



The Voice of Peace

CAMYOSFOP

Promoting a Culture of Peace: Edition, No 28, September 15th, 2020

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EDITORIAL

Locked in to Violence Amid COVID-19

The world is currently facing tumultuous time as the Corona Virus invalidates and destroys its inhabitants. This is particularly difficult for Cameroon as the country already deals with cases of gun and physical violence, particularly in the Anglophone regions.

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), is “an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Many of those infected with the virus “experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment.” COVID-19 is particularly detrimental in older people and those with underlying medical problems like diabetes, HIV/AIDS and cancer as they are more likely to be seriously affected. The World Health Organization advises that we should protect ourselves, preventing the symptoms, by washing our hands or cleansing them with an alcohol based rub and wearing masks.

The pandemic affected and constrained all countries, with Cameroon being no exception. Bars, petty businesses, enterprises and other recreational areas were given a curfew, a ban was placed on crowds containing more than 50 people, and schools were shut down. Due to this, CAMYOSFOP postponed most of her events. One in particular focused on building the capacity of youths in secondary schools through the Human Rights, Peace and DGs Clubs. The outbreak of the pandemic triggered the suspension of all club activities including the cultural manifestation which is always organized every term.

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The health pandemic has also left devastating effects on those in the conflict affected areas in Cameroon. Thus it is important for us to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to prevent violence and build peace at local and national levels. This is the time for all states to unite amid COVID-19 for a common purpose of social protection, human dignity and economic stability. We can turn this crisis into an opportunity. Member states should advocate collectively for an end to the investment, production and misuse of arms and divert the funds or resources on weapons for community development.

Furthermore, the pandemic brought about an alarming increase in unemployment and crime rates leading many to return to their villages. Those in the private sector were hit harder. A majority of the population created at-home remedies consisting mainly of lemon/lime and ginger in an effort to “kill” the virus. Several herbal remedies emerged as a result of this, such as Bishop Kleda’s which proved successful on certain patients.

This special edition of The voice of Peace Newsletter focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on Education and young people, especially those in conflict affected areas and measures taken by them to curb its spread.

COVID-19 Challenges the 2019/2020 Academic Year



The outbreak of the Corona virus declared in the Wuhan Province in the People's Republic of China in December 2019 gradually spread to Asia, Europe, North and South America and Africa as well. Few weeks into this, the World Health Organization announced that the Corona virus has gone from an epidemic to a pandemic, with over 170, 000 cases in 146 countries and about 6,500 deaths. This situation resulted in quarantining of people in the world at large and closing of borders which later extended to the closure of schools.

Cameroon, like many States in the world, was not spared by this pandemic. From the very first hours of its emergence, the Government implemented a prevention and response plan aimed at stemming the spread of this epidemic. One of the preventive measures taken by the Government in March 2020 was the closing down of all public and private training and education establishments of various levels of education from nursery school to higher education including vocational training and professional centers. This measure actually had a great impact on the 2019/2020 academic year especially on the end of course exams both at the Primary and secondary school levels; Government Common Entrance, First School Leaving Certificate, A and O levels, Brevets d'Etudes du Premier Cycle, Probatoire

and Baccalaureate. The educational system in Cameroon just like others in the world was seriously affected as students were sent back home in the middle of the 2nd term with respect to government measures to curb the spread of the virus.

Given that the 2019/2020 academic year was not cancelled and syllabuses/syllabi not effectively completed, it is obvious that students sitting for the end of course exams will face a lot of challenges with regards to their performances. Though the Ministries of Basic and Secondary Education derived strategies for pupils and students in examination classes to continue receiving lessons, it is not still very certain that they have acquired adequate knowledge to confidently brave the end of course examination.

Due to the inconsistencies caused by the covid-19 and its impact on education, parents are wondering about the outcome of results with regards to students' performances in the 2019/2020 exams.

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CAMYOSFOP – UN Women COVID-19 Rapid Response

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon, CAMYOSFOP as a Youth leading NGO was selected to receive protective and sanitary kits from UN Women for distribution to other Youth groups. Speaking during the ceremony Madam Hind Jalel, the Resident Representative of UN Women country office for Cameroon noted that there is need to protect young people during the pandemic as they are the future leaders. The hygienic and protective kits have been distributed to community leaders from the Mbororo and Pygmy communities in the East Region and Youth CSO in the Center Region



CAMYOSFOP Receiving the COVID-19 Kits from UN Women



CAMYOSFOP ED.Ngalim Engine Appreciating the Support from UN Women Resident Representative Madam Hind



UN Women/CAMYOSFOP Family Picture After Receiving the COVID-19 Preventive Kits from UN Women Cameroon



Mbororo Community Receives COVID-19 Preventive Kits from CAMYOSFOP



CAMYOSFOP in a Group Picture with community leaders from the Mbororo and Pygmy

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CAMYOSFOP – UN Women Distribution of COVID-19 Preventive Kits



Pygmy Community Receives COVID-19 Preventive Kits from CAMYOSFOP



The Mbororo & Pygmy Communities Appreciates CAMYOSFOP/UN Women



Group Photo of Yourh Organisations that Benefited from the CAMYOSFOP/UN Women COVID-19 Rapid Response



An Expression of Gratitude to CAMYOSFOP/UN Women Cameroon



Awareness Raising on the role of Youth in the Fight against COVID-19



Comment Prévenir la Propagation du COVID-19 en Situation de Crise?



Picture Credit: WHO

Au Cameroun les zones de crise doivent affronter de nouveaux défis depuis la généralisation de la pandémie du COVID-19 dans tout le pays. Cette situation est d'un intérêt majeur pour les populations de L'extrême Nord, du Nord, du Nord-Ouest et du Sud-Ouest du Cameroun qui sont des parties du territoire où le tissu sécuritaire est instable. Alors que la pandémie de COVID-19 représente un danger vital en particulier dans les zones en crise la violence vient sérieusement compromettre toutes réponses sanitaires car tout accès à toute unité sanitaire et toute éventuelle

descente des unités de soins est un véritable danger. Le système de santé déjà fragilisé par la crise est mis à rude épreuve, les conditions de vie déjà précaires la situation devient extrêmement préoccupante. Car les capacités de sensibilisation, de dépistage, de traitement et de suivi des malades sont entravées par des violences qui minent ces zones ; ce qui a pour conséquence l'augmentation de risque de transmission du virus.

Les personnes déplacées pour cause de violence sont particulièrement exposées aux complications médicales. Leur logement temporaire peut abriter de nombreuses personnes avec de piètres conditions hygiéniques mais surtout un accès limité aux soins médicaux et une alimentation saine. Il est donc difficile voire impossible dans ces conditions de respecter la distanciation sociale. Pour lutter contre le COVID-19 ma famille et moi essayons d'appliquer les mesures préventives préconisées « par l'OMS, par exemple le lavage des mains systématique seul handicapé ce niveau l'accès à l'eau courante car nous n'avons pas d'eau dans notre abris » levis Ebama déplacée interne.

De nombreuses PDI des régions du Sud-ouest et du Nord-ouest vivent dans la brousse où les conditions de vie précaires les exposent à un risque deux fois plus élevé que le reste de la population. Ces personnes qui dépendent essentiellement de l'aide pour vivre, doivent maintenant affronter le nouveau défi de la maladie. Depuis l'apparition de la maladie le gouvernement et ces différents partenaires ont multiplié des actions dans l'intention de la sensibilisation, la détection, la prise en charge et le suivi des malades, mais ces différentes actions restent diluées ou freinées par la situation sécuritaire. Face à cette situation le dialogue entre les différentes parties prenantes apparaît comme solution salutaire.

Building Self Better During the COVID-19 Outbreak

It is easy to lose your hopes and brood over the negative side effects of any event, especially when we are battling a global pandemic. For every low, there's a high and it is true that even this current scenario has a silver lining to it. While at home I was looking at a strategy on which I could brainstorm on building up my capacity and that of other young people to be able to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own health. Covid-19 pandemic has positively impacted me;

Building genuine Relationships: The COVID-19 situation has positively impacted the way I emote and maintain relationships I get to spend my time with my family and plan my work better. This helps me build a better future for both my work and family. As life slowed down, I have found ways to stay connected with people, even if it's virtually. Most of us youth are at a stage all we think about is making it in life. We all have been so busy hustling for jobs, some completing/pursuing their education as such many of us have lost those real, genuine moments we have with our loved ones. It could also have been the busy schedules, running around to make ends meet, & rushing to be in urgent meetings. Reconnect with your loved ones and retrospect.

Entire Lifestyle Changes to Practice Better Hygiene: Being hygienic is no longer just a good habit, but the very skill I need and we all need for survival. Times have changed, and I am now aware of how important it is to keep myself clean. As human beings, the very engineering of humans is the ability to emote and connect with fellow beings. That's not going to change, and that's something we cannot change. These recent times have made us all aware of the importance of hygiene. From shaking hands to social distancing and isolation, we all have had a lifestyle change for the good. We are going to survive this and when we do it's a different world that's waiting for us.

Akwo Hillmann**NEWS BRIEFS:**

- ◆ CAMYOSFOP, in partnership with UN WOMEN, are currently implementing a project on the fight against stigmatization of HIV/AIDS and Gender Based Violence amid the COVID 19 pandemic within the Mbororo, Pygmy, Youth and Women Living with HIV/AIDS in the East, Littoral, West and South West Regions. It focuses on: capacity building, economic empowerment, psychosocial support and awareness raising.
- ◆ The world commemorated in the month of August the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. In this light, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in partnership with CAMYOSFOP joined forces to mobilize national actors around the process of ratification of the treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Cameroon. This workshop was held on the 6th of August 2020 in Yaoundé. The Executive Director of CAMYOSFOP, Ngalim Eugine also shared on the role of Civil Society Organizations in mobilizing the government of Cameroon on the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
- ◆ March 23rd 2020 - LOYOC Cameroon launched Operation ONE Person One Hand Sanitizer initiative aimed at producing and donating over 5,000 hand sanitizers to Cameroonian homes. Championed by youth, the initiative adopted a peace building approach in the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 in particularly vulnerable communities in Cameroon. (Source: Loyoc Cameroon/Website)
- ◆ Triennial Youth Plan: Cameroon Minister of finance, Louis Paul Motaze, puts youth in the middle of the country's economy re-launch following COVID-19. The 2021-2023 plan is aimed at quickening the socioeconomic integration of young people in the agriculture, industry, digital economy and innovation fields. Funds for this project will be made available as instructed by the country's president, H.E, Paul Biya. (Source: Crtv/Website)

How has the COVID-19 Pandemic Affected you? and How did you Overcome the Challenges?



Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected our organization in many ways and we are doing less than 20 percent of the activities we use to do. First and foremost our organization is an internally displaced organization from Fontem Lebialem division, South West Cameroon following the crises in the two English speaking Regions of Cameroon since 2016 where we lost everything in terms of office equipment. However, since October with the collaboration of other local organizations we have trained and empowered 500 internally displaced women and girls in six cities of Cameroon; Yaounde, Dschang, Bafoussam, Bafang, Limbe and Douala on income generating activities. From this you see that our organization deals more with onset training and outdoor sessions for physical/hard skills acquisition. Field visiting, training sessions, monitoring, evaluation and restitution sessions which are 85 percent onsite. With COVID-19 pandemic, we are unable to do them anymore. Although many persons / organizations are using zoom to overcome such situations, that can only work for soft skills and when everyone is connected to the internet. 90 percent of the internally displaced women and girls we train come from rural communities and presently living in very miserable conditions not to talk of owning android phones or computers that they can use for training online. With the outbreak of COVID-19 setup measures against it, especially public gathering and social distancing, we can reach out only to less than 10 of IDPs we trained and empowered through watts-app groups and less than 50 through phone calls for monitoring, evaluation and continuous psychological counseling.

NKEMCHA Martin Tiku

La pandémie principalement affecte ma façon de vivre. Il s'agit essentiellement des lieux que je fréquenté. J'ai ainsi limite les loisirs impliquant la présence de nombreuses personnes. J'évite les boites de nuits et tout autre milieu lourdé de monde. J'évite également les hôpitaux publics et je préfère aller dans le privé. J'ai intégré les gestes barrières. Déjà qu'avant la pandémie, utiliser le gel hydro alcoolique ou laver les mains constamment étaient une habitude. J'ai aussi effectué un travail mental sur moi-même. En effet au début de la pandémie, j'ai vu qu'on allait tous y passer. Comme la fin du monde mais je vais m'informer sur la maladie. Cela m'a aidée à gérer mes peurs et à relativiser celle-ci.



NAMA Stephanie



The pandemic severely affected my activities as a social worker. I was not prepared to face such a situation. My business trips, my meetings were all cancelled and my revenues got divided. Nevertheless, I did my best by respecting the barriers and measures set by WHO and the Cameroon Government. In order to overcome the devastating situation, I started organizing online meetings and conferences as well as attending some. I further shared the idea and supported other entrepreneurs to help them sell their products from home online.

BOUTCHOUANG Nghomsi

Cont...

How has the COVID-19 Pandemic Affected You? and How did You Overcome the Challenges?



De façon indirect j'ai été affectée par cette pandémie d'une part dans ma vie professionnelle à cause de la suspension des activités. Dans ma vie familiale également, cela n'a pas été facile pour les enfants qui ont dû passer plus de temps à la maison à ne rien faire et c'était difficile de les canaliser. Comme challenges : On doit d'adapter à la présence du virus et continuer de vivre en évitant la propagation en respectant les mesures barrières dictées par l'OMS.

NGACHILI Aminatou

This pandemic brought a lot of changes in my life. My daily activities in every sphere have been greatly affected negatively. I lost my job during the outbreak. To overcome this challenge and adapt to a new way of life I have been engaging in different skills to raise funds that I can cater for my day to day needs.

ARAH Dorothy



Le monde entier a fait face à de nombreux défis depuis le début de l'année 2020, avec la découverte du nouveau virus corona "COVID-19". En tant que personnel de santé, j'ai été confronté à de nombreux défis, se lever un matin à la nouvelle d'un nouveau virus avec peu ou pas d'informations le concernant était vraiment effrayant. Chaque jour que j'allais au travail C'était effrayant, vous ne savez pas quand vous contracterez la maladie et tout le reste. C'était d'autant plus difficile que le travail était au plus bas, les patients fuyaient les hôpitaux et les centres de santé et préféraient mourir chez eux. à une occasion particulière, une dame a refusé de me vendre ou de m'approcher pour le simple fait que je suis dans le corps médical en disant qu'elle ne veut pas attraper la «maladie», bien que cela me paraisse drôle c'était aussi douloureux. En dehors du fait que cela affectait ma vie professionnelle, ça également engendré Des retards dans ma vie personnelle. Beaucoup de mes projets ont été mis en attente et le pire, c'est que nous ne savons pas quand les choses reviendront à la normale. Je remercie Dieu car depuis cette pandémie, il a protégé ma famille, mes amis et mes proches. Cela n'a pas été facile, mais pour maintenir ma santé mentale stable et ne pas céder à la dépression, j'ai fait des discussions sur la santé et les campagnes de sensibilisation sur le COVID-19 et comment nous protéger. La pandémie a apporter beaucoup de changement, non seulement dans notre mode de vie, mais aussi dans la manière dont nous interagissons avec les autres, mais aussi dans l'économie. Espérons que nous réussirons tout cela par la grâce de Dieu et que nous pourrons vivre en paix sans crainte.

EKOKO Ekwa Suzan

PROFILE OF DR CHEMUTA DIVINE BANDA, CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS (NCHRF), 2003 – MAY 2020.



Dr. Chemuta Divine Banda was born on 26th December 1946 in Mankaha, Bafut in the North West Region of Cameroon. He began his education with some vernacular classes in Manji, Bafut and later attended the Roman Catholic Mission School Bambui from infant one to Standard four, before transferring to the Basel Mission Boys School Nsen, Bafut where he completed Standard five and six obtaining the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) in 1961.

After obtaining his FSLC he moved to Victoria in the South West Region in search of a job that would help him raised money for the continuation of his education. While in Victoria he met with a Swiss Missionary, Reverend Albert Miaz working with the Basel Mission that adopted and supported him with an office agent job in the Basel Mission Printing Press. Later on, the young Banda wrote the entrance examination into the Teacher Training College Nyasoso, then based in Kumba.

After receiving his teaching certificate, he served as Headmaster as well as a teacher at Presbyterian school Swei, Bafut for three years before leaving for the University of Yaounde in 1972. He graduated from the University of Yaounde with a BA in History and an LLB in Public Law on record time. He then proceeded to the International Relations Institute of Cameroon where he graduated with an MA in International Relations in 1977. He pursued further studies in France and in the USA graduating with an MA and a Doctorate in Public Administration respectively.

Between 1977 and 1980 he served, first as Chief of Bureau for Latin America and next as Chief of Service for America and Oceanic Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1980-1985 he served as a state Adviser on Administrative Organizations at the Presidency of the Republic under President Ahmadou Ahidjo; he was re-commissioned by Paul Biya in 1985. His foreign service began in 1986 when he was appointed First Counsellor at Cameroon's Embassy in Washington DC. In 1990, he took up a new assignment as the Charge d'Affaires at the Cameroon Embassy in The Hague, the Netherlands until 1993 when he was seconded by Cameroon government to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) where he served as the Head of Human Resources Branch for 5 years before returning to Cameroon in 1998. Upon his return, he rose to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary.

On January 2003, he was appointed as the Chairperson of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF). During his tenure as the Chairperson he enthusiastically engaged in efforts to promote and protect the rights of Cameroonians by creating branches of the Commission in the 10 Regions of Cameroon and raising the Commission to international standards, securing greater autonomy, credibility and efficiency for its operations. To this end, he collaborated with Human Rights Institutions in Africa and the world, serving as the Chairperson of the Network of Africa National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) from 2015 – 2017. He was also an active member of NANHRI Steering Committee and the Bureau of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). He was a fellow of the International Peace Academy as well as a member of the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) and a resource person for the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM).

Out of his professional duties, Dr.Chemuta was a member of the Bafut Elite Association, full flesh Christian with the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and a dedicated member of Christian Men Fellowship (CFM) and also an entrepreneur serving as the founder and pioneer Board Chair of UNICS PLC Micro Finance.

Dr.Chemuta Divine Banda has left a huge footprint legacy that he will lived to be remembered for departing from this world at a time that he was most needed by his community, Anglophones and Cameroonians at large.

Gratitude to Dr CHEMUTA Divine Banda, Chairperson of the NCHRF (2003 – 2020)



How painful is it to loss someone so Dear professionally and as a parent.

The news about Dr. Chemuta Banda Divine passing into eternity came like a bomb shell as few weeks before his death almost everyone heard about him enlightening Cameroonians about the human rights situation in Cameroon especially advocating for the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) to mediate in the current Anglophone crisis, being vocal about overcrowding in prisons and the need for a Presidential pardon to decongest prisons and stop the propagation of the COVID-19 in prisons, the Ngarbuh incident that led to the killing of a number of innocent citizens and above all his lengthy interviews aired in the Canal2 and Equinox Televisions.

As an appointed member of the NCHRF from 2006 – 2014, Dr Banda was not only a boss to me but played the role of a mentor, adviser and parent and became a role model in my everyday life. Though I was the youngest and low profile amongst the members of the Commission that included magistrates from the Supreme Court, Members of Parliament, University dons, Lawyers amongst others, Dr. Banda made sure I was valuably represented in the midst of these senior citizens. First, he did not hesitate to appoint me as the Deputy Editor - in - Chief of the quarterly Born Free Magazine. Secondly, he encouraged me to run for a position in the Commission's working Groups which I eventually became the Rapporteur of the Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for a period of four years. Dr. Banda, made sure my opinion counts in every process of the Commission. As such, I was regularly part of almost every Commission's delegations and Missions that engage Cameroonians on the promotion and protection of their rights as well as investigating human rights abuses and visiting detention centers in the national territory. Before long, I became the face of the Commission on issues of economic, social and cultural rights and facilitated working sessions and workshops in SONORA and CDC on the rights of workers in these corporations. Thanks to Dr. Banda I also became the face of the Commission at the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) in Banjul where I ended up representing the Commission in the drafting of a model law on pre-trial detention.

As Dr. Banda lived to be remembered by the national and international community, I will personally miss this peace loving, hardworking, patriotic and emblematic personality. Fondly called Pa in the Commission because of his fatherly approaches, I also called him Pa or Daddy not just out of respect but because of the affinity between him and me. Thanks to this affinity, Dr Banda totally changed my life and raised me to a high profile personality within and out of Cameroon. Though, I will personally miss Dr Banda, there is no doubt that both the civil society and the down trodden will as well miss him as he stood for them as a crusader of human rights.

Dr. Chemuta Divine Banda, the Chairperson, Daddy, Pa, as I keep listening to your advices resounding on my ears, be assured that I will keep implementing all what you thought me and your legacy will not be lost in the wilderness.

Go ye farewell, till we meet never to part.

NGALIM Engine Nyuydine
Executive Director – CAMYOSFOP
Member – NCHRF, 2006 - 2014