



OSIWA

THE BELL

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

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The Role of Civil Society Organisations in the Development of the South West Province!



By Ebenezer Tabot Tabot, Rural Development Consultant

To many people, this may sound like an overstatement, but it is true that we enter the new millennium with less certainty and assurance about the development process than when we started way back in the fifties. A few decades ago, 'modernisation' and various necessary stages of technological development and national economic growth were largely viewed as inevitable processes whose benefits would 'trickle down,' bringing material progress, social justice and freedom to all. This has not come to be, due to several institutional and organisational constraints.

Today, a new direction for more integrative development has emerged in which human needs are the centrepiece, and in which meeting the fundamental needs of the poorest is seen as the most urgent challenge. This is viewed not only as a strategy for helping the poor in the fringes of society to meet their own needs, but as part of a larger pattern of interdependent national/regional development through which all citizens may seek more diversified and sustainable directions for genuine development.

The constituency of concern within which these directions are being formulated extends far beyond conventional governmental structures to include new sets of participants, that is, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), in the larger development discourse. Civil Society Organisations are non-governmental, non-profit, tax-exempt organisations whose primary purpose is to provide material assistance and administrative and technical services at little or no cost to the needy. They include Non Governmental Organisations, Community-Based Organisations, Common Initiative Groups and many other community-level organisations and institutions. Following this definition, CSOs are essentially development oriented. As non-governmental development agencies, CSOs have no official relationship with the government although in practice there are often specific agreements that give CSOs access to needy populations. As a general rule CSOs attempt to maintain a scrupulous non-political or, at best, non-confrontational image so as to retain good faith and confidence with governments. However, operating in a politically oriented world,



Members of the South West Civil Society Network (SWECSON)

it is often difficult for CSOs to stay clear of politically charged atmospheres.

CSOs are the innovators and promoters of the bottom-up approach to development, and compared with government agencies, they are in a relatively enviable position as regards human development strategies, since they live with people, have relatively simple structures, serve the deep-felt needs of the population, and act on what the people themselves consider their priorities.

CSOs in the Development Space

The South West Province stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the south, to the Bamenda and Bamboutos Highlands in the north and north-east respectively. In development terms, this zone is known as the Rumpi Area. 'Rumpi' being a chain of mountains covering the entire South West Province and extending to the neighbouring West.

With a population of over two million (2,000,000) inhabitants, the SWP covers an area of 25,085 km², and harbours a variety of ecological zones. It is still rich in natural resources, and even so in human resources, which should form a basis for its development. CSOs have a great role to play in this direction by increasing their scale, scope and influence through sensitisation, education, advocacy, lobbying, training, alliance-building and networking. However, this will only be possible if a resourceful organisation like the South West Development Agency (SOWEDA) assumes and play the

role of rallying force, while the South West Elite Association (SWELA) plays the role of watchdog organisation. For the latter to play this role effectively it must, itself, professionalise and implant the necessary structures.

Due to resource constraints and the need to set practical, achievable and measurable objectives, all CSOs in the Province have limited their development efforts to specific areas of the South West Province and to specific development domains. The focus is usually on access to micro-credit and other resources, rural infrastructure, community health, sustainable agriculture, community-based natural resource management and access to markets. In these domains they raise awareness on critical health issues, embark on road maintenance, provide potable water, assist peasant farmers increase agricultural yield on marginal lands, through agro-forestry and organic agriculture. They also assist communities to manage, collect, process and market non wood forest products (NWFPs), encourage small-scale, conventional and non-conventional animal husbandry by supporting rural groups to raise snails, grow cane rats, raise mushroom and embark on bee and fish farming, etc.

The overall goal of all these CSO interventions is to raise the nutritional value of food intake, improve health conditions and break the spell of ignorance and grinding pov-

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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 organisations 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 globalisation, OSI seeks to



George Soros extends support to Africa

foster global open society by increasing collaboration with other nongovernmental organisations, 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 the 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 foundations, governments and donors.



Abdul Tejan Cole
Chair of OSIWA's Board of Directors



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Executive Director, OSIWA

OSIWA further recognises 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, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, 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

As the First Phase of the Project to Create More Open and Democratic Societies in the South West Province draws to an end, I plead to use the powers conferred upon me by the Coalition (FIDA Cameroon, GNNGG, HELP OUT, MUDEC Group) to thank all persons who participated actively or passively in any of the activities that were organised. The ride was fast and very professional. The impact has been felt throughout the Province and beyond, proving eloquently that the Civil Society can play a contributing role in our development equation, if associated by Government and the Private Sector in the formulation and execution of development policy.

Dear Readers, the Germans left roads, bridges, plantations, houses, most of which are still in use today. The British left Clerks' Quarters, Boys Quarters, G.R.A. etc. The Chinese are renovating and building hospitals. The Japanese have started building primary schools. The Americans should build roads, provide potable water and solar energy to our villages to improve people's living conditions.

We end by advising the Government to do or take note of the following:

- Revamp our agricultural sector to empower the rural population in poverty alleviation;
- Decrease taxes by 50% for one year to relaunch

investment, industrialisation, employment and beehive economic activity;

- Stimulate the Tourism and Housing industries by forging strong relationships with the Brazilians, Malaysians and Indonesians. Invite their experts and give concessions to their businessmen to transform our coastal areas into veritable touristic destinations;
- Stay away from the IMF and the World Bank;
- Apply the **Gabonese solution** to the fight against corruption i.e. organise a secret meeting with all embezzlers and give them one month to repatriate stolen money or face **SATAN!** The present sporadic arrests strategy might not enable us to recover up to 5% of billions that have embezzled;
- Privatisation should be carried out with the best interests of workers, consumers and the local communities;
- Pay urgent attention to the Mutengene-Kumba Road and all others;
- Repair the Ombe Bridge, because the 1911 bridge currently in use might not be very safe.

Amen!

By George Mbella



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Primary schools under construction in Limbe by the Japanese



The 1911 German Ombe Bridge



Arrow shows eroded cavity under Ombe Bridge



The dilapidated Mutengene-Kumba Road

The South West Civil Society Network (SWECSON) Enjoying Strength Transfusion From SNV

The South West Civil Society Network (SWECSON) was created a few years ago by a few pioneering civil society organisations to act as a forum for networking, advocacy and capacity building.

Today the membership has grown to more than thirty civil society organisations operating throughout the entire province in the different domains like agriculture, governance, sustainable development, media, environment, micro-finance, human rights, women and youth empowerment, health etc.

This growing membership has been an eloquent proof of a growing civil society in the timid South West Province.

As a young network, SWECSON needs a lot of material, technical and financial assistance. Recognising the urgent need to strengthen the civil society in the South West Province, the Netherlands Development Organisation quickly responded to SWEC-



SNV's Verina Ingram addressing members of SWECSON during the Buea Media Workshop

SON's plea for assistance and has since been a strength behind SWECSON successes. The relationship between the bodies has been for-

malised through the signing of a Partnership Agreement that has so far enabled SWECSON to benefit from training workshops on Resource Mobilisation and the Use of Media Tools. SNV has also donated media equipment worth over half a million francs CFA to SWECSON.



SNV's Bakia Besong and Moise Foki



CRTV's Robert Abunaw (left) and Kedia Basibang (right) give media lessons to SWECSON Members

By
David Nkeng
GNGG's Representative
SWECSON



The Role of CSOs in the Development of the South West Province

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erty by significantly raising agricultural and non-farm incomes of their target beneficiaries. It is the CSO belief that the much talked about 'poverty alleviation' would jump from mirage to reality if the majority of rural and disenfranchised urban people are empowered to earn sustained incomes, rather than if a few city-based individuals are enabled to earn super scale incomes. Unfortunately, the action that CSOs lead in the field, the extent to which they go and the results they obtain from these actions are limited by the resources (intellectual and financial) at their disposal.

CSOs and Financial Autonomy

One big challenge, which also happens to one of the primary factors limiting the growth of CSOs, is their dependence on external financial resources to execute projects and programmes. Such dependence augurs poorly for planned and systematic execution of own programmes. Since the source is so uncertain, timing is usually at variance with established activity calendars. Donor money may also mean the implementation of someone else's agenda rather than one's own, which is annoying even when such an agenda has the potential to produce good results. Apparently, the future of CSOs will be determined by what orientation this thorny issue adopts in the future.

The dependency syndrome arises for two major reasons. First, unlike what happens under other skies, our government is still not open to the prospect of committing even a small percentage of its GNP for development work through local develop-

ment oriented structures. The reasons for this go far beyond mistrust. It translates misplaced priorities and a lack of political will to genuinely address issues of rural poverty. Until recently, there was no national law recognising NGOs and governing their activities. Today, such a law exists but it surprises few people that it is phenomenally silent on the issue of financing them. In fact, the law presupposes that CSO funds will be accessed from abroad even though there is an increasingly compelling case for collaborative partnerships between CSOs and the public sector: the size of human capital and other resources locked up in government institutions usually represent an under-utilised potential which many CSOs have demonstrated they can put to better and controlled use. Secondly, since it is relatively easier to solicit donor money than embark on internal fundraising, this latter strategy, which has a lot of potential, has not been exploited.

Of course, laying all the blame on the government could be considered an escapist ploy. For one thing, it is also true that not much has been done by way of convincing the government that if public funds are disbursed, they will be used as accountably and transparently as expected. Besides, if such a financing policy were put in place, only a few organisations in this province would be able to benefit from it. This is so because the majority of CSOs in the Province are still largely amateurish and plagued by lack of professionalism; they lack the necessary skills to elaborate acceptable multidisciplinary proposals and action plans, and lack the money to employ the services of consultants to do these for them. Furthermore, as small scale as CSOs are, and in spite of the relative efficiency of service delivery capabilities compared with government agencies, they are essentially bureaucratic.

To diversify their sources of funding it is high time CSOs professionalise, float well-remunerated fund-raising units and devise appropriate strategies to raise funds externally and internally from individuals, corporate entities and the government. The truth is, the financial autonomy of a CSO is less a matter of self-reliance than one of diversification of the financial resource base. Put simply, it is suicidal for any CSO to depend on one source of income. The financial starvation of CSOs arises because not enough has been done to pursue and endure this process of financial diversification.

It must be said honestly that the 'enviable position' of CSOs vis-à-vis government institutions as stated earlier has often been misconstrued and even flouted by many CSOs, especially NGOs, who see themselves as godfathers of the people ones seek to promote themselves rather than those for whom they work. They claim to aim at the people's autonomy of thought and action but are not prepared to face the changes in their relationships with these same people's autonomy expands.

While it is legitimate for CSOs to recognise that they are important, in fact the most important link in the development chain, they must nevertheless accept that they are not indispensable for the people's emancipation. Their success lies in posing as the interface between those who have resources and those who need them for development; assisting in a professional and purely participatory way, the latter to achieve their individual and collective objectives.

Working With Rural Communities For Sustainable Development

Experience From Pan African Institute for Development and Implication For Rumpi

By Mrs. Rosetta B. Thompson, Director Pan African Institute For Development, West Africa

We are in a radically changing world, and this change is from various sectoral dimensions. Our concern in this paper, however, is the change related to rural communities in which we can situate the vital issues of food security and poverty alleviation. In a quotation in the article of Dr. Uwe Werblow, in *Agriculture and Rural Development Vol.4*, it was noted that there is a real global concern for food security in view of the increasing global population growth; more so as the farm surpluses of the past are giving way to deep sense of unease. What are the emerging trends in Africa? Are these putting Africans at ease?

Productivity level is falling below population growth rate and sustainability of high production level cannot be guaranteed either because agriculture and rural development have given way to other national priority income sources such as oil, or rural development technology that should accelerate productivity is lacking. Either way, the situation does not augur well for rural communities and it calls for urgent action to reverse the trend.

The subject of food security and rural communities are highly intertwined as the latter is generally perceived as the bread basket of the nation. In the World Development Report 2002, the value added as percentage of GDP for agriculture is 44% as against 19% for industry in Cameroon; meaning that a remarkable proportion of the country's population (even of many African nations) depend on agriculture for their sustenance. It is therefore logical to have an understanding of the rural communities; their potentials to accelerate economic growth; and the need to enhance their capacity to achieve those potentials for the good of all. These are aspects of development and sustainability which are of importance to any economy. From the perspective of the founders of the International Pan African Institute for Development, the development of the rural communities and their linkage to the mainstream of national development system are issues that are pertinent enough to create, about 40 years ago, an organization of national and international stature to address them.

Development and Sustainability

Development is a concept which is defined in a variety of ways depending on people's ideology, perspective, discipline or professional background; but the commonality is that improvement is generated either socially, economically, technologically, and/or environmentally, over and above the existing undesirable situation. In order for development to have a long term desirable impact, it must be sustainable. In its definition of sustainability, the 2003/04 batch of PAID-WA's Diploma in Development Studies (DDS) students referred to it as the ability of a community or State to maintain the improved existing trend, status, condition in terms of quality (standard) and quantity (dimension) without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. In other words, the present developed state or level will not be diminished; the beneficiary community or nation will be able to maintain and improve on the level even after the withdrawal of assisting partners.

Development is sustainable when feasible ideas are turned into concrete project actions, efficiently managed (especially by the beneficiary community), and is having the desired impact. It involves positive change in behavior, mobilization of resources and regulated use with a view to maintain-

"Today there is the view that sometimes growth and modernization, which are objectives of rural development, make the poor poorer; that the main gain from increased agricultural production often goes to urban population and the rural rich. In consequence, the sense in which rural development is used might also have been affected. Howbeit, given the importance of the rural communities, can a nation afford not to focus development attention on these communities?"

ing a long term base for productive activity. Thus at any level that development is planned and is taking place, sustainability factor needs to be integrated. Various approaches can be used to achieve and accelerate development. In using the bottom-up approach, we are touching the core area of rural communities; the grassroots. Sustainable development in any of the countries of our region, particularly Cameroon, will be a mirage if rural communities are left behind.

Rural Community

A community is classified as rural based on its occupational, socio-cultural and ecological assessment. Usually such a community is predominantly agrarian and in small trade ventures; the people are closely bound together by cultural, ethnic values among others; has small size population that is often isolated from more advanced communities. In most cases, a community classified as rural, lacks infrastructural amenities such as good motor able roads (particularly farm to market), electricity, potable water, medical and educational facilities. The people are, in most parts, faced with deprivation; weak, vulnerable and powerless. According to Robert Chambers in 1986, they are regarded as physically and socially wretched. Given some of the features described, it is common to have records of high mortality rate, low literacy level, poor market access, low income level, and high poverty rate in rural communities. With development efforts, the outlook of rural communities today vary from place to place.

In Cameroon with agrarian economy, the major food crop producers, the rural communities, also suffer from the action of middlemen who are able to get into them to exploit their hard earned farm production very cheaply; they find it difficult to preserve their raw produce due to infrastructural deficiency, and have social life that is rural due to often lack of electricity and communication access that would have opened them to world development events and learning. There is therefore obvious need for rural development in order to ensure that a substantial base of the economy does not crumble and to maintain continuous feed

from that base to the whole of the national development system.

Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people - the rural poor: men, women, and youths, to enable them acquire for themselves and their children some of what they want and need. Thus rural development aims at reversing those disabling features and trends in rural communities through improved agricultural system, health facilities, literacy, micro credit and communication facilities, among others. It should be noted that rural development as an approach to development has its own controversy arising from its emphasis on livelihood or a desirable change, but what is considered desirable differs by country, region, person and over time. Today there is the view that sometimes growth and modernization, which are objectives of rural development, make the poor poorer; that the main gain from increased agricultural production often goes to urban population and the rural rich. In consequence, the sense in which rural development is used might also have been affected. Howbeit, given the importance of the rural communities, can a nation afford not to focus development attention on these communities? With its several years on the development scene, the intervention of Pan African Institute for Development (PAID) is worth sharing in this respect.

PAID'S Experience

According to Fernand Vincent, one of the founding fathers of PAID, there was back in the early 60's, "a huge rift existing in African countries between the young professional staff back from abroad who were capable of understanding development, and the rural populations who were often left to fend for themselves". The polarization made it necessary to train middle-level staff who would serve as agents for rural development between the 'country - people' i.e. the rural communities, and the overseas trained African elite. This observation, shared among other founders, culminated into the establishment of PAID "Ecole des Cadres" (School for Training of Executive Staff) in Douala, which later became IPD Afrique Central. In response to demand from various African governments and development assistance agencies, the Association developed into a regional institution with four operational regional institutes including PAID-West Africa. PAID chose to be a non-governmental international association. Non-governmental, in order to find an independent channel of development that would not be dominated by the State; a Pan African association because of its wish to reunite people who shared similar developmental ideals, and the exclusive African nature of the projects it would launch and be involved in. Though non-governmental, it resolved to work in strict collaboration with the entire body of African governments.

PAID's development perception is based on:

- CHANGE at both human and structural levels.
- The view that man is an individual with not only economic and social needs, but also cultural and spiritual. Transformation is therefore expected to affect the heart, soul as well as the head and body; the whole being.
- The individual is at the very heart of development and as such it is necessary to operate on the people, whether individuals, groups, communities, so that they could identify their project needs themselves.

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Working With Rural Communities For Sustainable Development

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That fact that motivation and proof will generate more development than technical qualification. It therefore consider it necessary for professional staff to be trained for the desired change such that their own life will be transformed and subsequently give evidence to their beliefs when implementing activities.

PAID's programme activities since inception have been on these principles which made participation in its programmes a full experience not only for the students but also for the staff as well. Its development philosophy therefore is that any action initiated or conducted by the institution is necessarily part of an educational process. This philosophy views man as both the catalyst and beneficiary of his development activities, as it is by him and with him that changes within the environment can be planned or effected. In view of this, it had to evolve a development support strategy that would promote endogenous development models since it believed that foreign institutions, technologies and models could not always meet the needs of the Africans. This point formed the basis of its adoption of the concept of integrated development system which the institution has used to great advantage and to work collaboratively with communities.

PAID's major themes of interest are:

- Rural development, poverty alleviation and agriculture
- Gender and development
- Development management and financing
- Training systems and policies
- Development of small and medium enterprises and micro-credit management
- Environment, health and project management
- Executive and leadership development

In working with rural communities, PAID adopts a participatory approach which enables the communities to benefit not only from the outcome of research work in their communities, but to develop the capacity for self appraisal and project identification. In using training, advisory services, and research to address rural community development issues, the 'field' is usually its point of reference. PAID's use of the integrated rural development approach enables it to identify community issues and needs from a wide sectoral perspective, from which key problematic areas are highlighted for solution. Even when there was wide global debate on the usefulness of this approach, our findings in the field score it highly as credible and workable. However, its usefulness is within the orbit of participation, involvement, and capacity building of the rural community themselves to take initiatives, to be active participants in their own development, and to control their development future.

Other ways by which PAID has been addressing the sustainable development is through institutional development of local organizations who work directly with the communities and deprived groups. Examples are the:

- Training of development workers and organizations including leaders of NGOs, CIGs, CDAs, CBOs
- Training of women and women leaders to improve their condition, status, and to affect other women at the rural level.
- Developing the capacity of traditional chiefs in good governance and participatory development process.

Through working closely with rural communities, PAID-WA has assisted in helping them evolve over 200 priority development projects some of which have either been implemented by the communities themselves or with the support of the government, funding agencies and private organiza-

"In working with rural communities, PAID adopts a participatory approach which enables the communities to benefit not only from the outcome of research work in their communities, but to develop the capacity for self appraisal and project identification."

tions. The outcome of its field work and research also serve as inputs into administrative systems and policies

Implication for Rumpi

RUMPI Area Participatory Development Project (RPADP which will be referred to in this paper simply as RUMPI) covers the whole of the South West Province with a laudable goal of contributing to poverty reduction among rural households in its focal area. Specifically, the project aims at increasing the income of the smallholders in the project area in a sustainable way. It has six years to achieve its goals during which it will focus on:

- Capacity building and empowerment of rural communities
- Agricultural production and productivity
- Access to markets and support to local initiatives
- Project Management

As RUMPI evolves from the IRDP project, it is not totally new to rural development activities; but with new orientation and enhanced technical capacity, it is expected to achieve a higher level of performance, and its defined goal by the end of the project period. PAID-WA, having been in the realm of rural development for several years and have had a high record of achievements and studies carried out among rural communities, particularly in Cameroon, have a number of lessons learnt which could be useful in the implementation of the RUMPI Project.

The integrated rural development approach provides a global view of the state of a community from various sectoral dimensions, and shows the linkages of problems, cause and effect. PAID uses this approach for its field work. However, at a stage in the use of this approach, the research methodology used became more classical than participatory. The people were not so involved and so could not really own the outcome. Due to its regular self and activity appraisal system, this problem was soon discovered and the participatory study approach introduced. The difference has been clear. There is need to prioritize the emerging development problems and needs for systematic solution. Energy and resources are better directed at the most critical, while other problems/needs are tackled as the means are available rather than neglected.

- The rural communities should be active participant in their development process and not made to be passive. The consequence of the latter is that the project may fail. They are willing to contribute in cash and/or kind to their own development, though may not be able to carry the whole responsibility.
- Develop capacity and commitment in the community to maintain and sustain projects.
- Assist the communities to be organized; have community development committee (CDC) whose membership is based on commitment, capacity and honesty to effectively handle the project. Many communities do not have CDCs, while some existing CDCs are not

achieving much. These organizations require technical and management empowerment to enhance their performance.

- Involve women and youths in community projects and encourage community leaders to let them have a voice in the development process. Sometimes the ability and capacity of women are downplayed in community action to the detriment or disadvantage of such community.

- Use the field as the reference point in projects for communities. Projects should not be planted on them. Hence participatory process of project evolution is advocated.

- Community Based Organizations should play effective role in community development, as some are already doing, but they need capacity building and resources to strengthen their level of performance. Individual economic and social development is necessary for the common good. Therefore technical and management skills for successful income generating operations, entrepreneurship, and marketing should be provided to men, women and youths in these communities. A wider scope of economically viable rural dwellers would enhance rural development.

- Encourage the community to promote clean environment (one of the focus of the Kyoto Agreement) through, for example, introduction of local substitutes for fuel wood, and investment in rural infrastructure that facilitates rather than diminish the development process.

- Follow up to rural project actions is important until the rural community can adequately handle/maintain the project sustainably. Technical advisory services through extension services are useful.

For sustainable development of rural communities, RUMPI has a wide scope of issues to cover within its mandate. It must however understand its role as not just to provide projects, implement development activities for the communities, give and not allow contribution; but allow inclusive development process; integrate sustainability in projects right from the planning stage; and adequately prepare communities to take full responsibility for the management of the projects. PAID should be regarded as a partner in this progressive venture of RUMPI.

By Dr. Rosetta Bola Thompson
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Development, West Africa



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The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Rural Development: *The Case of Rumpi*

Introduction

The RUMPI project was designed as a participatory rural development project. Public consultations and workshops were held across the province, involving actors from different shades of civil society - village development associations (VDAs), associations, producers' organizations etc.

This approach can be traced to the prevailing context of donor conditionality, the Cameroon Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy, the National Governance Programme, and the Participatory National Development Programme (PNDP). This context itself has also been largely influenced by the current macro level orientations of liberalization, privatization and globalization, and the international desire to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Within this context, it is obvious that the involvement of Civil Society at the design stage of Rumpi was therefore neither accidental nor should it be seen to be cosmetic at the implementation stage. Indeed it is common currency to insist on Civil Society participation in all poverty alleviation programmes if these are to have meaningful impact and be sustainable.

The rationale for this argument has been based on the retreat of the state from the provision of basic social services. This phenomenon, noticed since the 1980s with the onset of structural adjustment programmes, left a critical lack of social protection which Civil Society is gradually struggling to fill by providing so called social safety nets for the poor and marginalized.

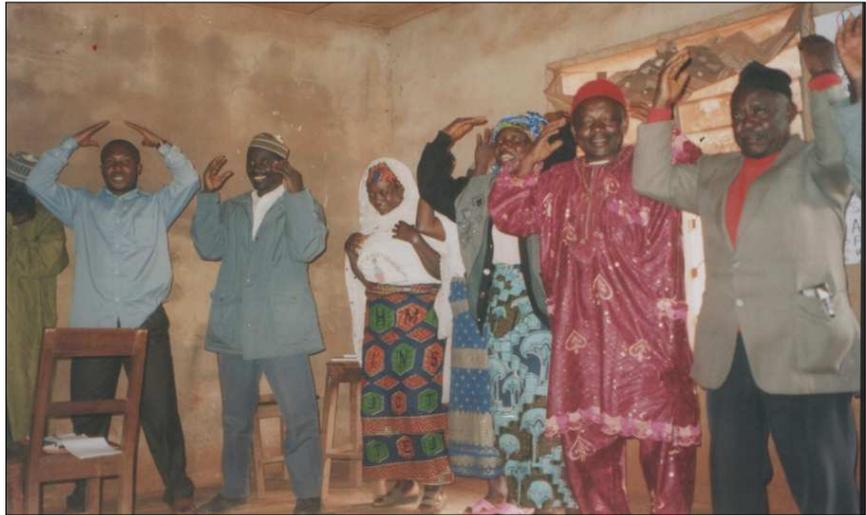
What then is civil society?

Civil Society - A definition

Interest in civil society has grown rapidly since the 1990s as the trend towards democracy opened up space for non - government, non market actors to participate in social service delivery, and political reform processes, especially in developing countries. However, no consensus exists as to a clear definition of what civil society is. The multiplicity of definitions reflects the rich diversity of this sector. The following three definitions show, however, the common characteristics of civil society.

"Civil Society is the sphere of institutions, organizations, networks and individuals (and their values) located between the confines of the family, the state and the market which is bound by a set of shared civic rules, and in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests" (Civicus Civil Society Index 2001)

"Civil society is a sphere of social interaction between the household (family and the state) which is



manifested in the norms of community cooperative, structures of voluntary association and networks of public communication ... norms are values of trust, reciprocity, tolerance and inclusion, which are critical to cooperation and community problem solving, structure of association refers to the full range of informal and formal organizations through which citizens pursue common interests" (Venelklasen,1994)

"Civil society is composed of autonomous associations which develop a dense, diverse and pluralistic network. As it develops, Civil Society will consist of a range of local groups, specialized organizations and linkages between them to amplify the corrective voices of civil society as a partner in governance and the market." (Connor, 1999)

"The key features of successful civil societies which emanates from various definitions include the following: Separation from the state and the market; formed by people who have common needs, interest and values like tolerance, inclusion, cooperation and equality; and development through a fundamentally endogenous and autonomous process which cannot easily be controlled from outside.

The experience of developing countries highlights a wide range of such organizations, from large registered formal bodies to informal local organizations, the latter being far more numerous and less visible to outsiders. These include traditional organizations (e.g. religious organizations and modern groups and organizations, mass movements and action groups, political parties, trade and professional associations, non-commercial organizations and community based organizations). Civil society should not be equated to non-government organizations (NGOs). NGOs are part of

civil society though they play an important and sometimes leading role in activating citizen participation in socio - economic development and politics and in shaping or influencing policy. Civil society is a broader concept, encompassing all organizations and associations that exist outside the state and the market.

Accordingly, civil society is seen to lie outside the domain of the state and in opposition to it. It is that collectiveness of interests mediating between the state and the people and thus consisting of all hues of people's organizations, voluntary agencies and NGOs initiating and engendering participation." (Pasha, 2004)

Rural development on its part is hinged on what some have called "the holy trilogy": it must be **"engendered, sustainable and bottom -up"**. (Roy 2003). A further breakdown of the trilogy leads to *engendered* being equated with equality of men, women, youth and the marginalized in all development effort; *sustainable* equates with balance maintained over time, a rational use of resources, guaranteeing continuous availability for future generations; and *bottom up* refers to active participation of all facets of the community, based on dialogue, consensus building, transparency and accountability.

In the current Cameroonian context rural development cannot be divorced from the ongoing decentralization process with its emphasis on council led local development. It has been argued that such development:

- A) Can only be implemented successfully at the local level with the active participation of the social, political and economic actors;
- B) Will only exist where local civil society and its institutions are capable of creating it. Either it will emerge from the local decision itself and will be implemented and encouraged by the local institutions, or it will not exist at all". Delnet TU 3 (2004)

Role of Civil Society in Poverty Alleviation

Below are some arguments, which have been given in support of CSO involvement in development programmes.

Turn to page 7

"...selection of CSO partners is based on competitiveness and open and objective criteria and tendering procedures. Such an environment would gradually weed out the NGIs (Non Governmental Individuals) and the BRINGOs (Brief Case NGOs)."

The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Rural Development

Cont'd from page 6

- CSOs are perceived as more flexible, participatory and responsive to local needs of the poor - all prerequisites for sustained development. State bureaucracy and corruption erodes finances and policies are often motivated by institutional, political and even kinship interests. These policies are typically urban based, delivery to politically favoured areas (Lehmann, 1990). CSOs can counter this by targeting pockets of poverty better.

- CSOs can potentially foster and support grassroots organizations to become more numerous, sizable, resourceful, and self-reliant.

Also, grassroots contacts enable CSOs to provide critical information on potential crisis and thus contribute to early warning systems.

Typically, CSOs require less financial inputs than government agencies and therefore are more cost effective, an attribute that is important in financially constrained third world countries.

CSOs can be more resourceful and innovative as they involve local communities in the identification and resolution of development problems which are cost effective, more sustainable, and more compatible with community values and norms.

Over and above these direct development roles, CSOs also have a very important advocacy role to play in promoting effective governance. (Pasha 2004)

This background demonstrates the need for an active role of civil society in the implementation of RUMPI. But what is the nature of civil society in the South -West province?

Civil Society Organisations in the South West Province: A Typology.

Going by the definitions quoted above, civil society entails both formal and informal structures, generally voluntarily associated, not -for profit and working for the common good.

At the formal level three distinct types of CSOs emerge, regulated by national legislation as follows:

1. Associations

They are regulated by law No 90/053 of 19 December, 1990. Registered by Senior Divisional Officers, there are possibly hundreds of these working in the South -West Province. They are both member and public benefiting in nature.

2. Cooperatives and Common Initiative Groups

They are regulated by Law No 92/006 of 14 August 1992. Over 4561 are registered in the province but it is estimated that only about 20% are active. They are generally self-help oriented.

3. Non -governmental Organisations(NGOs)

They are governed by Law No 99/014 of 22 December 1999 - 12 -27. It seems only

"CSOs can be more resourceful and innovative as they involve local communities in the identification and resolution of development problems which are cost effective, more sustainable, and more compatible with community values and norms."

one of these is so far registered in the province.

4. Professional Unions e.g. trade unions, drivers unions etc.

These are registered by MINATD and the other various relevant ministerial departments.

5. Faith - Based organizations:

This refers to the social work carried out by various church denominations. Mainstream churches (Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, Apostolic etc.) run development projects and social programmes across the province.

6. International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs):

Mention should also be made of the international NGOs such as the Red Cross, SNV, Heveltas, CARE International, Plan International etc.

Informal CSO structures

These organizations are not formally registered but they play a very important role in mobilizing people at the grassroots for self-help projects. They include:

Village Development Associations (VDAs) and their affiliates such as water management committees, village health committees, road maintenance committees, Local AIDS Control Committees (LACCS)

Producers' Associations (also referred to as Rural Organisations, Farmers' Organisations), Youth Clubs

Socio-cultural meetings

Women's associations and groups

Associations of People Living With AIDS

Parent Teachers' Associations etc. etc.

Challenges for CSOs in the South West Province

CSO Legitimacy

Very often the public asks of CSOs who are you? Who do you represent? On

whose mandate are you speaking? Are CSOs indeed voluntary and not for profit? Are they addressing the issues affecting the marginalized? Or are they exploiting the beneficiaries they pretend to target?

Civil society organizations must therefore work to enjoy the confidence of the society. Civil society, organizations, must tackle issues such as legal legitimacy, technical legitimacy, political legitimacy and moral legitimacy, which ensures transparency of work and governance systems.

Accountability

How accountable are they to their members and to the public they serve? CSOs must ensure this to increase public recognition for them,

Partnership with the State

All too often a state of misunderstanding, mutual suspicion and avoidance prevails between the State, its various representations and CSOs. While CSOs blame this on the highhandedness and self-interest, especially of administrative officials, government functionaries tend to see CSOs as little more than opportunistic pretenders. CSOs must, again, come clean. If they condone corrupt practices and endure abuse of office then they can hardly qualify as civil society. This of course presupposes an environment where, for instance, selection of CSO partners is based on competitiveness and open and objective criteria and tendering procedures. Such an environment would gradually weed out the NGIs (Non Governmental Individuals) and the BRINGOs (Brief Case NGOs).

Sustainability

It is known that CSOs are generally resource weak and donor dependent. Their funds are raised from membership fees, grants and donations, loans, service charges and fees. These are hardly ever enough, requiring that they contribute as members a huge amount of staff time, which is unfortunately undervalued.

CSOs must strive at ensuring sustainability . They must tackle issues related to how ownership is guaranteed, rigorous management principles, resources mobilization, financial management and auditing.

Unhealthy competition among CSOs

With the advent of programmes such as HIPCI, the National AIDS Control Programme, CSOs are being invited to tender along side private sector partners to provide services. This has led to backstabbing, and other unfair practices among CSOs, undermining their networking potential and the need to form coalitions for policy advocacy.

By Folefac Vincent Anu
Trainer, Local Government Training
Centre, Buea
CEO, Nkong Hill Top,
(A Civil Society Organisation)



REACH OUT Empowering Women Making The World A Better Place

By the Declaration of the Decade for Women and Development (1976-1985) by the UN, expectations of the South were very high. It was believed that international agencies and governments will try to address the root causes of gender inequality. In many countries, the response was the creation of special ministries for women and bureaus in national government whose activities enhance knowledge and understanding of gender issues.

However, it was increasingly clear that a large part of the women's agenda was being bypassed by governments and even international development organizations. It should be realized that women are an indispensable asset development and the globalization process.

In 1996, a group of dynamic persons came to the conclusion that every human being is endowed with a gift that can contribute in some way to nation building and the progress of human civilization. This is how React Out was created.

React Out (REO) is a non-profit making organization, located in Buea in the South West Province with a worldwide outreach. The organization focuses on improving the lives of women and young girls

through their access to education by increasing their knowledge of issues that affect their lives and helping them to access resources that will contribute to their well being. Using participatory techniques such as awareness raising and bottom up approaches, the women themselves are empowered to voice their concerns and address issues that most concern them.

To this effect, REO has identified the issue of increasing burden of poverty on women as one of the long-standing concerns of women's problems. Women, Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCS) constitute the poorest of the poor and this has emerged as a global concern and recent development discourses have earmarked poverty as a priority issue which needs intervention programmes to eliminate it, while addressing women's needs.

In this light, React Out has trained women's groups in rural areas on how to generate income by developing entrepreneurial business ideas. In all, 28 CBOs with a total of 855 women have been trained and financed with the assistance of Plan Cameroon on the elaboration and establishment of 28 micro projects in Kumba Central Sub Division. These have only been made possi-

ble thanks to the organization's belief that every human being has an untapped ocean of wealth in him or her, which only needs orientation to make life richer and fuller. Also, there has been recognition that mere access to resources or provision of service is not adequate to justify the fact that women are the poorest of the poor. It is only through self-empowerment that women can break free of this position. React Out, in the same regard, has many exciting and innovative ideas for the future. These include food and nutrition workshops, the formation of market co-operatives, reaching life skills to girls who have dropped out of school and continuing activities to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, bearing in mind the women constitute the most vulnerable group.

By: *Efitti Ikome Josephine*
Assistant head - Gender unit
REACT OUT BUEA



Nkong Hill Top & PCC Empower Women in Fako Division

Since April 2005 the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) and Nkong Hill Top (NIGIC) in partnership embarked on the Women Education and Empowerment Project (WEEP) for communities in Fako division.

- The goal and objectives of this Bread For The World (BFTW) sponsored project is to increase women's participation in development and decision-making processes, by
- Reducing women's ignorance about their rights and responsibilities.
 - Improving women's level of education
 - Improving women's access and control over resources
 - Improving women's reproductive health, rights.

Between April and December 2005, WEEP carried out several activities aimed at achieving these objectives by organizing a training of trainers workshop on Gender And Women's Rights for 30 community representatives (25 women and 05 men) from all 4 sub divisions of Fako on gender and women's rights, a round table conference and radio talks, sensitization on a girl child education in several communities were organized.

During the 1st quarter of 2006 18 new communities have been introduced into the project. In all 33 communities have benefited directly with active participation by the women, men and traditional authorities where grassroots training have been implemented. Women and a good number of men have come to agree with the empowerment factor and to answer the following question.

Who should be empowered?

- The marginalized, powerless, less privileged of the society like women, youth, children etc should be empowered on their right and responsibilities (freedom of speech, movement, right to own property and participation in decision making processes.
- Men should be, on the need to understand and integrate women in decision-making processes, power structures and to respect the rights of women and other marginalized.
- Women in the position of power should be, on the need to see other women as having the same problem despite their level of social, economic and political attainment and to stop being the enemy or an obstacle to other women.

And why should people be empowered?

- To increase their opportunities to participate equally in society,
- To give every human being a sense of dignity,
- To foster the development of the individual and the society.

Women of Fako now say gone are the days when women used to say no to decision making positions. Proof of this is the sacrifice made by women in the cocoa plantation regions of Munyenge, Bafia, and Ikata who were able to take off time from their money making activities and cocoa businesses to sit in workshops on gender and women's rights of 10 hours per day for 3 days during which 507 women and 111 men were reached in 2005. To crown it all, an increase in the number of men who joined the train-

ing on the 2nd and 3rd days was an indication that the feedback on the trainings for the first day had a positive spread in the communities. WEEP targets at least 700 women and men and most importantly traditional rulers who are the up holders of tradition in 2006. WEEP preaches the concept of Gender, Development and Peace (GDP+) not Gender, Disintegration and Problems (GDP-).

With the current tilt towards the promotion of women in decision-making processes in the society, and the coming up of Municipal elections in Cameroon, the WEEP has come in just in time to see to it that more women get interested and participate in political activities in Cameroon. That is why WEEP plans a 5 day training on leadership and governance at the Presbyterian Synod Office for Women leaders in Fako come May 2006. Women want to be Lord Mayors NOW and not just Deputies as in the past. Can women not govern? With our numbers we can make it. This is not a challenge - Just try the woman.

Gospel Mabatiji Nti (Mrs.)
Gender and Community Action Officer
Nkong Hill Top, Buea



Fighting Against HIV/AIDS Stigma & Discrimination

There is no doubt that HIV/AIDS is increasingly ravaging our society and creating enormous economic and social consequences on those infected and affected. Despite all the efforts that has been made in the education and sensitization campaigns, people still have the denial attitude towards the pandemic and the infected number keeps increasing daily.

Stigma and discrimination is one of the most serious problems that PLWHA and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) face. These negative attitudes are not always openly and explicitly expressed in words. But rather they are implied in many subtle remarks that the people in the society make. Imagine a well-educated woman from one of our big cities, comes into a friends housing panicking. She asked for water to wash herself and her clothes. Infact she almost moved naked; removing her dress in the parlor. When asked why she was behaving this way, her answer was that she sat in the bus beside and HIV/AIDS infected person. The next question was how she knew that that person was infected. She said because the person was sweating a lot. What a misinformation. This lady has not got the facts about HIV/AIDS.

She might not be the only one behaving in this manner. In some families, when a person is tested positive, that person is considered potential candidate for death. Therefore there is no need to spend money for any treatment. This patient experiences violence, solitude and abandonment. One patient recounts. "When I was suspected of having AIDS my brother refused taking me to the hospital. That I was going to die. I even begged him that I will sponsor everything, because at the time I had money about 1.5m francs. That he should just take me to the hospital in Douala where I was referred to go for the test and refused. He wanted I should die and leave my properties to him".



Due to such ill treatment from family members and the society the PLWHA, orphans and vulnerable children seem to see themselves responsible for their faith. This causes self-stigma in PLWHA and OVC they are rejected by their friends. Because they are stigmatized, some PLWHA turn to hide their seropositive status and continue to go about with their usual habits and infecting more other people. Hence, the high rate of infected persons. Due to stigma, most patients die a miserable death. OVCs are blamed for their misfortune of losing their parents to HIV/AIDS. They are mocked by their friends. Family members who play the role of carers mishandle these children.

What can we do?

Fortunately, community/home-based care and support that the international organizations including local NGOs and CBOs render in the communities will go a long way to reduce stigma and discrimination. These services rendered to the PLWHA and OVC also involve members of the communities who serve as volunteers. This builds a sense of hope in these people. The services also generate love that is needed by the PLWHA and OVCs.

We should also build support action groups in our various communities to provide support and care for the PLWHA and OVC. In this way the infected and

affected will be integrated in the society.

Let's not despise these people because they are people as we are. They have not committed any special crime or offense to be infected. It can also be you living in the same situation as they are. Most of them are living in abject poverty and cannot provide the basic necessities like food or even transport to go for treatment. Just lending a hand of fellowship by giving just 500 francs to a PLWHA and OVC will change his/her life for the better.

They are crying and saying
 We have HIV/AIDS;
 Please hug us;
 Eat with us;
 Sleep on the same bed with us;
 Eat our food;
 Sit on the same chair with us;
 Drink in the same cup with us;
 We will not get you infected;
 We are spreading the message not the virus;
 So be part of our solution and not our problems.

By Yonga Bilfonyam Beatrice
 Coordinator, RUWDEC Buea

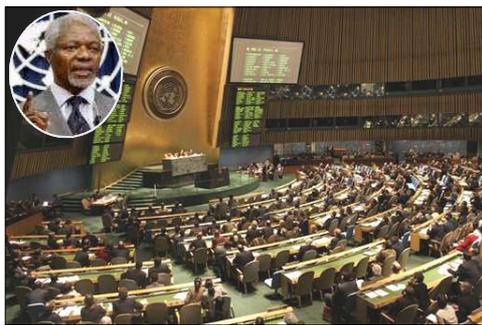


The Human Rights Council

On March 15, 2006, 170 members of the UN agreed to establish a new Human Rights Council to replace the discredited Commission on Human Rights. The establishment of a new body represented a major advance for the protection of human rights worldwide. This was the result of a Swiss initiative.

The origins of this new body could be traced back to March 2005 when the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, fed up with the tattered credibility of the UN, unveiled a proposal to replace the Commission with a smaller, permanent human rights council with tougher membership criteria. The purpose was to protect the UN's human rights role against manipulation by those who had become quite adept at gaining the system to their own advantage.

Based in Geneva and established as a subsidiary organ to the General Assembly, the body will consist of 47 members elected by secret ballot by an absolute majority. Members of the Council will serve for a period of 3 years and will not be eligible for immediate



re-election after two consecutive terms.

The selection of members will represent equitable geographic distribution, where by, Africa will have 13 seats, Asia 13 seats, Eastern Europe 6, Latin America and the Caribbean 8 and 7 for Western Europe and other Countries. The Council will meet 3 times a year for a maximum of 10weeks, and will be able to hold special sessions at the request of a member.

Why the Commission on Human Rights has been discredited.

The Commission on Human Rights has been criti-

cized for "declining credibility and professionalism".

- It has been criticized for allowing some members to escape condemnation. Some Countries have blocked scrutiny of their human rights record. For example, China, regularly defeated efforts to discuss its records.

- Koffi Anan had condemned the Human Rights Commission by saying it had been discredited by human rights abusers who joined to protect themselves from criticism, or to criticize another Country. For instance, Libya, a country with grave human rights abuse recently chaired the Commission. In 2004, the Commission declined to take action against Sudan despite the abuse by government forces in the region. Thereafter, the Sudanese elected government joined the Commission.

The Human Rights Council is a separate body like other UN agencies.

By Ete Ekolle
 Human Rights Department
 GNGG



Female Genital Mutilation

Still Practised in the South West Province

One of the most harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and children in the world now is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), that involves the surgical removal of parts or all of the most sensitive female genital organs. It is an age-old practice that is still present in many communities in the world. These communities perform FGM for several reasons among which are:

- to preserve the woman's virginity before marriage and fidelity thereafter;
- to mark the coming of age of the female child;
- to control sexuality.

The practice varies from area to area. In some communities, FGM is performed on infants as young as a few days old, on children from 7 to 10 years old or on adolescents. Often, women about to marry have to undergo the operation.

FGM is also practised by different communities around the world using different types of surgical forms. The most common are Circumcision, Excision or Clitoridectomy, and Infibulation.

Circumcision

This involves the removal of the prepuce and the tip of the clitoris. This operation is very similar to male circumcision.

Excision or Clitoridectomy

This involves the removal of the clitoris, and often the labia minora. It is the most common operation in most of the communities that still practise FGM.



The instruments used are crude and unsterilised

Infibulation

This is the most severe operation, involving excision plus the removal of the labia majora and the sealing of the two sides, through stitching or natural fusion of scar tissue. What is left is a very smooth surface, and a small opening to permit urination and the passing of menstrual blood. This artificial opening is sometimes no larger than the head of a match.

Like all other harmful traditional practices, FGM is performed by women. In most rural settings throughout Africa, the operation is accompanied with celebrations and often takes place away from the community at a special hidden place.

The operation is carried out by women (excisors) who have acquired their "skills" from their mothers or other female relatives; they are often also the community's traditional birth attendants.

Operation

The conditions under which these operations take place are often unhygienic and the instruments used are crude and unsterilised. A kitchen knife, a razor-blade, a piece of glass or even a sharp fingernail are the tools of the trade. These instru-



A Proud Excisor shows her unsterilised 'weapon'

ments are used repeatedly on numerous girls, thus increasing the risk of blood-transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

The operation takes between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on its nature; in most cases, anaesthetic is not administered. The child is held down by three or four women while the operation is done. The wound is then treated by applying mixtures of local herbs, earth, cow-dung, ash or butter, depending on the skills of the excisor.

Reasons for the Practice

FGM is a custom or tradition still practised for cultural or religious reasons. The reasons for maintaining the practice include religion, custom, decreasing the sexual desire of women, hygiene, aesthetics, facility of sexual relations, fertility, etc. In general, it can be said that those who preserve the practice are largely women who live in traditional societies in rural areas. Most of these women follow tradition passively. In some societies, in order to be clean for marriage, female circumcision is a precondition. Among the Bambara in Mali, it is believed that, if the clitoris touches the head of a baby being born, the child will die. The clitoris is seen as the male characteristic of the woman; in order to enhance her femininity, this male part of her has to be



Psychologically, most children have recurring nightmares

removed. Circumcision is also performed to reduce sexual desire and also to maintain virginity until marriage.

Health and Psychological Complications

In rural areas where untrained traditional birth attendants perform the operations, complications resulting from deep cuts and infected instruments can cause the death of the child.

Haemorrhage can occur during circumcision with the removal of the clitoris; accidental cuts to other organs can also lead to heavy loss of blood.

Acute infections are commonplace when operations of infibulation are carried out in unhygienic surroundings and with unsterilised instruments. The application of traditional medicine can also lead to infection, resulting in tetanus and general septicemia. Chronic infection can also lead to infertility and anaemia.

Haematocolpos, or the inability to pass menstrual blood (because the remaining opening is often too small) can lead to infection of other organs and also infertility. Obstetric complications are the most frequent health problem, resulting from vicious scars in the clitoral zone after excision. These scars open during childbirth and cause the anterior perineum to tear, leading to haemorrhaging that is often difficult to stop.

Psychologically, most children experience recurring nightmares. Girls who have been genitally



Often, women about to marry have to undergo the operation.

mutilated have to come to terms with the fact that they are not like their classmates. Mood swings and irritability, a constant state of depression and anxiety have all been noted among infibulated girls.

The practice of FGM violates, among other international human rights laws, the right of the child to the "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health", as laid down in Article 24 (paras. 1 and 3) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In Cameroon, FGM is practised in some parts of the East, Far North and South West Provinces. Some villages in N'dian and Manyu villages have continued with this very harmful customary practice that causes serious health and psychological problems to the woman and the girl child despite pressure from Government and some NGOs to stop.

Compiled by



&



&



Ebai Tonge Brunhilda
Women Empowerment Dept,
GNGG

Allyn Mwofoh
Health Governance
Dept,

Grace B. Jato
Women Empowerment Dept,
GNGG

Letters to the Editor

Sir,
FIDA Cameroon has provoked our thinking on our political rights as women. We have received training manuals on women political rights and have developed strategies for our local realities. How will the Project support our action plans?

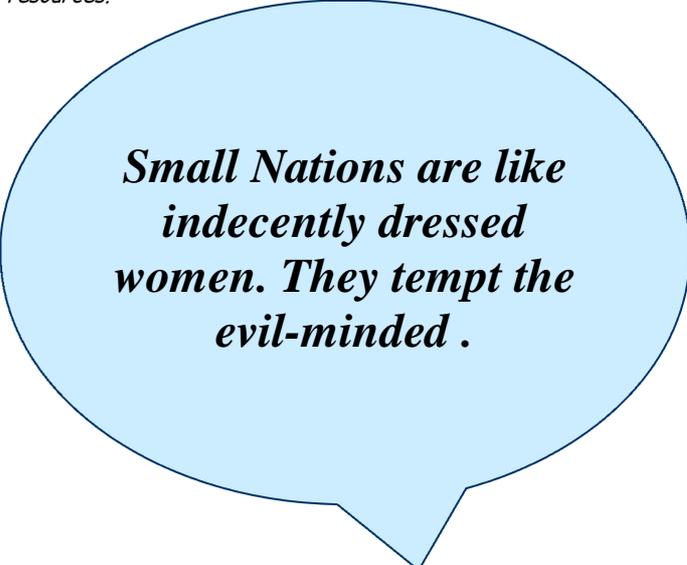
Mrs Doris Senge Ngalame
Deputy Mayor, Bangem

For now our Coalition can only provide technical advice on request, while searching for the resources to support some of your action plans, provided they fall in line with the objectives of the Project. FIDA's formidable team of resource persons certainly appreciates your growing interest in women political rights.

Sir
Why is it that only six (06) Secondary Schools in Fako Division benefit from your Project to Create Human Rights Clubs? Open Societies are needed in all schools within the Province.

Concerned in Lebalem

This is just a beginning because we intend, in future, to extend this activity to schools throughout the Province as soon as we get the resources.



Small Nations are like indecently dressed women. They tempt the evil-minded .

Julius Nyerere

COORDINATORS OF OSIWA FUNDED PROJECTS MET IN LIMBE!



Charlie MBONTEH
Coordinator, PCMODS-SWP



Esther OMAM
Coordinator, RESAC-SIDA

Coordinators of OSIWA-funded Projects met on March 29 2006 in Limbe to discuss on best practices, monitoring and reporting strategies for jointly executed projects.



Mrs Nana Tanko (left), Abdul Tejan Cole (Middle) and Mrs Bertha Nдох, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister

At the OSIWA Consultative Meeting in Yaounde on January 20 2005

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- Develop strategies to take advantages of the few windows of opportunities that now exist.



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bellosiwa@yahoo.com

Warning!!
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