

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

July 2006

Cameroon Girls battle 'Breast Ironing'

Anationwide campaign is under way in Cameroon to discourage the widespread practice of "breast ironing".

This involves pounding and massaging the developing breasts of young girls with hot objects to try to make them disappear.

Statistics show that 26% of Cameroonian girls at puberty undergo it, as many mothers believe it protects their daughters from the sexual advances of boys and men who think children are ripe for sex once their breasts begin to grow.

The most widely used instrument to flatten the breasts is a wooden pestle, used for pounding tubers in the kitchen. Heated bananas and coconut shells are also used.

Student Geraldin Sirri recounted her painful experience.

"My mother took a pestle, she warmed it well in the fire and then she used it to pound my breasts while I was lying down. She took the back of a coconut, warmed it in the fire and used it to iron the breasts." "I was crying and trembling to escape but there was no way."

Another woman from Mamfe in South-west Cameroon told me she ironed her own breasts as a girl so that she would not be forced into early marriage as is the practice in her village.

"I wanted to go to school like other girls who had no breasts," Emilia said.

'No regrets'

Many mothers have no regrets about ironing their daughter's breasts.

"Breast ironing is not a new thing. I am happy I protected my daughter. I could not stand the thought of boys spoiling her with sex before she completed school,"

one woman explained.

"Unfortunately, television is encouraging all sorts of sexual immorality in our children."

Anthropologist Dr Flavien Ndonko says that breast ironing is not an effective method of preventing early sex and pregnancies because many of the girls still become pregnant. He recommends plain talking between parents and their daughters.

"What you have to really do is talk about the issue of sexual reproductive health with the child. So that she is aware about what it means growing up and having breasts or having periods," he says.

With the help of sponsors, a group of teenage girls called the **Association of**



The Campaign hopes to spare girls physical and emotional pain

Aunties has produced a television campaign to expose the problems of breast ironing.

"Massaging the breasts of young girls is very dangerous. This is harmful to health... Do not force them to disappear or appear - allow them to grow naturally,"

one of the adverts says.

Prison

So far, no research has taken place on the medical effects of breast ironing.

However, Prof Anderson Doh, a can-

cer surgeon and director of the state-owned Gynecological Hospital in Cameroon's capital, Yaoundé, says the practice is dangerous.

"There are structures in the breast made of connective tissue. Now if you over iron the breast, if you use very hot objects, if you pound on the breast at this tender age when the structures are developing of course you could also cause damage," he says.

The victims do have protection under the law, as long as the matter is reported within a few months, lawyer Buba Ndefiambu says. If a medical doctor determines that damage has been caused to the breasts, then the person responsible can go to jail for up to three years.

This does not always deter mothers who see their daughters hitting puberty earlier and earlier thanks to better living standards.

But the **Association of Aunties** hopes their campaign will start to change attitudes and spare other girls future physical and emotional pain.

By Randy Joe Sa'ah, BBC News, Yaoundé

Breast Ironing Classified As Torture

The Sub Director in charge of Judiciary Cooperation in the Ministry of Justice, Mathias Nyoh Dinga, has said 'breast ironing' is as bad as other forms of torture punishable under the law. He made the statement while responding to questions at a forum in Yaoundé to commemorate the United Nations International Day in Support of Torture Victims worldwide.

The Day, which is commemorated every June 26, was jointly organized in Cameroon by the Centre for the Rehabilitation and Abolition of Torture, CRAT, Trauma Centre in Yaoundé and Tort for Torture Victims Cameroon.

It brought together legal experts and medical officers who presented papers on medical evidence and the roles of medical officers in treating victims of torture in Cameroon, psychological impact of torture, legal redress and victims' reparation, amongst others.



Most tools are warmed before pounding the girls' Chests

As far as breast ironing, which entails the use of hot objects to press the breasts of young girls to either limit or encourage their growth, was concerned Justice Nyoh said the issue came to the limelight only recently. He, however, said the act ties with other forms of torture such as rape, forceful imprisonment, and so

Turn to page

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.

To diminish and prevent the negative consequences of globalization,



George Soros extends Support to Africa

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 world.

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.



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



*Mrs. Nana Tanko
Executive Director
OSIWA*

OSIWA further recognizes the 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 enter into the second phase of the Project to Create More Open Societies in the South West Province (PCMODS-SWP) we express our heartfelt gratitude to hundreds of south westerners who have laid testimonies of the positive effects that this lonely little publication has had on their views about certain issues holding back the development of our beloved Province. Unanimously, they agree that despite sporadic examples of objectivity and positive action, most of our sons and daughters are still captives of jealousy, greed, mutual suspicion, back biting, petition writing, selfishness etc.

We are requesting that these testimonies be submitted for publication so that we could together effect a change of attitude with regards to the development of the Province. By so doing we create more open societies in the South West Province.

In this issue, we take a close look

at another harmful traditional practice on young women - breast ironing - very present in some parts of South West Province and join our voices to the shout against the malpractice that also has negative effects on the well-being of its victims.

Mayors and Government Delegates met in Limbe but provided very few convincing reasons for the slow pace of development in their respective municipalities. Some still have to exploit other income-generating and job-creating avenues such as tourism. These days Decentralised Cooperation stands as a major source of development assistance.

As you glide through these pages, remember that your intellectual contribution will certainly enrich and sustain 'The Bell'.

By George Mbella



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Government Delegates and Mayors of the South West Province meet in Limbe



South West Government Delegates and Lord Mayors

Government Delegates and Mayors of the South West Province came together in Limbe; June 21st under the canopy of their association of "South West Provincial Association of United Cities and Councils of Cameroon", to deliberate on the theme, "**Harnessing Financial Resources for Development**".

The Mayor of the Buea Rural Council, Mr. Mbella Moki Charles, in an opening speech, highlighted that Mayors are, in most instances, involved in financial wastage due to their lack of knowledge of the rules and regulations involved in public financial management. He further lamented that most mayors vehemently refuse to attend such meetings maybe due to their fear of scrutiny.

The Government Delegate of the Limbe Urban Council welcomed the members of the association and prayed that this will stimulate further frequent meetings to develop strategies for local development.

Mr. Ikongo Verine Ekole, Mayor of Mundemba Rural Council, in his capacity as President of the association, remarked that discussions were geared towards the changing of the livelihood of the people they manned. He congratulated the exper-

tise of MUDEC Group, a Buea-based NGO, for initiating open public hearings for councils and stressed that decentralisation has come to stay.

Representing the Governor of the South West Province, Mr. Ayuk Enow (the Social and Cultural Affairs Adviser to the Governor) said councils have a key role to play especially as Cameroon has reached the HIPC completion point. He congratulated the mayors for their high sense of duty and their unending sacrifices for a tireless fight to bring development and self-discipline. He urged them to be agents of peace and national unity. Mr. Enow promised to channel their requests to the Governor, Mr. Eyeya Zanga Louis.

The meeting was graced with the presence of SNV, GTZ, MUDEC Group; Provincial Service for Stores Accounting and the Provincial Treasury who each gave an elaborate exposés on some succinct issues.

The Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) is an NGO existing in Cameroon and whose work is based on sustainable tourism and working towards sustainable development and Poverty alleviation.

The German Cooperation in the South West (GTZ) on

their part focus on community health services governance and decentralisation. They also introduced the programme for the sustainable management of natural resources in the South West Province.

MUDEC (Municipal Development Counselling) Group based in Buea, focuses on capacity building. They also give access channels on how councils can garner resources, especially human resources.

Mr. Igelle Elias, the Provincial Chief of Centre, Stores Accounting, stressed the need for account documents for every expenditure by councils. He called on councils to report to his office directly when facing problems with stores accountants.

Representing the Provincial Treasury, Mr. Ngomba Francis informed mayors that they can directly come for their balance at the level of the provincial treasury. He warned that those dealing with state funds have to be trained.

The next session of the day was held behind closed doors, void of pressmen.

by Samba Ruth
GNGG



SWECSON Elects New Executive Board Members

Members of the South West Civil Society Network (SWECSON) met on ...2006 at the FAKOSHIP Board Room in Buea to elect a new Executive Board.

The meeting was heavily attended by registered and unregistered south west civil society organizations that had the development of the South West Province at heart.

The outgoing executive presented a balance sheet of achievements since the creation of SWECSON. Most difficulties were blamed on the lack of commitment by several NGOs and the difficulty to mobilize the funds necessary for action. Gratitude was expressed towards SNV for giving moral, financial and material assistance to the Network.

A new Executive Board was elected after with new members joining to support the re-elected outgoing



SWECSON's New Executive Board Members

President, Mr. Nchong Tabe Moses, who was praised for running the Network through its difficult launching phase. The new Executive was given

the mandate to stimulate civil society action in the South West Province.

By David Nkeng



Small Scale Fishing in the Coastal Zone of the South West Province

Statistics have shown that small scale coastal fishing contributes about 98,000 tons (70%) to the national production of about 140,000 tons. Over 14,295 fishers carry out fishing (94% are foreigners) in this area of the South West Province (Ndian and Fako divisions) more males are involved than females and 64% use motorised (engines) boats. 742 tons are smoked per year and sold to neighbouring countries.

These revelations were made by SIRDEP, a Bamenda based N.G.O at a seminar held in Limbe on the Institutional Analysis of small-scale fishery in the S.W coastal area. This was sponsored by SNV Highlands in line with the SNV's goal of sustainable poverty Alleviation by promoting the market chain.

SNV highlands team Leader, Mr. Bakia Besong said fishing has implications to natural resource management because the mangrove plants are endangered as they are constantly used as wood fuel for smoking fish. This also has a direct implication to the fish community because small fishes breathe under these trees. Therefore, the aim of this meeting was to identify strategic partners to strengthen this sector, improve on the living conditions of the fisher folks.



Small scale coastal fishing contributes about 98,000 tons (70%) to the national production

Some key issues presented were as follows: statistics in the sector are poorly collected, documented and disseminated; Low involvement of Cameroonians in small - scale fishery sector; Low involvement of Municipal councils in the development of the sector; continuous harassment of fishers by uniform officers; persistent conflict between industrial and artesian fisheries; post harvest loses, poor development of infrastructure (Social, Marketing, transport); and the uncoordinated linkages between intervening actors, among others.

Some opportunities in the sector include: available credit schemes, available

markets, legal framework, employment, available HIPC funds, available qualified human resources to mention a few.

After deliberations in groups, the participants were able to come out with possible causes and solutions to key issues raised. They also prioritised key issues as well as identified some key actors.

Present at the meeting were municipal council representatives, the Deputy Director of Fisheries, the Chief of Station Research Batoke, Rumpi project, South West Civil Society Organisations fisher folks and smokers.

By Samba Ruth

Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders Visits Buea

Madam Reine Alapini Ngansou, Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders who also doubles as Commissioner for Cameroon at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights was in the country recently to meet with government officials and also with civil society organizations. She was accompanied during her visit by Madam Anne Reshidi Mulumba, Legal Assistant at the ACHPR.

After meeting Government and Civil Society authorities in Yaounde and Douala,, the delegation left for Buea.

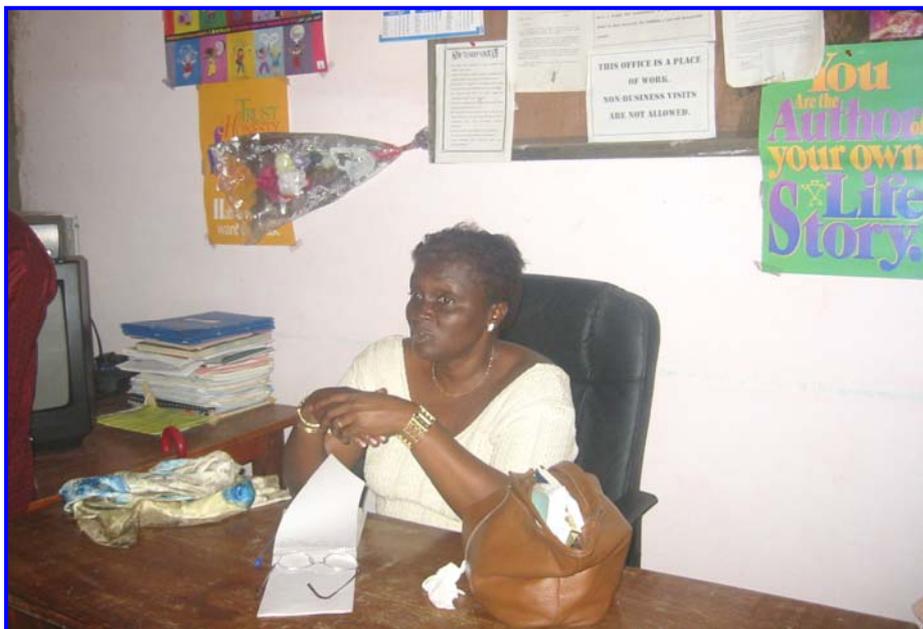
In Buea during a meeting with members of the civil society, Madam Reine Alapini Ngansou explained that the Delegation had been in Cameroon for a week to promote the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights based in Banjul (The Gambia) and to have first hand information of the human rights situation in Cameroon.

After presenting herself and the members of her delegation, she outlined the purpose of the meeting which was to talk about human rights in general in Cameroon and what the participants perceived as Human Rights Defenders.

Some of the participants gave their views on the human rights situation in Cameroon as well as their experiences as human rights defenders. These views included the satisfactory complementary role played so far by the civil society; the indirect imprisonment of political prisoners; punitive transfers of objective court magistrates who give judgements not favourable to the Government; abuse of workers' rights; non-respect by Government and some employees of the views and advice of civil society organisations and recommendations of institutions like the ACHPR; non-inclusion of women in decision making; the poor detention conditions of prisoners; inequality in the respect of human rights; the close link between corruption and human rights violations; etc.

After listening to the participants, Madam Alapini underlined that there is no society in Africa where human rights abuses does not exist, reason why, the promotion of human rights is a continuous process in which the civil society has an increasing role to play. She then requested to know from the participants what they understood as the role of human rights defenders.

The participants listed sensitisation, education and lobbying as the main activities carried out by human rights de-



Madam Reine Alapini Ngansou

fenders. While acknowledging this, Madam Alapini stressed on the objectives of NGOs which is attaining development and helping the population to improve on their well-being. She warned that NGOs are not political parties. She prescribed credibility for NGOs vis-à-vis the State and the civil society.

Another role of human rights defenders, she said, is helping victims get access to justice while learning and mastering the different procedures for seeking redress from the institutions of justice.

For human rights defenders to achieve any meaningful progress, Madam Alapini stressed on the need for politeness, networking and information sharing because NGOs cannot work in isolation.

Lastly, she advised NGOs never to put their arms down or be discouraged but look for all possible legal avenues to make their cases heard and never to wait for promises.

by Clarkson Obasi, Executive Director, HELP OUT.



With representatives of some NGOs in Buea

Bright Future For Tourism in the South West Province



Members of the Mount Cameroon Tourism Network

The tourism industry in Cameroon is recently being given so much attention because it has been realized that the rich natural, artistic and touristic sites which have been neglected, can contribute a reasonable percentage to national income.

This was the main reason that members of the Mount Cameroon Tourism Network (MCTN) in a meeting with partners and 8 councils around the Mt Cameroon region, came out with measures to improve this poten-

tial sector.

The Government Delegate of the Limbe Urban Council, Mr. Samuel Lifanda in his capacity as chairman called on everyone to put "*our hearts our hands and our heads together in order to have a success*" According to him, members had the natural endowment in this area to make tourism succeed.

Moderating the meeting, Mr. Nfor Thaddeus said that tourism is an industry that needs support services

such as hotels, bars, porter, local councils, travel agencies, security services etc. to make it work.

After deliberations by members, it was decided that the annual contribution by councils will be in three categories: One million francs CFA, Five Hundred francs CFA and two hundred and fifty francs CFA for the biggest to the smallest council respectively.

The Constituting members that make up the network have annual



SNV Facilitators to provide assistance to the Network



*Mr. Samuel Lifanda,
Pioneer Chairman of MCTN*

registration and annual dues ranging from 5000francs CFA to 10.000francs CFA and 5.000francs CFA to 25.000francs Cfa respectively. The dateline for registration was slated for January 2007 for Council and July 31st for others.

The meeting which took place at the Limbe Municipal Conference Centre adopted the following nominated members to handle posts of responsibility: Mr. Samuel Lifanda as Chairman, Mr. Moisisa as Secretary, Mr. Nfor Thaddeus as treasurer and Mr. Itoe as Financial Secretary. The General Annual Assembly is slated for October 2006.

By Samba Ruth



Nfor Thaddeus elected Treasurer of MCTN



Canoe Races attract more tourists every year



Mount Cameroon rises above Tea Plantations



Rich Culture from the South West Villages



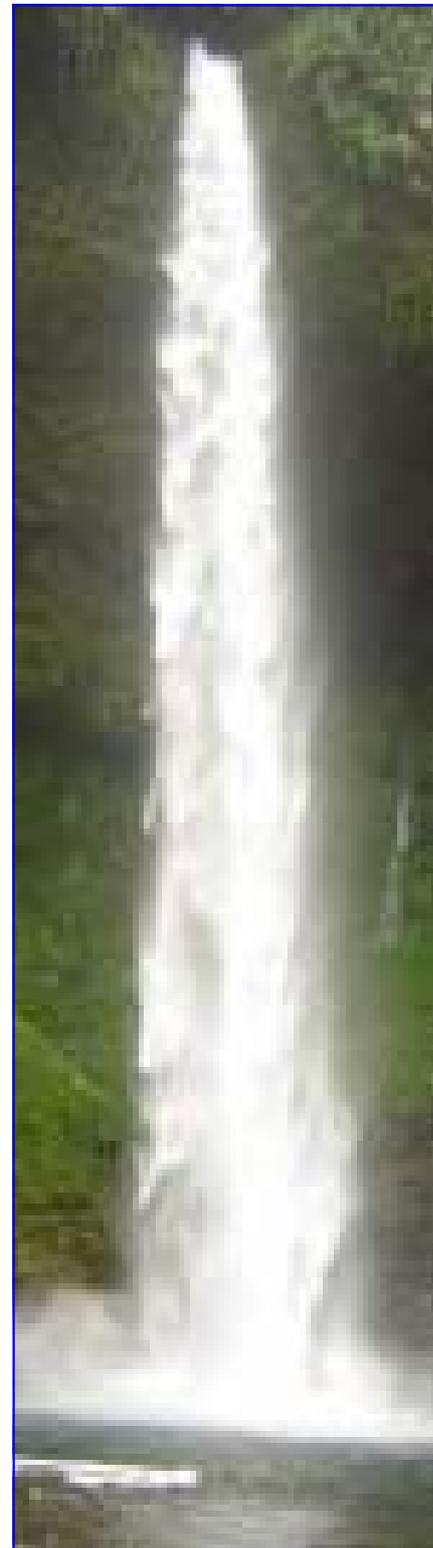
Gorillas at Lunch



Tourists enjoying a Sea Trip by Canoe



More Comfortable Hotels



Splendid Bomana Falls

Global Fund for Women-USA Supports Manyu Women Association

The GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN - USA has supported MOHWA - (Manyu Women Association) in its struggle to put more manyu women in decision making position.

The Women's Empowerment Center in Mamfe town was filled to capacity by over 68 women leaders from all 4 subdivisions of Manyu division on Friday May 19th 2006, under the watchful eyes of the Divisional Officer for Mamfe Central Mr. Mulah E. Joe, and the First Deputy Mayor, Mr Nkwo.

The meeting was marked by a heated exchange of ideas and opinions on critical issues affecting the Manyu woman. Manyu women tabled several obstacles and stumbling blocks to their socio - cultural, economic and political advancement.

This was followed presentations of well researched facts on different topics by, Mrs Chu Mary (former Lord Mayor of Eyumojock), Mrs Chu Mary, Mrs Nyenty Henrietta (the Divisional Delegate of Womens' Empowerment and the family) and Mr Agbor B.B. (an educationist and Regent Chief of Egbekaw Village.



Women getting into more decision making positions

Questions, answers, suggestions and appeals on topical issues were raised by the participants. The workshop ended with the formation of an Advisory Committee saddled with tasks of ensuring the translation of resolutions arrived at during the workshop into practical achievement. The most important of these resolutions included

- the demand for a 50% quota in all decision making positions; starting from the council and parliamentary seats,

- a plea to the Manyu Chiefs to eradicate 'Wake keeping with Corpse'. Women recommended wake keeping without corpse up to 10.00p.m.

The Manyu women through MOHWA extended sincere thanks to GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN - USA for their Support which hopefully will contribute immensely in arresting those traditional impediments blocking the Manyu woman from attaining her full potential.

*By Agbor Meg
President General, MOHWA*

Breast Ironing Classified As Torture

Cont'd from Page 1

On, condemned by the 1987 UN Convention Against Tortured other cruel inhuman treatment punishable by Cameroon Law.

On arguments from some participants that breast ironing constitutes cultural aspects of some Cameroonians and that perpetrators don't carry out the act with the intention of inflicting pain, one of the panelists, Barrister Tanda Numfor, said any act whether cultural or not, and which is repugnant to social justice is punishable under Cameroonian Law.

Justice Nyoh said breast ironing should be reported to the courts. One of the participants also sought to know whether a wife who has been forced into sexual intercourse by the husband could take the matter to court for legal redress. Nyoh and Barrister Tanda explained the

handling such a case is very difficult considering that sexual intercourse is one aspect of the nuptial bond. Nyoh added that if for some medical reasons, the wife is unfit to engage in sex, the claim can be tenable.

He said that indulging in sexual starvation of one partner by the other without any justifiable reason constitutes torture, which can be redressed. Prior to the presentations, the Executive Director of CRAT Cameroon, Basil Ajuo Tifu, said joint efforts are needed to eradicate torture, which is glaring in about two thirds of the countries in the world.

"Information, training and education in treatment of torture victims and in the documentation and investigation of torture cases are keys to a world without torture," he declared. Ajuo said the obliga-

tion specified in the UN Convention Against Torture has so far been ratified by 141 states.

The Convention, he noted, "...specifies that every victim of torture be offered rehabilitation to help him or her overcome his or her trauma." According to Article II of the Convention: "No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political stability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture."

On this basis, Ajuo maintained, "suspicion of torture incidents should be promptly investigated and those responsible, not only torturers but also those who ordered and condoned torture should be brought to justice," he stated.

*By Nformi Sonde Kinsai
Culled from The Post Online (Cameroon)*

Women, How Financially Literate are We?

In a context of extreme poverty and untold economic malaise, Cameroonian women like their counterparts in other sub-Saharan African countries have become much more inventive, involving themselves in multiple economic ventures, predominantly in the formal sector of the economy.

They strategize with various coping mechanisms and engage in self-help projects and revolving credit schemes that are sometimes imbedded in other social network of consumer activities such as "born house" and "cry die" that often have little or no growth visions. At the end of the day women spend most of their economic lives working and toiling non-stop without actually knowing how much they earn. They however contend themselves with their prime concern in keeping family livelihood sustainable.

In one of my findings on the emergence of female petty traders in the Buea municipality due to the hard pressed economic ridden situations, it was discovered that some female nocturnal food vendors could make a net profit of as much as 10 000frs a night. This places them on about 240 000 FRS average earnings per month, if they were to rely solely on this business as their basic source of income. A sum which is far above the basic salary of the highest category (A) civil servant in the Cameroonian public service. Yet women of this socio-economic bracket are not aware of their financial prowess. This is simply because they don't keep any tract of their economic activities which is often merged and managed with other household exigencies. Whereas information of such financial strength of theirs can be tapped and used for a better advocacy or preferable as a negotiating instrument to position themselves in a more lucrative socio/economic and why not political venture.

White collar job women, who nowadays are increasingly streaming into private enterprising activities, are even worse off in handling financial issues, their academic background not-



Female nocturnal food vendors could make 10000 CFA F a night.!

withstanding. Their economic activities face the same predicament of being embroiled in household, professional, community and philanthropic demands.

Despite the centrality of finance, in all socio-economic endeavors. Women hardly give enough thought on vital aspect of money management. Giving the exigencies of the new world economic order, underpinned in neoliberal ideologies with free open and competitive markets, it is incumbent for women as housewives, professionals and entrepreneurs the level notwithstanding, to brace themselves with appropriate tools in the management of their financial resources. It is evident that issues pertaining to figures, calculations and financial analysis are often considered as being non-a female-friendly puzzle. Yet women are apparently better managers of money.

In their quest to enable mothers and sisters have access to manage and control their resources, and the desire to acknowledge and assert women's unheralded financial acumen, Chim Sisters' Group has identified areas in financial literacy for women, tailored in the following framework,

- Home ownership skills, basic budgeting planning and decision making.
- Wise saving and the use of credits.
- Dealing with and reconciling enterprising, financial and personal issue.
- Long and short term investment priorities.
- Funding sources and their accessibility. Public, private or philanthropic sources and their mobilization.
- Rate and tax return, their assessment and settlements beware that women entrepreneur usually fall prey to unscrupulous tax officials who deceive them to pay more than official dues.

Long-term financial planning, pension and skill development for midcareer changes.

About CHIMSMAF GROUP.

Chim sisters is a group initiated by some professional women, who in one of their social gatherings were inspired to add a professional color to their reflections. They were therein galvanized into harnessing their professional skill and talent to assist the under privileged ones, particularly children mothers and sisters on how they can acquire and manage financial resources. This gave rise to the christening of the group as Children Mothers & Sisters Management and Financial Group, CHIMSMAF operates on the following ground works.

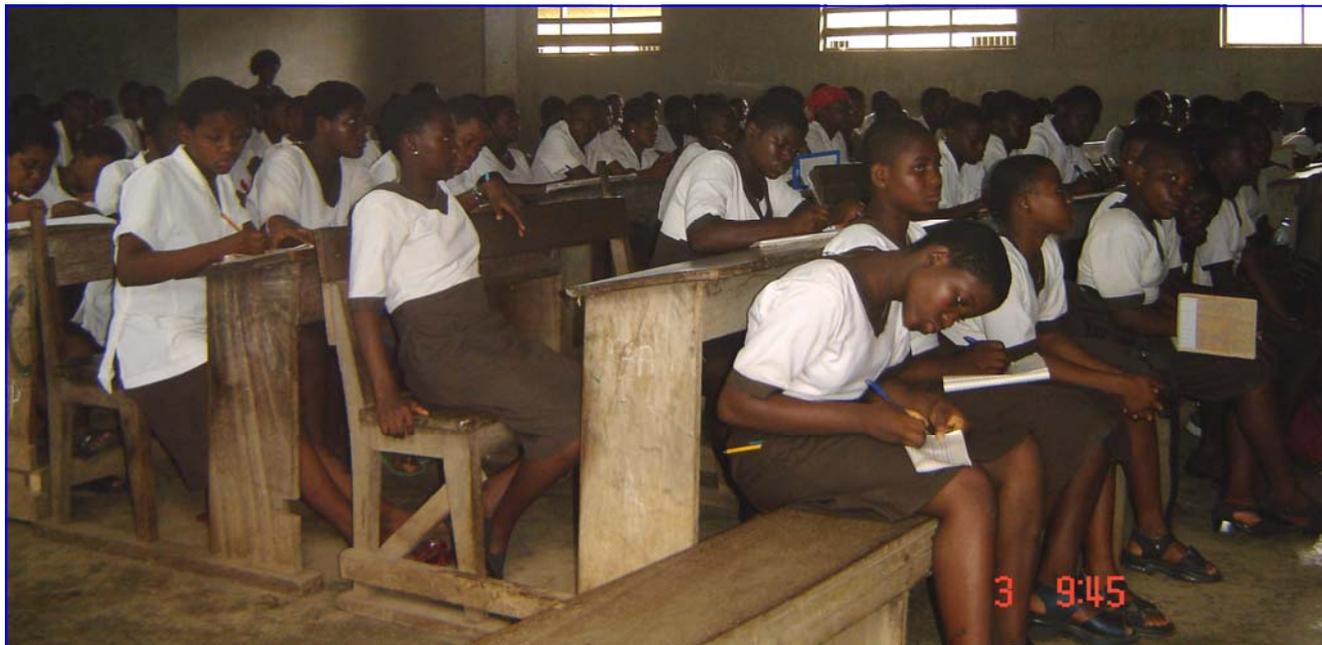
OBJECTIVES

To provide practical and competitive skills to target groups, in the domain of financial management science and technology.



*Mrs Susan Awasom
Lecturer CEFAM*

Empowering Young Girls to read Science Subjects in Schools



More young Girls have to read science subjects in schools.

What world do we want to build tomorrow? A world dominated by men in all domains of life. The youths of today are the leaders of tomorrow. They are the future electrical engineers, medical doctors, pharmacists, chemists, nurses and so on.

Girls belong to these youths who are going to be the future leaders in the various fields. So there is necessity for them to study sciences in school.

The girl child should be motivated, encouraged by their parents and teachers to study science in school in order to cope with the competition in future.

Studying sciences should not be for boys alone but for both sexes. Girls should take the challenge in studying science and will succeed like those boys do.

Many people say that mathematics or physics or chemis-

try is difficult because you have not tried it. People venture in different domain in life they succeed because they have the will. No subject is difficult, if you have the desire to study. Ask yourself this question, how do others pass it? The answer is easy, because they study hard.

My friends, if you look around, you will realise that our mothers did not have the opportu-

nities that we have to go to school.

In Cameroon we do not have many female who study sciences. Look at our schools how many of our science teachers are females?

Girls won't you be happy if tomorrow you are involved in a research team on finding the vaccine or malaria and HIV or analysing the DNA?

Won't you like to be an electrical engineer, medical doctor, pharmacist and so on?



By Ebai Tonge
Women Empowerment Dept,
GNGG

YADD strengthens Relations with PCMODS-South West Province

The Youth Alliance for Democracy and Development known by its acronym YADD is presently engaged in a project to strengthen youth forums in the South West Province. The support for this initiative is from the Project to Create More Open and Democratic Societies in the South West Province (PCMODS-SWP), Cameroon. PCMODS-SWP is funded by OSIWA Dakar and executed by four Civil Society Organizations namely; MUDEC-Group, HELP OUT, FIDA Cameroon and the Global Network for Good Governance (GNGG).

The choice of engaging YADD by PCMODS-SWP comes from YADD's consistent focus in addressing the needs of young people. Three outreach activities are already planned for this project. First, the YADD team will be in Muyuka by September 30th, Kumba and Buea shall follow early in October. Surveys and needs identification have already been done and various youth forums are anxiously waiting. The major issues to deal with shall be; youth and their civic responsibilities, governance and decision-making and networking among youth. A joint declaration and an action plan is expected to be made by beneficiaries



Women getting into more decision making positions

at the end of each conference.

The Youth Alliance for Democracy and Development is a youth led organization created in 2000 and legalized in 2004. It focuses on empowering the youth for effective involvement in national development. At a time when there is increasing youth apathy about national life, YADD is expected to stimulate the youth and course them to be more engaged in national issues; to be assertive and take the future in their hands. The

gender angle in this project is strong.

Talking to the Coordinator of YADD, Eugene Atabong Atem, he said YADD has more female than male resource persons and girls will surely be encouraged by their push, to be in the frontline of issues too. The PCMODS-SWP support is indeed a move by its promoters to demonstrate commitment in promoting the efforts of youths.

*Tala Patience Maforche
Political Science student
University of Buea
Volunteer in MUDEC.*

The Education of the African Child

by Ebai Tonge

The education of the African child today in our society has become a serious problem. The African child behaves differently from the elderly people of yesterday. This is due to the influence from street, internet and television. Parents have the responsibility to educate their child in the right manner. How many parents teach their children their mother language? Many children speak and prefer English, French or pidgin to their mother tongue. Some consider the mother tongue as a sign of illiteracy. Why are we underestimating our African language? When they serve the same purpose

i.e. communication. There is nothing you can say to your child and hide it from visitors, there is no secrecy!

Parents no longer teach good behaviour to their children. There is disparity among parents like a parent may beat a child to correct that child, the other gives a counter action to it all in the name of Modernism. Some parents have failed in their duty to educate their children. James Brown once sang "am black and I am proud". The modern society gives more rights than obligations to these children. A parent may want to introduce an education to the children based on submission and humility but the other opposes saying today

is the 21st Century and that that kind of education is outdated and no longer implemented. The world is changing, it is accepted that we should embrace the culture and tradition of others we know nothing or understands nothing. It is said that a piece of wood soaked in water can never become a fish or crocodile. Struggling to live the Western style will not change our colour to white, in so doing we will acquire a custom that is neither Western nor African.

I think it is time for parents to question themselves on the type of education they give their children. We should learn to accept our colour and be proud of it.

MEMORABLE SPEECH

**A WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE BUEA RURAL COUNCIL, MR. SMITH MOLUA BECKE ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO BUEA, CAPITAL OF THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT PAUL BIYA, HEAD OF STATE AND PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
27 SEPTEMBER 1991**



Your Excellency The Head of State,

It is with the greatest pleasure and honour that I stand here on behalf of the Mayors, Municipal Counsellors and the entire population of the South-West Province to welcome you, Mr, president and the distinguished members of your entourage, on this occasion of your third visit to the South-West Province.

In your capacity as Head of State and President of all Cameroonians without distinction, we the peace-loving people of the South-West Province extend to your Excellency the very warm welcome for which we are traditionally known.

Your Excellency's visit comes at a time when Cameroon is living through a period of disquieting tension and insecurity. The present situation is having disastrous effects on the well being of the entire nation and of all Cameroonians. It is our ardent desire that purposeful dialogue instituted to resolve the prevailing stalemate.

Permit us, Your Excellency, to thank you formally for the recent remarkable realisation of your government in this province: the announcement of the University of Buea which will be fashioned in the true Anglo-saxon tradition; the recent appointment of top management personnel for the South-West Development Authority (SOWEDA); the creation of several secondary grammar and technical schools in the province and the creation of a bitumen factory in Limbe, to name but a few.

But we anxiously await the effective take-off of all these projects in the nearest future.

Mr. President,

Much as we appreciate all that Government has done for our region since your accession to power, we feel very worried and embarrassed that after thirty years of independence, the South-west Province which alone contribute about 60% of our gross national product, is so glaringly marginalized in many aspects of the nation's life. We would like to see this very immense contribution by the South West Province to the wealth of the nation significantly reflected in the attention given to the development of this province and to the interest of its people.

We wish to remind Your Excellency of a few of our grievances which have repeatedly been reported to government but which seem to have been given a deaf ear.

DEEP-SEA PORT:

Mr. President, Sir, all the international airports in Cameroon are east of the Mungo. The only seaport we have in the country is that in Douala which can only be used by constant dredging at very high cost; and even when dredged to its limit, it cannot accommodate large vessels which make modern commercial shipping economical. We have at Cape Limbo an ideal geographical setting for a natural deep-sea port has been undertaken and the results have been positive.

In view of the limitations of the Douala

port, it would appear to be in the national interest of the efforts which we are putting in to fight the economic crises, to make the realisation of the Deep-sea port in Cape Limbo a number one national priority. This will not only give practical expression to your policy of balanced development; it will also contribute significantly to revive economic activity in this once-booming city of Limbe

ROADS:

We lack adequate words to describe to Your Excellency the deplorable nature of the roads in the South-West Province. Most of the province is not easily accessible for most of the year; at the height of the rainy season, some regions are virtually cut off. Ndiain Division, which produces most of our petroleum, does not have one single kilometre of tarred road.

We call on government to take urgent steps to remedy this anomaly.

In this connection, we appeal for the completion of the projects already started to tar the roads of Buea and Kumba. The inhabitants of Kumba, the fourth largest and most populated town in the South-West province according to official statistics, have been condemned for too long to inhale dust in the dry season and to swim in mud in the rainy season. The towns of Mamfe and Mundemba should also be given some consideration in this regard.

We also request Government to improve on the deplorable state of the following roads:-

The Kumba-Mamfe-Ekok road;
The Kumba-Mbonge-Mundemba-Akwa road;
The Kumba-Loum road;
The Kumba-Tombel-Bangem road;
The Mamfe-Bamenda road;
The Mamfe-Fontem-Dscang road;
The Mamfe-Akwaya road;
The Buea-mile 4 road;
The Buea-Mapanja-Etome-Batoke road;
The Muyuka-Muyenge-Idenau road;
Idenau-Mbonge road;
And the Wone-Mundemba-Toko-Dikume-Ekondo Titi road.

AGRICULTURAL SHOW:

Buea had the singular honour of organising the first Agricultural show in 1973 as a demonstration of the Green revolution. The show evolved, bringing with it substantial development in the form of road infrastructure, airports, hotels, telecommunications and public utilities. But if you look around, Your Excellency, there is nothing in Buea to remind anyone of that first farmers' feast. That is why we are calling on government to organise the next one in Buea to do justice to this province and to give Buea a face-lift befitting of a provincial capital.

APPOINTMENTS:

Your Excellency, we have noticed with dismay that our province has never had fair consideration in top administrative and political appointments. This is clearly evident in top-level appointments in some

key ministries and public corporations. Even in SONARA, which is located in this province, we are looked upon as "foreigners."

BILINGUALISM:

Your Excellency, we very fully subscribe to the policy of bilingualism enshrined in our Constitution. This province can boast of being the bedrock of the implementation of that policy. However, Mr. President, we believe it is of paramount importance that, as is the case in all other provinces, and as you have often demonstrated, administrative and other officials posted to this province should be able to communicate with the people in the language that they understand.

DELAYED PAYMENTS and UNEMPLOYMENT:

Your Excellency, while we very much appreciate the commendable efforts made to pay some of the arrears owed to farmers of the South west Province, we appeal to government to do all it can to hasten the payment of the remaining arrears.

We also implore Your Excellency to look personally into the plight of workers in research institutions in the country as a whole and in the South West Province in particular who have had no salaries for several months. It was only as a result of the intervention of the local chiefs that those of this province reluctantly called off their sit-in strike at the Governor's Office.

Mr. President, we are aware that the problem of unemployment is a national phenomenon. The South West Province is no exception here. Many people have been laid off work; increasingly large numbers of qualified young people cannot find jobs. We trust that our province will not be forgotten in the drive to seek solutions to this problem through projects such as the National Employment Fund and the Free Trade Zone.

CONCLUSION:

Your Excellency, we wish you a very pleasant stay at the foot of Mount Fako. We want you to enjoy the beautiful climate of Buea and that you come back again soon.

At this time when Cameroon is hard hit by the current world Economic Crisis and is going through turbulent political transition, we implore the Almighty to endow you with wisdom and courage to lead our people successfully out of the prevailing situation and to grant you and your entire family good health and long life. We request Your Excellency to kindly accept this gift of a log table, a product of wealth of our forests.

Long Live the Buea Municipality.
Long Live the South West Province,
Long Live His Excellency Paul Biya,
Long Live Cameroon.