, tree planting in strategic areas of the municipality and waste management along the coastal line as their activities to celebrate the 5th of June. The African centre for Research Development and Climate Change elaborated on the on going activities with schools in the Limbe municipality. Their activities involve essay and arts (drawing) competition on the environment, with prizes for the best in both categories to be handed on the 4th of June at the Limbe City Council Hall. The Development and Environment Officer of CAJAD proposed talks with religious groups in Limbe and a radio talk with Eden radio as their planned activities.

Participants of the meeting agreed on harmonizing the activities, and the 4th of June was approved by all organizations present to join the Divisional delegation to celebrate at the Limbe City Council Hall. Organizations will maintain their activities for the World environment Day but will all meet on the 4th June for the divisional celebration in Limbe and 5th June for the grand regional celebration in Buea. Organizations with similar activities were also asked to collaborate and those with no activities were asked to partner with others to observe the day. The participants selected topics for the radio talk show which were, Deforestation, waste disposal, tree planting, Environmental Education in schools and the cutting down of Mangroves around the coastal line by fishermen for their women to dry fish. Mr Ndenge proposed regular meetings with organizations at the delegation, a proposal which was approved by all and the next meeting was scheduled for the 2nd of June 2009 at 8:30am. It is worth mentioning that, this year's World Environment Day will be celebrated on the theme, "YOUR PLANET NEEDS YOU – Unite to Combat Climate Change".

By ELVIS WEPNGONG