



Protocol Exchange Meeting

**Actors financed through Bon Secours Cameroun
in the field of**

**School Support for IDP Children from the South-West and
Nord-West in Cameroun**



Venue: Head Office ACF in Bafoussam

Date: Friday 13th till Sunday 15th of November 2020

Organised by: Academie Camerounaise des Formations Bafoussam (ACF)
and
Hope and Life Cameroun

Financed by: Bon Secours Kamerun

In view of the fact that the Association Bon Secours Cameroon financially supports four different Actors in Cameroon, who are all active in the work to support internally displaced children from the North-West and South-West of Cameroon, it was suggested to organise a meeting where the different actors can exchange their experiences since September 2019.

On the one hand, each organisation should have the opportunity to present its activities, but also its problems and its limits.

At the same time, the association ACF (Academie Camerounaise des Formations), based in Bafoussam, proposed to present various "inputs" on theoretical and practical aspects of their work.

Thanks to the financial support of Bon Secours, this meeting was organised for 10 participants and was successfully held.

Participants:

- Hope and Life Cameroun; Douala
 - Réne Samuel Marcel Mpome
- Manna Herz Association Nkongsamba
 - Asanga Eveline Amundam
 - Angwe Conneleons
 - Nkambi Shadrack Alombah
- Dschang
 - Nkengafac Theophile T.
 - Anyiamin Magdaline Mbeven
- ACF Bafoussam
 - Michel Foaleng
 - Sikimoki Winifred D.
 - Heike Foaleng

Program:

program	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8-9	breakfast		
9-12		presenting the different projects, questions and discussion (30 min /project)	technics for psychosocial support; role games, materials (heike/godlove/winifred)
12-13			ethical principals (heike)
13-15	lunch		
15-17		input heike: resilience, signs of stress/trauma, psycho social support by non-professionels, mental health	feedback/evaluation and finish
17-18		Meditations in two groups (technique anti-stress)	
18-19	welcome,sharing rooms	input winifred - talking to children and adolesent; gender	
19-20	dinner		
20-21	knowing each other	New ideas out of this day - feedback/evaluation	

Friday, 13.11.2020

The participants from the different places in Cameroon all arrived in the course of the afternoon until about 8 o'clock and could occupy their rooms.

From 6 to 9 pm, during a common dinner, there was the opportunity to get **to know each other and to exchange first information** about the schedule for the coming days.

Saturday, 14.11.2020

After the breakfast between 8 and 9pm all participants met in the conference room to start the first part of our meeting:

Each group could **present their own project**:

- With how many children we are working
- What are the selection criteria's
- What are we offering
- Which difficulties we are facing



Réne Samuel Marcel Mpombe, Hope and Life Cameroun Bekoko/Douala

- Their aim is to reinsert IDP children into the school
- They are working with the Inspector of Primary Education and the directors of the primary schools
- 2019: 600 Children supported
2020: 528 Children supported
- They paid materials for the school like paper, chalk, educative materials, photocopy machine, etc.) and therefore the IDP kids are free from paying school fees in the various schools and had extra evening classes
- To the children direct they supplied books, exercise books, bags, etc.
- In the course of the project they added
 - o Psychological support in some cases
 - o Medical assistance for all the concerned families
- They supported one government primary school to start the English section
- They discussed with a private School in one quarter where there is no Anglophone government school to pay just half of the fees for the IDP's
- Monitoring is done each 3 months in cooperation with the school responsible to see which child needs further support



Asanga Eveline Amundam, Manna Herz Association Nkongsamba

- The project started through an initiative from Dr. Elisabeth Herz, a German Ophthalmologist
- 2019: 73 children
2020: 100 children
- Before the selection they targeted different churches and did announcement that they are looking for IDP kids and families
- They were invited in a catholic church at a fix day and are interviewed there about their situation and their needs, where they are staying, since when, if they are schooling and where
- After the school resumes they held a second meeting to see who really started school, who has still to pay fees, exercise books and essential text books
- After the 1st Exams they inquired the Results in the Schools and asked the teachers to organise evening classes for those in need
- The most of the children were promoted; for A-level 5 over 7 succeeded
- In the second year they did the meeting in the Manna Eye Clinic
- They paid then first only school fees and and wanted to check other needs only after the first exams

- They are giving free treatment for IDP in their health-centre
- In extreme situations they even gave accommodation in one of the wards
- They are planning to see the bishop to discuss with him if school fees can be reduces for IDP children; so that more children could be supported from them

Anyiamin Magdaline Mbeven; Dschang

Mrs. Magdalina herself is an IDP coming from Fontem. She is a retired primary school teacher. Being in Dschang she noticed many IDP children in distress, mostly they are coming from Fontem due to the very short distance.

She really wished to help those children which are selling in the market instead going to school. By chance she got in contact with Samuel and she could also apply for the support from Bon Secours.

- 2019: 20 children
2020: 28 children (from those 7 are schooling in Limbe)
- She is meeting the children on the road, the market, but also trough mouth to mouth information
- Those in need she buys them uniforms, books, exercise books and the school-fees
- She knows all their families and their homes
- She is doing visits and discussing with the parents, also the children come sometimes to her house if there is need or just to check the motivation

Heike Foaleng, Academie Camerounaise des Formations

- ACF was presented through a power point presentation which will be added at the end of the rapport
- 2019: 30 children
2020: 40 children
- ACF had as from the beginning the aim not just to support the children with school-fees and material, but instead with a strong psychosocial support in form of individual visits in the families, in the schools and with the children alone; but also with weekly youth-group-meetings
- Further ACF is looking how it is possible to support the families in the long run
 - o With a regular counselling offer
 - o With income generating activities
 - o Health support
 - o Encouraging to restart a professional activity
 - o Creation from IDP-Solidarity Group

After each presentation the participants had space to ask further questions, to discuss challenges and chances and own experiences.

Before break the groups were asked to work within themselves about the ideas they got from those presentations to change or add some of their duties.

After the lunch, at 3pm, we started with the afternoon session. Mrs. Heike gave an input about the following subjects:

- **Definition trauma and stress**

Traumatic experiences have the following characteristics:

- Suddenly
- Powerful
- Cannot be stopped
- Imposes extreme emotional reactions
- Far exceeds the capacities of individuals or groups
- Consequences last over time

- **Reactions to armed conflicts**

- Impact on young people
- acting as parents to siblings
- lack of income
- homeless and without access to farmland
- being forced to leave their homes to migrate to cities in search of work and security
- interruption of school education
- Stigmatisation (being orphaned, ex-combatant, disabled, etc.)
- Social exclusion (being perceived by others neither as an adult nor as a child)
- Increased violence
- Increased use of alcohol or other harmful substances
- Changes in traditional gender balance and roles

- **Armed conflicts and gender based violence**

- **Definition of resilience**

...the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten its stability, viability or development (Masten 2014)

- **Factors to reinforce the capacity of resilience**

- **STABILITY**
Stable contact persons/reference persons
- **EMOTIONS**
Space to express feelings and think about how to deal with these feelings
- **FUN**
Leisure experiences, fun, sport, keeping busy, new positive experiences
- **SPIRITUALITY**
Spiritual healing, being able to think about faith and forgive; being able to regain faith
- **CONTROL**
Regain a sense of control through the ability to take charge of oneself

The participants should be able to understand their target group and to support them accordingly. Certain behaviour from children and young people can confuse and discourage the environment. Our task, however, is to be able to understand these behaviours in their context and to intervene to support them.

It is also only possible to support resilience if we know what resilience means and which factors have a supporting effect.

After a short break, an introduction to the **practical implementation of the theoretical principles listed above** by Mrs. Winifred.

- what conclusions teachers have to draw from this for their interaction with the children at school
 - We are talking about re- integration, bcs the child lost the notion of how is it to go to school, what have I to do there, rules and regulations. They are coming from villages, never saw a big town, as many cars and people like they see here. They used their mother tong to communicate and neither English or French. Children are timid, over aged and under the level of the “normal” students. We like to give the kids the opportunities to interact freely, to get new friends, to like the school and to be excited to learn as much as possible. We want them to be encouraged, not to be insulted as stupid, slow, doll, etc. We want them to be compared not to others of same age or in the same class, instead we want them to be compared on their own level as from yesterday till tomorrow.
- what do parents have to consider when bringing up children
 - Most of these children have found shelter in save zones but still they don't feel at home hence there are a lot of misunderstandings between them and the host families as well as their immediate family. To remedy this situation, the parents have to see the children as their partners.
- what special demands are made on the education of girls in this situation
 - A girl child seen as a victim in various aspects:
 - Risk to be raped
 - Effects of adolescence /puberty
 - Risk of pregnancy
 - Forced/early marriage
 - Risk of HIV /AIDS and other STD
 - Problem of a proper menstrual hygiene
- what problems are boys confronted with
 - Many people in one room; no space to retreat
 - Seeing girls near every day, feeling sexual attraction and at the same time ashamed for this feelings

- Poor living standard, no means to have an Income – expectations to a boy are still those of the one feeding the family and taking care of the girlfriend or wife
- Nobody to discuss his own sexuality

We closed then the first day with different **practical experiences of relaxation**, to calm down, to release ourselves from the stress of the work and even to practise it with our target groups:

Practice in two groups, while the first group works with Mrs. Heike, the second group is in another room with Mr. Godlove; after about 20 minutes there is a change.

Group Mrs. Heike:

A mental journey into our own, self-created world with all the benefits we wish for; doing good for all senses and not having to have fears and worries

- see only beauty
- only good smell
- only beautiful sounds to hear

Group Mr. Godlove:

- Breathing exercises
- Awareness and control of breath
- relax and tense different parts of the body and so get a feeling for your own body



After the dinner we separated to meet again next morning.

Sunday, 15.11.2020

The second day started by an Input about **Techniques for Psycho-social Support with children** by Mr. Godlove.

He therefore explained different methods of games, interventions, and activities to bring out the moments of pain, the burdening memories and the stress and to get free of it or to know how to cope with.

We could practise some of them in the group and exchange about our experience with.

The participants were asked which techniques are suitable for them to use in the work with the IDP children or their parents. Everybody could express his choice and further questions about to be very comfortable with.

After this Session there was a short reminder and input from Mrs. Heike about **Ethical considerations and humanitarian principles**:

- Do no harm
- Informed
- Consent
- Privacy
- Honesty and objectivity
- Responsibility
- Non-violence in all its forms
- Participation
- The best interests of concerned

The points listed here were explained in details and discussed with the participants.

The participants were then asked to give an **anonymous feedback**, taking in consideration three questions:

What was interesting for me? I profited from what?

- Stress- and trauma-management in IDP's
- How to help them cope with stress and trauma
- How to give them psycho-social support (through dancing, sports, poems, etc.)
- I have learnt that to help the IDP's should first know them individually, what traumatized them will be taken in consideration
- The different ways and exercises I can use to help them
- I enjoyed all the topics treated
- The choice of organising a seminar for the exchange is laudable
- The choice of topics discussed, especially the techniques for psychosocial support with children

- Lodging was perfect
- Feeding just on point
- Communication was very open, people free to express themselves
- Lectures good
- Interactions with one another
- Ideas perfect
- In the whole the exchange meeting was so good. I learned a lot and this is changing my way of doing things

What was not very useful? Not really done well?

- Yet to identify
- Time too short so program strenuous
- No agenda was given only on arrival
- Meeting was a surprise so many people did not come with their complete reports

For another meeting I wish to do or to talk about this....

- If this is organized at the end of every year so we come together to share how the year went through it will help both the children and we who are working on the field
- Next time we could have some minutes to walk out of the environment to relieve some stress

General observations

- I think we have to work with God fearing people, and not with the government officials. And for the meeting which started on Saturday the 14.11.20 up to Sunday 15.11.20 everything is ok by me.

After the feedback, a lunch together and a picture taken together everyone has made his way in the different directions.

Summary

The exchange meeting was a great success. Seeing the feedback all the participants profited in one way or the other. And taking also into consideration the verbal feedbacks given during the sessions, the participants all changed their view of the work to be done. It is encouraging that there was not one moment of concurrence or jealousy; instead a feeling of mutual support.

The fact that everyone talks about the "next meeting" in the feedback speaks for itself.

We are looking forward to the next Meeting!

Appendix:

- Participants list
- Input Sikimoki Winifred
- Resilience Trauma-Exchange_HF
- Techniques for Psycho-social Support with children
- Presentation Project IDP - ACF