



THE BELL



WORKING FOR A JUST AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IN THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON

A Monthly Publication of FIDA, GNGG, HELP OUT and MUDEC

Sponsored by The Open Society Initiative For West Africa (OSIWA)

OSIWA

December 2006

Creation of An Independent Electoral Commission MUDEC Group Team Leader Meets The Prime Minister



H.E. Chief Ephraim Inoni listens to proposals from the civil society

The Prime Minister, Head of Government, Inoni Ephraim on Saturday, November 25, 2006 began a series of broad based consultations in view of finalising the draft bill creating the independent commission that would henceforth take care of matters pertaining to elections in the country. The bill creating an independent electoral body is expected to be tabled for scrutiny by parliamentarians before the end of the November session.

These consultations which are therefore aimed at perfecting the text are part of instructions to Chief Inoni from President Paul Biya. The PM was aided in this task by the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals, the Minister of Territorial Administration and

Decentralisation, the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in charge of Relations with the National Assembly, the Secretary General at the PM's Office and his assistant as well as the Director of Cabinet.

In the course of the exercise, the



Prime Minister held discussions with political party leaders, heads of associations and representatives of the civil society. Among the people received were: Joseph Charles Doumba, Secretary General of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, Bello Bouba Maigari, UNDP leader, Anicet Ekane of Manidem, Jean Jacques Ekindi of the Mouvement Progressiste, Religious figures from the Catholic and Protestant churches, civil society actors like, Pauline Biyong, Charlie Mbonteh, experts, etc. They all had their say in the matter.

MUDEC Group was one of the civil society organisations that were invited upon to give their contribution. MUDEC Group was representing Civil Society Organisations from the South West Province, most especially SWECSON in which its Team Leader, Charlie Mbonteh is Secretary General.

The Open Society Institute & The Soros Foundations Network

The Open Society Institute (OSI) is a private operating and grant-making foundation based in New York City that serves as the hub of the Soros Foundations Network, a group of autonomous foundations and organizations in more than 50 countries. OSI and the network implement a range of initiatives that aim to promote open societies by shaping government policy and supporting education, media, public health, and human and women's rights, as well as social, legal, and economic reform.



George Soros extends support to Africa

To diminish and prevent the negative consequences of globalization, OSI seeks to foster global open society by increasing collaboration with other non-governmental organizations, governments and international

institutions.

OSI was founded in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union. Those foundations were established starting in 1984, to help former communist countries in their transition to democracy. The Soros Foundations network has expanded its geographic reach to include foundations and initiatives in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Mongolia, Southeast Asia, Turkey and the United States. OSI also supports selective projects in other parts of

The Open Society Initiative For West Africa (OSIWA)

The Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) is dedicated to supporting the creation of open societies in West Africa, marked by functioning democracy, good governance, the rule of law, basic freedoms, and widespread civic participation. OSIWA believes that it best serves by sustaining catalytic and innovative initiatives that add value to the efforts of West Africa's civil society. OSIWA seeks to collaborate with advocacy groups, like-minded foundation, governments and donors. OSIWA further recognizes the



*Abdul Tejan Cole
Chair of OSIWA's Board of
Directors*



*Mrs. Nana Tanko
Executive Director, OSIWA*

importance of incorporating global developments in building open societies and seeks a greater commitment to the region

by rich nations.

OSIWA serves 15 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as Cameroon, Chad and Mauritania. The ECOWAS members are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

OSIWA is based in Dakar, Senegal. The foundation also maintains an office in Abuja, Nigeria, which focuses on good governance and human rights programs in Nigeria.

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

As we reach the finish line of the Project to Create More Open Societies in the South West Province (PCMODS-SWP), it pains our entire editorial crew to say GOOD BYE after twelve months of reporting activities organised by FIDA Cameroon, HELP OUT, GNNGG and MUDEC Group throughout the South West Province. We give you the honour to judge on the impact that we have created through this project.

Our pain gets bigger as we finish on a sad note: GODDY IS NO MORE!. This young hardworking Cameroonian who helped extend OSIWA's funding to civil society organisations in Cameroon,

left us prematurely after a brief working visit to his fatherland.

We last saw him on November 5 during an Evaluation meeting/mission effected in Cameroon to assess the impact of the PCMODS-SWP. His satisfaction left us hopeful that, through his patriotism, more NGOs would benefit from OSIWA Funding. This hope is not shattered but GODDY won't be there to see the fruits of his labour.

May His Soul Rest in Perfect Peace!

Stay Blessed!

George Mbella



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MUDEC GROUP's Proposal on the Composition and Functioning of an Independent Electoral Commission

Background on MUDEC

Since the advent of multiparty politics in Cameroon in 1990 there has been an increasing demand by the citizenry for greater decentralization in governance. Some strides have been made in this direction, notably the provision for regional and local government in the 1996 revised constitution.

On the field, however, municipalities have continued to stagnate due to a multiplicity of problems: insufficient resources, unskilled management, citizen apathy, conflict of roles and relationships, neglect of the marginalized, lack of transparency in management etc, a far cry from good local governance.

The result is rural exodus, urban decay, unemployment, rise in violent crime, alarming rise in the incidence of HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, etc and the list goes on.

It is against this background that MUDEC GROUP was formed with the aim of developing the capacity of municipal authorities as well as the communities living therein to work together to build sustainable municipalities in Cameroon. MUDEC-GROUP is a service delivery organization located in Buea, South West Province of Cameroon.

MUDEC GROUP is a development-oriented organization with no political, religious or cultural affiliations. It comprises individuals with multi-disciplinary backgrounds who are well versed in their subject area.

Background on Elections in Cameroon

Since 1992 Cameroon has organized several multi-party elections - Presidential, Parliamentary and Council. For most citizens, however, this has largely been cosmetic as all previous election results have been vigorously contested on the basis of widespread rigging and voter disenfranchisement.



The Prime Minister's close aides at the Consultations

For instance, during the 2002 elections to both the Parliament and Local Councils there were 6.8 million registered voters nationwide. But for the recent 2004 presidential elections only about 4 million registered in spite of several public sensitization campaigns.

The Government of Cameroon is therefore determined to improve on this situation by instituting an Independent Electoral Commission.

The Management Control Team of MUDEC Group in its continuous attempt to contribute towards national development and having consulted other shades of opinion on this issue herewith proposes to the government to consider the following:

Establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission

There is an Electoral Commission for the Republic, which is independent and subject only to the constitution and the law.

The Commission shall be impartial and shall exercise its powers and perform its functions without fear, favour or

prejudice.

The constitution of the Republic is amended to create this organ

Objective of the Independent Electoral Commission

The objective of the Commission is to strengthen constitutional democracy and promote democratic electoral processes.

Power, duties and functions of the Independent Electoral Commission

- Manage any election;
- Ensure that any election is free and fair;
- Promote conditions conducive to free and fair elections;
- Promote knowledge of sound and democratic electoral processes;
- Compile and maintain voters' rolls by means of a system of registering of eligible voters by utilizing data available from government sources and information furnished by voters;
- Compile and maintain a register of parties;
- Establish and maintain liaison and co-

MUDEC Group's Proposal on the Composition and Functioning of an Independent Electoral Commission

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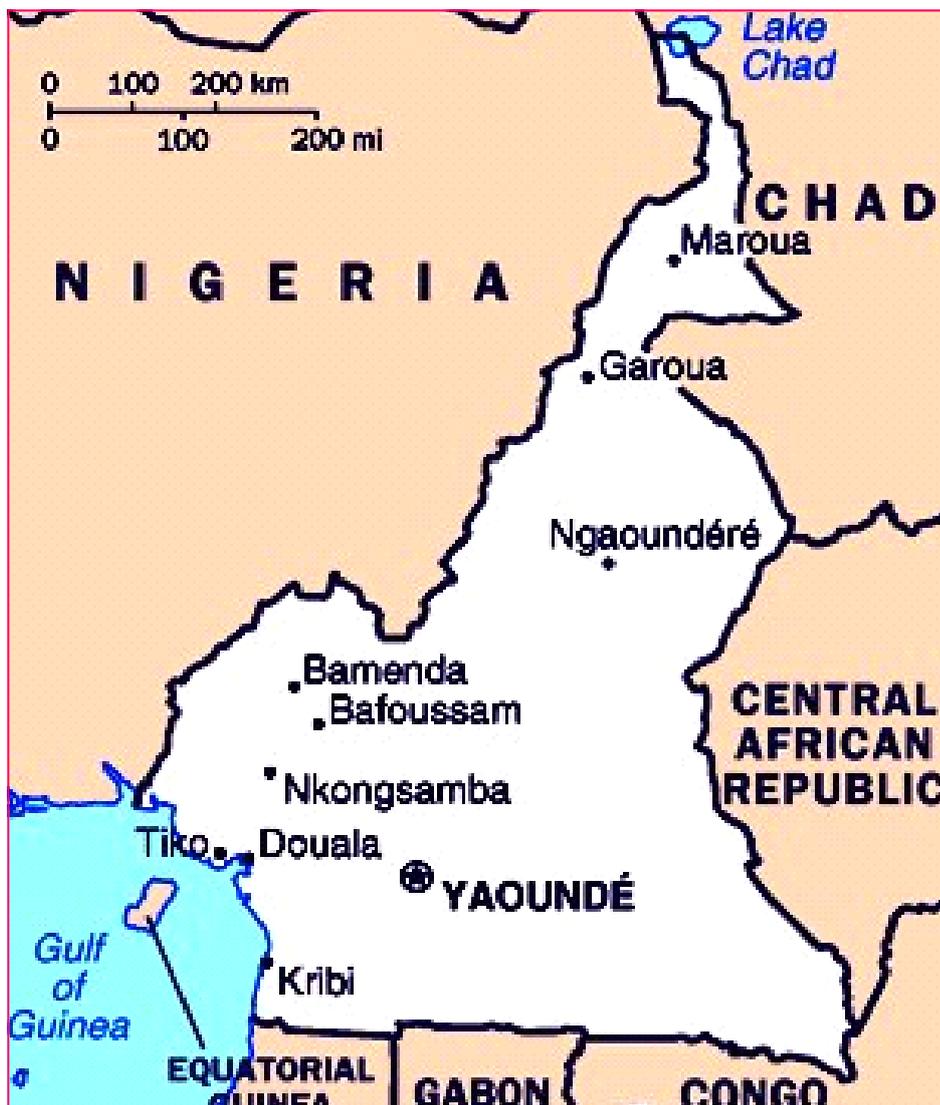
operation with parties;

- Undertake and promote research into electoral matters;
- Promote the development of electoral expertise and technology in all spheres of government;
- Continuously review electoral legislation and propose electoral legislation, and to make recommendations in connection therewith;
- Promote voter education;
- Promote co-operation with and between persons, institutions, governments and administrations for the achievement of its objectives;
- Demarcate wards in the local sphere of government or to cause them to be demarcated;
- Declare the results of elections for national, regional and municipal legislative bodies within seven days after such elections;
- Adjudicate disputes which may arise from the organization, administration or conducting of elections and which are of an administrative nature; and
- Appoint appropriate public administrations in any sphere of government to conduct election when necessary.

Composition , Term of Office and Conduct

10 members;

- Comprising one from each province with a fair gender balance;
 - They are nominated by the President and endorsed by Parliament and the Supreme Court
 - They should include Cameroonians from several career backgrounds and political parties;
 - They can be removed by Act of Parliament only;
 - The Term should be 10 years with no re-appointment;
 - There should be a Chief Electoral Officer;
 - There should be Regional Offices comprising persons from within the Province (region)
- Protected from prosecution for acts related to their activities as members



of the commission

Conduct

- Members should serve impartially and independently and perform their functions as such in good faith and without fear, favour or prejudice;
- If appointed in a full-time capacity, members serve as such to the exclusion of any other duty or obligation arising out of any other employment or occupation or the holding of any other office, unless specifically authorized thereto by the President.

OTHER ISSUES

Administration, Staff and Accountability

- There should be a Chief Electoral Officer (appointed by the

Commission) who is the head of administration/accounting of the commission

- There should be annual audits of the commission

Registration of Political Parties

The Chief Electoral Officer, upon consultation with the commission should register political parties in Cameroon

Establishment of an Electoral Court

There should be an electoral court with status of the Supreme Court that should make rules in terms of which electoral deputies and complaints about infringements of the Electoral Code of conduct are resolved.

CHAMEG Puts Smiles on the Faces of OVCs in Fako Division

CHAMEG and leaders of 28 CBOs in Fako Division trained under PLAN CAMEROON 4 s programme that extended 28 million CFA Francs to assist 3323 OVCs is waxing strong.

CHAMEG'S committment to continue vulgarising the doctrine of the « Circle of Hope » is reflected in the constant follow up of identified orphans while providing nutrntional and

psychosocial assistance to them.

Special thanks go to the 28 trained group leaders who are committed to managing the income gerating projects meant to earn incomes to support these orphans.

Some orphans were provided with basic school needs like books, pens, pencils, bags and uniforms at the start of this academic year; while very needy OVCs enjoyed in addition special meals prepared for them.

«The Journey of Hope » as CHAMEG terms it, is quite commendable, thanks to PLAN CAMEROON FOR THE INSPIRATION.

*By Lucia Mbu
CHAMEG's
Administrator*



FAREWELL TO GODDY FONYE

The cold hands of DEATH hit the entire OSIWA family last November with the sudden death of Godwin Yenika Fonye, erstwhile Programme Officer at the OSIWA Office in Dakar, Senegal.

Thousands of mourners stormed his family residence in Kumbo to pay their last respect to the young hero whose brilliant service at one of Africa's most prominent funding organisations, will always be remembered.

His death is a great loss to the civil society in Cameroon as some had started benefitting from OSIWA's funding thanks to his sense of patriotism.

The burial took place on December 16 2006 in Kumbo, Bui Division, North West Province.



Gamal was a jovial, witty and caring son, brother, uncle, cousin, colleague and friend. He always kept his friends and any company around him interested with his dry sense of humour. He was very intelligent, duty conscious and humble at heart. He always smiled and wanted everyone around him to have a good time, so he was the perfect entertainer

He definitely loved his food and loved sharing it too with company.

He was very career driven and set very high academic and social standards which

he followed right through to the end. You can trace his path of determination and success from Buea (kindergarten to primary school), Bamenda (primary through secondary school), Buea (high school), Yaounde (Bachelor's degree in law), Belgium (Master's degree in law), Georgia (Master's degree in law), Wisconsin (PhD) and through this endless path of struggle and success he indeed experienced a vast entity of the world by means of internships from the Carter center in Atlanta, Peace keeping center in Novoscotia, Canada, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Arusha Tanzania, United Nations, Sierra Leone and then finally the International Criminal Court, Hague Holland before he landed his dream job in Dakar-Senegal as Law, Justice, Human Rights & Program officer for Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)

What an accomplishment in such a short time. We as family and friends would like him remembered for the quality of life he lived and how he affected our lives while he was with us

We would like him remembered by all the fond memories as well as the struggles we shared with him. Most importantly may the lord welcome him with open arms where we hope to meet him again, one day

International Human Rights Day Celebrated in Buea



December 10th, 1948 is the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration guarantees the rights of all people and encompasses a broad spectrum of economic, social, cultural, political, and civil rights.

This day continues to be celebrated the world over as Human Rights Day.

Celebrating this day marks the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Help Out Centre for Human Rights Education in collaboration with Human rights Clubs it supports in some secondary schools in Buea and the South West Regional Office of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, acknowledging the importance of 10th December, jointly celebrated the International Human Rights Day on 10th December, 2006.

A march past starting from Cameroon Opportunity Industrialisation Centre (C.O.I.C) Buea up to the Independence

Square marked this year's celebration. During the march past, students carried placards with messages "no to corruption", "stop domestic violence against women", "freedom of expression", and "every human being is born free and equal in dignity".... Prior to the march past, there were speeches, sketches, songs and award of prizes.

This year International Human Rights Day was celebrated under the theme "**Fighting Poverty is Obligatory, not Charity**" carefully selected by the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights as a message to leaders across Nations in serious consideration of poverty afflicting nations world-wide.

Being first of it kind, the representative of the South West Regional Office of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedom Mr. Nchanji in his speech, thanked Help Out for this laudable initiative and explained that it was in line with the government's effort to

enlighten her citizens on their rights and obligations.

Mr. Julian Buckhalter from the University of Fribourg in Switzerland on internship at HELP OUT thanked the regional secretary's representative, patrons and members of the human rights clubs for their participation and encouraged them to continue to be actors to such educative programmes. He also added that human rights are the barometers of every country's democracy.

The Director of HELP OUT, Clarkson Obasi, said next year's celebration will take a different dimension as it will be a Human Rights festival bringing together other human rights organisations from within and outside the country.

By
Ofe Valentine
HELP OUT
Buea

GNGG attends Transformation Thinkers Conference in Berlin Germany



Transformation Thinkers
Berlin, 6 - 11 November 2006

Twenty Five young leaders representing various development organisations from 25 countries attended a week long Conference on transformation thinking in Berlin Germany, the third in a series.

GNGG Cameroon was represented by its Secretary General, Mr Mukete Tahle Itoe.

The Conference was organised by the Bertelsmann Foundation and sponsored by the German International Development Organisation (GTZ).

The mission of the transformation thinkers is to enhance the international exchange of knowledge and experiences.

It offers a cross-regional and cross-sectoral forum, unique amongst comparable programmes, for joint reflection on strategies for solving key problems associated with change to market-based Democracy.

During the week long discussions, papers were presented, experiences were shared and strategies to generate and manage change in selected states and regions were advanced.

At the end of the Conference, a network of transformation thinkers was created.

GNGG coordinates the activities of the Network in Cameroon.

It should be recalled that the first and second transformation thinkers conferences took place in the years 2003 and 2005 respectively in Berlin Germany.

GNGG is expected to share the knowledge and experiences gained at the conference with other civil society organisations in Cameroon.

« The Conference was organised by the Bertelsmann Foundation and sponsored by the German International Development Organisation (GTZ) »

Gender Sensitive Eco-Guide Training Workshop Organised in Limbe

This training workshop that started on Monday 27th November- 1st December 2006 at the Limbe Botanic Gardens was aimed at building capacities of local people to participate in Ecotourism activities around the Mount Cameroon Region, how to manage visitors in our own environmental settings and habits we need to exhibit when we take visitors to our environment.

The Gender Sensitive Eco-guide training workshop organized by **FAAFNET** & **SAJOVOC** in collaboration with the Limbe Botanic Garden was technically assisted by the JAFF Foundation in the Netherlands. This Foundation supports activities that are geared towards improving the livelihoods of Orphans, poor and destitute children.

ATTENDANCE

The sixteen participants came from the Buea Municipality (FAAFNET, SAJOVOC & Mount CEO) and from the Limbe Municipality.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- To build capacities of local guides in basic tourist site interpretation within the MCR,
- Widen knowledge of tour operation leading to employment of local guides,
- Improve environmental understanding & public awareness of the values of Natural resources,
- Provide skills, guidelines and techniques for guide-visitor relation,
- Increase the number of eco-guides within the MCR/S.W.P
- Promote local involvement in environmental protection.

WORKSHOP DAY 1

The workshop, which started at 8:00 am, began with a welcome speech from the Conservator of the LBG. This was closely followed by a word from the Executive Director of FAAFNET and the Coordinator of SAJOVOC, Mr.



Cletus Sembu. There was an introduction to the course by Mr. Tanda Godwin, training Manager and the Moderator, Mr. Peter Sanga.

METHODOLOGY

Participatory approach in the form of interactive discussions, questions, suggestions, presentations, field exercise, assignments and answers guided the workshop.

The training programme took its course guided by Mr. Chick David, the resource person with a post workshop tour in the LBG. During this tour, participants were introduced to the history of the LBG i.e. from the Germans to British, preparing visitors before a guided tour and interpretations on different interest points of the Garden. Some interest points include; the Musa Genetic Collection (The Banana and plantain Family), the Young West African Timber Species, the Jungle Village, Ornamental Palm collection, Symbolic British War Graves of 1914, the Greenhouse and the Water Lily Pond section amongst others.

Thereafter, the 1st Presentation was that of Ornithology, the principles of understanding bird's diversity by David Chick-an Eco-guide with the LBG. Important points he highlighted include; what is all about the study of birds?, the principles that underlines

the study, classification and identification of birds, some examples and methods to use in observing birds in the field or during bird watching.

The 2nd Presentation was on The Concept of Ecotourism with special reference to the MCR by Mr. Akpo Cletus, MINTOUR Buea. Points of interest include; resources that attract tourists to the MCR, opportunities in developing Ecotourism activities, code of ethics & categories of integration in into MINTOUR as an Eco-guide.

The last presentation for day one programme was that of Mr. Sinforence Formanyi. He focused on issues related to security and safety measures that could be exhibited during guided tours, measures to adopt to avoid accidents, common diseases and how to prevent them and first aid.

Questions, suggestions and assignments (in constituted groups) were given after each presentation.

DAY TWO

TUESDAY 28th November 2006

Day 2 activities started with a practical exercise on team building in constituted group of 5s. Group 1, Arena was to visit the Hotspot Restaurant, Group 2, LBG was to visit the Bifunde Centre, Group 3, Prospection was to visit the Craft shop, Group 4, Cats tail was to visit the LBG ticket shop while Group 5, MCP was to visit the Batoke park. The following information was needed from each of this facility; their accessibility, value and pricing, location, customer service and choice. The raison d'etre of the exercise was to facilitate the working in groups by participants to share knowledge and experience, learning to put our different information into one piece, cooperation, facilitating tasks and idea building. A recap of Day 1 activities followed.

The first presentation for the day was that on Nature Interpretation

(NI) by Mr. Ambe George. His content centred on what NI is about, why do we need Interpretation, the characteristics of good Interpretation, tips to capture attention of visitors during NI, kinds of Interpretation and planning an interpretation programme for your visitor.

This was later followed by a field practical session in the Garden around the medicinal plant collection section by Mr. David Chick and Ambe George.

The 2nd presentation was that of Miss Gladys on communication and Interpretation skills in NI. Much of what she presented was on effective communication methods and presentation skills.

The 3rd was that of Mr. Wilson Bern of the Limbe Wildlife Centre on Ecotourism and Wildlife Management with focus on the Limbe Zoological Garden. A brief history of the centre from its inception, transformation till its present state and the different varieties of Wildlife Species being protected and finally the coming of PANDRILLUS now working in collaboration with the Government of Cameroon.

The 4th was that of the Ecology of Tourists areas in the SWP or Off-location tips on the Ecology of tourist areas in the SWP) by Tanda Godwin. Important themes include; the definitions of terminologies like Ecology, Ecosystem, Ecotourism & tourist sites. In conclusion of day 2 agenda, an assignment was given to participants to be presented during day 3.

DAY THREE

Wednesday 29th November 2006.

Day 3 activities started with field practical on N.I and Bird watching at the Bota Hill, North of the LBG. A review of Day 2 activities was done by one participant.

The 1st presentation of Day 3 started on Environmental Education and Waste Management by Mr. Ngwa Christopher. The following themes were elaborated during this presentation:

-Problem statement, definition of some basic terms concerning the

Environment, Waste Management by an Eco-guide and his/her tourist, consequences of poor waste management on the Environment and a practical lesson.

During the practical exercise, participants were asked to move out of the conference hall, collect any type of waste of their choice, which were classified into two categories; Biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes.

The 2nd presentation was that on Environmental Education by Tanda Godwin. What EE is all about and its relation to NI. EE according to him is the understanding, interpreting and management of things around you; while NI refers to revealing nature to your visitor(s). EE is a universal set to NI. For EE to be effective, it should involve the production and use of Educational materials, during exhibition, games, treasure moulds etc.

Another presentation i.e. the 3rd was that on Tour guiding skills, code of conduct and experience. Here participant were made to understand skills involved in NI as an Eco-guide, how you can offer a guided tour to tourists before, during and after your guided tour.

The 4th presentation by Tanda Godwin centred on the Basic Knowledge in Interpretation. Here the various components and stages involved in NI were introduced to participants.

The 5th presentation was on Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Issues by Mr. Terence Njuakom, a beekeeping expert. In his exposé, some basic terms on the theme were defined with their importance highlighted. Also, the relationship between Ecotourism and Beekeeping, which he said, are the 1st non-consumptive activities of the forest and they are alternatives of not destroying the forest that can lead to livelihood improvement. An assignment was given to participants.

DAY 4

Thursday 30th November 2006

Day 4 activities started at about 7:30am with a guided visit in the LBG.

A review of day 3 activities was done by a participant. The 1st Presentation for the day was that on Cultural Interpretation and Ecotourism by Mr. Peter Sanga. Important points highlighted in his presentation include; definitions of basic terms like Ecotourism and Culture, the key components of culture (i.e. values, norms, institutions and artefacts), cultural interpretation and setting.

The 2nd presentation on making your own Ecotour Interpretation was done by Tanda Godwin. Some important issues to note hear include; the requirements (Introduction; history, area, location, facilities, services etc) to produce your interpretation, interpreting key interest points (things with lots of information to visitors), various themes and conclusion.

To conclude the day's activities, a field trip was organized for participants to the West Coast Area, where they visited; the Limbe Wildlife Centre, Lava Mt., Isobe Beach, Idenau Oil mill & the Idenau Beach.

DAY FIVE

Friday 1st December 2006

PROGRAMME

8:00-9:00am

Evaluation by an External Evaluator

12:30-13:30

Closing Ceremony

- Speeches

- Overview of training

- Speech from Executive Director,

FAAFNET, SAJOVOC, and JARF

FOUNDATION, THE NETHERLANDS.

- The Conservator, LBG

- Award of Certificates

- Cocktail

- Departure.

NGOs, Civil Society and Capacity Building

Towards The Development of Strategy

(cont'd from September 2006 Edition of 'The Bell')

5. FOCUS ON CAPACITY-BUILDING AS A STRATEGIC OPTION

Current development discourse refers ubiquitously, and too glibly, to the concept of capacity-building. Indeed, capacity-building is often equated with development. While this is perhaps partially correct, and represents an important advance in development thinking, it is often used as rhetoric without enough penetration to lift jargon into the realm of genuine discussion; lip-service masquerading as strategy. A number of options are available to us as NGOs, and they need to be explored in more depth.

Essentially, **provision**, as one strategic option (of resources, services, alternative methodologies), implies filling, or supplementing a lack. It raises some of the problems referred to when discussing it in the previous section - even where it is done in collaboration, or partnership, with communities, rather than as top-down largesse to recipients. But, although it may be associated with questions, it forms a vital part of our credibility as NGOs. We have no right to attempt institutional transformation if we have not engaged with that institution as alternative practitioners, and demonstrated our expertise. Can we assist communities to take over health care structures when we have no experience of, or expertise in, **health**? Can we assist communities to exert some influence over infrastructural urban development - say, within the institution of **shelter** - when we have not engaged with this institution ourselves, and gained some familiarity with alternative practices and possibilities? There are many different ways of "providing" - some of which may be pure welfare while others may be more collaborative and "developmental". But some form of provision - current or historical - by our NGO is necessary if we are to have the expertise, right or credibility to engage in other strategies. We cannot engage in institutional transformation when we have nothing alternative to offer either the institution or the communities who are seeking to impact on it.

Another strategic option is **lobbying**, or **influencing**, attempting to influence institutional policy. Lobbying requires, as has also been noted in the previous section, new capacities on the part of the NGO. Essentially, it is an attempt to engage in

institutional transformation such that the institution is freed to encourage alternative practice, as well as greater individual access and influence. As such, it is an attempt to create an enabling environment for the growth of capacity. Certain forms of **provision**, such as training, also provide an enabling framework for the development of capacity. But neither strategy, in and of itself, can be regarded as focused capacity-building. Capacity-building requires something more.

5.1 AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE-STUDY IN STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Let us approach the strategy of capacity-building by way of example. We take it from the institution of **law** - raised as an institutional instance in the previous section - as it has been approached by a number of NGOs in South Africa over the last ten years. In this example we will, for the sake of simplicity, refer to one NGO; in reality this is a composite example drawn from the experience of a number of different NGOs.

Under apartheid, the institution of **law** in South Africa has been used as a tool of oppression. Laws differentiated between people on the basis of skin colour, thus effectively marginalising the majority of citizens. In addition, the institution of **money** has been closely allied to the institutions of **law** and **government**, effectively ensuring that those already marginalised by the law had little access to the institution of law even in instances where it could work on their behalf. Finally, although the institution of law was partially peopled by persons who maintained an admirable resistance to the status quo, nevertheless the institutions of law, money and government effectively collaborated to ensure that legal practitioners stemmed predominantly from that skin colour group in society whose rights were protected and promoted by the status quo; the white minority.

Enter a legal NGO, which is rapidly to attain national status. We shall call the NGO "RIGHTS". At first, RIGHTS is set up to provide legal assistance to those people and communities who are unable to pay for legal representation. But as an NGO, given the status quo prevailing in the institutions of government and law, RIGHTS soon realized that it could carry on providing legal representation to those unable to afford it forever and still have no effect

on the legal dispensation confronting the majority of citizens.

RIGHTS thus embarked on a number of different strategies. One was to concentrate on legal representation mainly for those cases which were of "public interest": that is, those cases which, if won, would have a liberating effect on the laws themselves, and which could draw public attention to the oppressive nature of the state, thus effecting both the institutions of law and government (a sophisticated form of lobbying). Another was to promote the activities of research and publication amongst its staff, to the same end. Yet another was to undertake training programmes which would allow legal students of the "incorrect" skin colour (i.e. black) to gain access to the institution of law (provision with the intention of impacting on the institution itself). And there were others, the most relevant for our purposes here being the promotion and support of advice offices.

Advice offices functioned as community-based organisations, staffed by para-legals trained by RIGHTS. Spread throughout the country, in rural as well as urban communities, these advice offices provided the disenfranchised citizen with greater access to the institution of law, as well as the beginning of expertise, influence, and power over choices. This strategy was accomplished by RIGHTS in collaboration with other NGOs, not all of whom were legal. It was a strategy which encouraged the spread of community-based organisations, not all of which, once again, were confined to the institution of law. It was the part of RIGHTS' strategy which came closest to capacity-building. Close, but not close enough.

As the political changes began to sweep South Africa from 1990 onwards, the constraints under which RIGHTS had been operating began to fall away, more space was opened up, and more opportunities presented themselves. No longer having to concentrate so much on opposition and defiance, RIGHTS toyed with new strategies. One was to use the media to educate the ordinary citizens about their rights and about the functioning of the institution of law. This would promote access, encourage debate and influence, and generally create a more enabling environment for capacity-building and the transformation of law as an institution. Another was to engage as "consultants" to

whole communities which were themselves no longer fighting government but which were winning their rights to land and embarking on infrastructural development. Thus a form of capacity-building. But the beginning of this work coincided with a gradual dissipation of the advice office network. Both these strategies called into question RIGHTS' strategy of capacity-building. (It should be said that RIGHTS itself never referred to any of its strategies as "capacity-building").

Advice offices were battling to survive because, with the changing political scenario, they were no longer in the forefront of the agendas of either the communities themselves or of the various local NGOs and donor NGOs which had been supporting them. Given this new reality they became more dependent on their own capacity, and because they had never really had adequate access to the institution of organisation, they were struggling to maintain organisational viability. And the para-legals who provided the legal advice had been narrowly trained in a limited section of law; they had not had their broader capacities developed, either to provide them with sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances or to handle organisational realities. As well, the strategy of engaging as consultants to whole communities embarking on their own development process was taking up far more of staff members' time than had been anticipated, because these legal practitioners were called upon to respond to many and diverse extra-legal requests. It became apparent, once again, that communities' capacity to organise comprises a far more complex and multi-dimensional set of competencies than the simple provision of advice, and training in a specific skill, can facilitate. At the very least the proliferation of community-based organisation requires access to the institution of organisation. While RIGHTS could provide legal training, support and advice, it had not incorporated either the discipline of organisation development or the concept of individual development (as capacity-building) sufficiently into its practice to enable it to engage in capacity-building as a viable strategic option.

It should be said once more that the above example does not reflect on any one legal NGO in South Africa. It needs further to be noted that similar examples can be found in many different sectors and in the practice of many different NGOs. Pre-primary NGOs which aim to assist in the proliferation of community-based pre-schools by providing specific skills training

in education and finance run into similar problems in terms of the viability of the pre-schools as sustainable organisations. NGOs promoting co-operatives experience the same difficulties. Educational NGOs providing inservice training to teachers find the results of their work compromised by the school as an incapacitated organisation. Urban development NGOs - operating within the institutions of land and shelter - find it easier to provide specific advice and assistance with negotiations than to facilitate the growth of sustainable organisation. Agricultural NGOs provide sought after expertise, but struggle to assist farmers to attain the capacity to be flexible and innovative in the face of changing circumstances or new environmental conditions.

None of these examples is surprising. Capacity-building, as a strategic option, requires more than the specific expertise inherent in institutionally-specific NGOs. It requires access to the understanding of individual development and to the practice of organisation development. *(It requires familiarity with the institution of organisation.*

5.2 CAPACITY-BUILDING AS FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT WORK

Capacity-building as a strategic option for strengthening the organs and instruments of civil society is the most taxing, daunting and long-term approach that NGOs can choose. Primarily because it does not consist of the delivery of specific products, but consists rather of engagement with prolonged processes of change and resistance to change. And expertise in organisational and individual processes of change and development are lacking.

The provision of training and advice to build organisational capacity, and the liberation of institutional policy to create an enabling environment for organisational growth, are both necessary, but insufficient to the focused strategy of capacity-building. Organisations are complex, open systems, and skilled personal are only one element in the system. Further, skills training of these individuals is only one facet of individual development.

5.2.1 Individual Development

To consider the matter of individual development first: building the capacity of individuals is a far more daunting process than providing them with a skill. Of course acquiring skills is necessary, but to assume that this is all that capacity-building entails is to take a very narrow, mechanistic and thin view of the human being. Being

provided with the skill does not necessarily imply the capacity to use it. For instance, one might provide training in listening skills, really "getting under the skin" of the other person. However, if the trainee has unresolved inner issues, unconscious avoidances or preconceived notions, he or she will continue to project these and continue "hearing" what they want to hear. Similarly, training evaluation skills will not ensure adequate reflection on action if the trainee has a strong resistance to change. Training the skill of chairing meetings will not stop the trainee from manipulating the meeting if they have a hidden agenda, or allowing the meeting to be manipulated if he or she is insecure or fearful.

This is why we talk of "developing" capacity rather than "training" capacity. Building capacity involves the whole person and is a long-term process, not attainable through short training courses. It demands follow up and assistance with reflection on action. Development is as much a process of "letting go" of mindsets, fixed attitudes, ingrained habits as it is a process of "taking on the new". Indeed, "letting go" is a prerequisite for change. Developing capacity has more to do with confidence, maturity, flexibility, fluidity, creativity, coherence and integrity than with specific skill acquisition. The bottom line in the development of capacity appears to be inner resourcefulness; the ability to meet the future with creativity and flexibility rather than with a fixed (trained ?) response appropriate in past situations. Individual capacity is the capacity to act competently in the face of ambiguity, uncertainty, contradiction and change. The ability to handle "fluid reality", to analyse, synthesise and respond appropriately.

The development of capacity implies the emergence of objectivity and of the ability to take criticism in an undefensive manner and to learn from it. It implies being strong enough to be vulnerable, and resourceful enough to acquire or recruit the skills needed in a given situation. Such capacity cannot be trained on short-term training courses. It is developed through guided interaction, preferably within one's own work arena. One needs to bounce against one's own context and reflect on the interface.

At the very least then, training for individual capacity-building requires that we pay attention to individual development in our training courses, not simply to the transfer of a specific set of limited skills. It requires that we facilitate in people the understanding, attitudes and skills required to encourage them to continue their process of development once the course is over. It requires that we pay much more

NGOs, Civil Society and Capacity Building

Towards The Development of Strategy

attention than we have to the motivation for, and processes of, learning itself. And it demands that a process of follow-through with participants be built into the structure of the course, for the course itself can only be an opener, an introduction. Real learning takes place back in the home context of the organisational or community situation itself.

To do slightly more, we need to engage with people inside their working or community context, so that learning is contextualised and the principle of guided interaction is able to be adequately operationalised. Optimally the process of guided interaction should be incorporated into organisational life itself. But this implies competent organisation, and takes us from the issue of individual capacity-building to organisation development.

5.2.2 Organisation Development

For, as we have noted, individual development is only one element in the complex organisational reality of an open, developing system impacting on, and being impacted by, a constantly changing environment. Organisations struggle with questions of leadership, motivation, direction, strategy, monitoring and discipline, structure and organisational design, systems and procedures, conflict and teamwork, and many more. They often lack overview, self-awareness, and the self-reflective techniques and practices needed to achieve this. They require the techniques, ability and will to adequately analyse their context and to adapt their practices accordingly. Lack of will, resistance to change, unhealthy organisational culture and attitudes which are not responsive to the demands of change all contribute to organisational malaise, to a lack of capacity. Few of these issues will respond to an individual being sent on a training course.

Fowler notes that: "The systems view makes clear, for example, that training and human resource development cannot simply be equated with institutional or organisational development. Training can only tackle a limited number of systems in only one sort of way - through the knowledge and skills of individuals and groups. The skill of organisation development specialists lies in helping organisations correctly identify what combination of system, structure, style or environmental factor is limiting performance and selecting the right mix of tools, methods and strategies to bring

about the required changes".(3) And, further, the organisation development practitioner will assist the organisation to learn from these experiences so that it may become more self-regulating in future. Building organisational capacity then, requires practitioners skilled in the discipline of organisation. NGOs wishing to engage in building the capacity of community-based organisations as organs of civil society need to gain access to the institution of organisation and integrate it into their own practice. This can be done either in addition to their current skills or by collaborating with other NGOs.

Either way, we should be wary of being too nonchalant when we claim the strategic option of capacity-building. Ultimately, where the strategies of provision and influencing - developmentally practised rather than delivered as "welfare" - will contribute towards capacity-building, focused capacity-building itself is probably the most directly developmental approach. Not many NGOs have incorporated it as a nucleus of chosen strategy, with all its attendant ramifications; fewer have had much success.

The field is new, resources are limited, the track record which exists is not promising. Nevertheless, it is the strategy of the future if we are going to become genuinely developmental NGOs aiming to transform the institutions of civil society and build the capacity of the organs of that society.

6. THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY

We should in no way denigrate NGO strategies other than focused capacity-building. In the first instance, not all NGOs lay claim to being primarily developmental, and there is ample space for a wide variety of NGOs operating in the social sphere. Second, it may well be that in certain instances the internal constitution of particular institutions needs to be shifted, or resources need to be provided, before the strategy of capacity-building can take effect. A grossly disabling institutional environment will confound attempts to build capacity. And again, where people have had little or no access to, for example, the institutions of education and work, or family, the task of capacity-building will be that much harder.

The point of this paper is to provide some perspective on the terrain of civil society and to explore possible strategic options, not to elevate one option above others. For

the problem with many NGOs does not necessarily lie in their choice of a particular option, but in their taking action without choosing a specific option, or in their failure to differentiate between options. Action, the need (to be seen) to be doing, often takes precedence over strategic analysis, the end result being something akin to Shakespeare's "much ado about nothing". Or, to turn a proverb around, there isn't necessarily fire simply because our eyes are smarting from the smoke. Too few NGOs differentiate between doing and achieving. And the only thing more debilitating than organisational activity without forethought or assessment is many such activities performed at the same time, all demanding equal attention and resources. In the resultant confusion we often find - too late - that we've tied our shoelaces together in preparation for the hundred metre sprint.

Is this too harsh a critique? It is not that we are lazy, or thoughtless, but rather that we are breaking new ground, and there is little that we have to go on. Rather like cutting our way through the undergrowth of an ancient and unpenetrated forest; with sweat obscuring our vision, and nightfall swiftly approaching, we hack with increasing desperation at the next vine, the next creeper, to discover that the next step is consuming all our concentration and that we are thoroughly lost in terms of overall direction. We should not underestimate the extent to which we diminish our own capacity through lack of strategic clarity; neither should we underestimate the organisational tensions caused by pursuing different strategies simultaneously without differentiating adequately between them.

6.1 Issue Two: The Tension Between Responsiveness and Proactivity

The extremity of the example serves to throw the general problem into relief, but it also illustrates a more specific tension with respect to strategy formulation. One of the major advantages of NGOs is their ability to respond to community needs, to "work from the bottom up", to start from where the people are. To work flexibly and responsively in terms of community wishes, and thus to remain accountable to people "on the ground". This is often contrasted with agencies and institutions which work "top down", imposing their interpretation of what is