



fobang foundation

Devotion-Openness-Verity-Equity

A Humanitarian non-Governmental Organization for Science and Health

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 2005-DECEMBER 2005

Summary

The year 2005 was one of great success in certain activities but also one of great difficulties in others. The Boomerang, the musical on AIDS stigma continued to spur the population and has been shown on TV more than 11 times this past year. It has been requested by the Cameroon Baptist Mission and is used as an educational piece to start discussions on stigma and ways to alleviate it. Innovative aspects were the successful performance of "WABU" a dance theater depicting the dilemma of Africans over Western and African traditional medicine, performed during the 4th MIM international conference on malaria, the largest ever held, with 2000 delegates from 64 countries. "WABU" witnessed the attendance of 457 delegates.

Other highlights were the successful conduct of a KAP study that relating behaviour and the active detection of STDs and HIV/AIDS at the University of Buea. a workshop on reproductive health and methods of conducting peer education in communities held in Yaounde in July, 2005.

The FF continued to developed projects in partnership with The standard Chattered Bank of Cameroon and with the American Ambassadors AIDS Funds for West Africa. Both projects were favorably reviewed at the close of the year 2005 for possible funding. The results are awaited early in 2006.

The Health clubs continued to function on reserves from the previous year and on locally raised funds. There was an annual meeting of teachers involved in health club related activities during the MIM conference and this posed as an opportunity to start a process of developing new programs for the Malaria component of infectious disease education. Regrettably, the FF can not realize all intended programs due to the late arrival of funds beyond the third quarter of the year.

Management and administration was funded for 6 months only and that made management very difficult. The death is reported of Mr API Elias who served as errands and office help. He died on Dec 16, 2005 of a hepatitis induced complication leading to primary adenocarcinoma of the liver. A Group of nine Public health medical doctors created a public health discussion group and they meet weekly at the FF premises.

The situational circumstances of student strikes during the year (April – June, 2005) affected the intended peer educator training programs for the University of Yaounde I and the University of Buea Health clubs at the peak period of activities. However, in the later part of the year, the university health clubs organized many vocational training activities for its members in soap making, cloth dying and yogurt manufacture. The UYI carried out a massive disinfection campaign of water wells and water catchments in 6 very poor neighborhoods of the Yaounde VI administrative district.

The main strategies for the year were:

- To continue to introduce discussable topics on ways to recognise and alleviate stigmatisation related to HIV/AIDS as well as sex and sexuality amongst youths.
- To further improve on the performance of club masters in coordinating club activities within the schools and communities involved.
- To develop and perform drama activities on malaria and AIDS. Initiate the development of a malaria prevention campaign for the Foundation.
- To revitalise community summer projects through redesigning the nature of the services and re-enforcement of peer education.
- To revisit and discuss issues in health and biology with the demystification of the causal origin of infectious diseases.

Objective 1 - Office

Management was particularly difficult as funds were available for only six months of the year and so funds had to be sourced from elsewhere to compensate for the activities of the administrator.

Management continued to meet albeit irregularly and with officers as the need arose. Meetings were held to prepare the projects for the cooperation with the American Embassy and the Standard Chattered Bank of Cameroon.

Obituary: Lost one of its members to complications from hepatitis-induced liver cancer (Mr. Api Elias - Dec 16, 2005). Elias served as the repairs and errands person for the FF since its inception. Another member is terminally ill with HIV/AIDS (Dr. John Muluh, University Lecturer). He serves as the officer incharge of the summer workshops on biology and health.

Mr. Akindeh Nji returned from training in Belgium as a statistician in October , 2005 and took over the administration of the FF again from Mr. Collins Nkwenti who served as interim.

Objective 2 - Pool of volunteers

Ms Lana Foncham, continued to serve as part time bilingual assistant to the President and was paid in part by funds raised from other activities. She is a secretary with the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM) conference which will hold in Yaounde, Cameroon from November 13-18, 2005.

Current actor with the foundation Mr. Atteh Tafor intensified his activities beyond acting to assist with errands associated with the coordination of theatrical preparations

A new group of professional choreographers, The Black Roots of Yaounde, joined the FF to assist in the completion of the dance theatre "WABU".

At the close of the year, Mr Ndansi Elvis, the former club president of the University of Buea Health Club, who will be graduating with a BSc in Nursing was recruited by Prof Mbacham to assist him with FF and other public health related activities as of April 2006 when he leaves school.

Objective 3 – Survey and Capacity building

A study was conducted in collaboration with Dr Nkwescheu, Medical doctor at the University of Buea Health Unit during the period October –December 2005 which coincided with the routine medical check up of students of the University of Buea. The objective was to reevaluate progress in knowledge acquisition over 4 years and to establish a correlation and an index between self-reporting of HIV/STDs and the actual diagnosis of these infections in students. The analysis is underway.

Mr Akindeh Nji, administrator of the FF travelled to Belgium to complete courses leading to a Masters in Applied Statistics. Although sponsored by another project directed by Dr. Mbacham, he plans to return and run a consultancy in collaboration with the foundation for various tasks that will be needed by health- related projects in Cameroon. Mr Nkwenti Collins who temporarily replaced Mr Akindeh was trained on basic bookkeeping with Caprifi Sarl.

Objective 4 – Culturally Relevant Health Education Material

To help teachers disseminate knowledge on the basis of disease causation, teaching material was further developed on Health and Biology. Further discussions on

the demystification of current African beliefs on the origin of diseases were assembled. Work has started on the development of IEC for malaria prevention alongside the Methodist Church in Cameroon and a protestant church in Cameroon. Some of the themes discussed were Children and pregnant women, best management practices, Vector control, home management etc. Slides were revised to separate contents for the ABC model (Abstinence-Being faithful-Condom Use), between youths and adolescents/young adults. Suggestions of the Bamenda workshop were incorporated into the revised slides.

Objective 5 - School Health Club (SHC)

Clubs that average between 40-60 members, continued activities within their schools and actively employed the educational manuals and kits that had been provided to them. Weekly lectures and discussions on the following topics: Abortion and pregnancy; Sexual variations and impotence; Love, dating, sex and violence; Environmental care and sanitation; Teenage attitudes and practices; Personal hygiene and care of genitals; Hormones and behavioural changes; HIV/AIDS and skin infection; Smoking, alcoholism and drug abuse. Some schools witnessed the transfer of their health club masters to other institutions. These are Mr Bama Joseph replaced by Mrs Ajame (Mbengwi), and Mrs Ngala by Mr. Ahrike (Nkambe). These two remain on board as resource persons given the enormous training they have received through the FF.

Peer Education and community outreach: Except for the Universities of Yaounde and Buea which due to strike actions that lasted from April to June, the other schools carried out peer education on topics related to reproductive health, youths and the community and HIV/AIDS prevention. Emphasis was continued on stigma recognition and its alleviation. Advantage was taken of important national holidays such as the National Youth Day (February 11), and the Cameroonian National Holiday (May 20) to reach out to more people attending these public festivities through leaflets, sketches, drama, debates and film projections on health-related topics. The situational circumstances of student strikes during the year (April – June, 2005) affected the intended peer educator training programs for the University of Yaounde I and the University of Buea Health clubs at the peak period of activities. However, in the later part of the year, the university health clubs organized many vocational training activities for their members in soap making, cloth dyeing and yogurt manufacture. The UYI carried out a massive disinfection campaign of water wells and water catchments in 6 very poor neighborhoods of the Yaounde VI administrative district.

Summer projects

Summer projects that were developed in the course of 2005 will be executed in 2006 due to the late arrival of funds.

Health Club Masters Retreat. One of the innovative aspects of the technical support to schools was the organisation of a retreat for all the health club masters in attendance at the 4th Pan African Malaria conference in Yaounde. This gave the teachers a booster in the understanding of malaria and to see where the preventive measures could be found. During that conference, the teachers organised a meeting under the auspices of Dr. Steven Smits to address topics for the development of IEC material on malaria prevention.

Support to School Health Clubs

Through the various school health club masters, the various FF SHCs received support in the form of educative material, health kits and financial support to fund their activities. This assistance was received late due to late arrival of funds.

Yaounde Workshop.

This workshop was organized in Yaounde in July 2005 on the theme - Lets beat HIV/AIDS together: Our Collective responsibility. It brought together all the SHCs and some interested participants. During this workshop, an integrative participatory approach was used to discuss the various ways in which HIV/AIDS could be prevented through a

responsible life style. Youth participation was heightened as Mr. Nchia Lawrence, principal resource person for the FF on health education gained more experience in this method of teaching. Many educative resource materials were given to the students and Health club masters. The Workshop which started on the 7th ended on the 10th of July 2005 with 60 participants in attendance.

Objective 6 – THEATRE

The BOOMERANG

The troupe visited the North West Province of Cameroon in February 2005 during the youth week. During this visit, the 'Boomerang' was performed at the Bamenda Congress Hall of the Northwest province with a very large audience of about 1000 present, most of whom were youths; the Governor of the province and 65 provincial delegates representing different government ministries were in attendance. After this concert, the FF drama troupe received appreciations from top ranking officials of the Province including the Governor of the province and the Government Delegate to the Bamenda Urban council. Many calls have been made for the troupe to pay a second visit to the province.

"*The Boomerang*" continues to be aired on TV. The recorded VCDs are now used by the Cameroon Baptist Convention as a teaching tool to start discussions on stigma and its alleviation. The Cameroon Baptist Convention is of protestant denomination with more than 3 million parishioners in Cameroon

WABU

In November, the troupe performed at the largest ever held conference on malaria with 2000 delegates from 64 countries in attendance, The 4th Pan African Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM) conference. The Fobang-Mundi Theatre for Social Change (FTSC) was invited to perform a play during one of the social evenings with 470 conference participants in attendance. *Wabu*, a play sandwiched with song and dance from the diverse cultures of Cameroon, exposes the conflict between modern and traditional African approaches to health care. Through a realistic demonstration of what obtains in our society, *Wabu* attempts to resolve an outstanding health problem by taking us through the adventure of diagnosis and treatment of malaria by practitioners of modern and traditional African medicine. Despite the conflict in ideas and approaches both parties finally see the necessity to merge their ideologies for a more constructive and healthier society. Primary healthcare should stretch out to embrace the two perceptions which could henceforth provide a solid take off for the development of more efficient strategies to the treatment of malaria that has been ravaging lives. The play's topical theme requires the choosing of local colouring and representative costumes from Cameroon.

Associated with this performance were two professional groups. The *Clarinettes* with whom the *Boomerang* was performed and *the Black Roots*, a renown group of African drum beat choreographers who have represented Cameroon twice at the Francophonie and at the African Festival of Arts and Culture.

Objective 7 - BIOSCIENCE FOUNDATIONS OF LIFE

Health and Biology

The following 4 modules were revised and due to lack of funds, the course was scheduled for the summer of 2006: Module I- Diseases that cause a fever; Module II - The Physiology of the Systems and related diseases; Module III – The basis of disease persistence; Module IV- Practical session: laboratory techniques, demystification of causal origin of diseases and basic epidemiology/Survey, creating databases; methods of conducting field surveys were chosen to complete the workshop on surveys.

Challenges

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE YEAR.

One of the greatest impediments to the smooth running of the activities of FF was the late arrival of funds for the year 2005.

The calendar was not respected and all the meetings which usually start the year did not hold but will hold in 2006 to catch up for lost time.

The lack of funds destined for administration made management particularly difficult.

The unrest in the state universities affected the University health clubs activities.

The BID seminar did not hold in summer as usual due to the aforementioned reasons.

Catch-up workshops have to be organized to make up for the ones that did not hold. Community Out reach projects for 2006 are going to be effectively implemented and many projects shall be sponsored this year to make up for those of last year.

Annex I

The Fobang Foundation, Cameroon

A Volunteer Organisation for the promotion of science and health

Introduction

The Fobang Foundation as a volunteer organisation, set as its goal, to contribute to a more effective approach to the major health problems caused by infectious diseases (especially malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases) in the African population, through new ways of culturally relevant health education by committed volunteers, who will promote prevention and also enable the population to gain an understanding of the bio-scientific basis of life, health and disease.

Objective 1

To become a transparent organisation, it has to be attractive as a local partner for donor- and other international funding agencies in executing their development plans and make itself independent of foreign aid for the execution of its own activities.

Strategy

Objective 2

To have built up a pool of trained volunteers, recruited from among students and professionals in health related disciplines for conducting the various activities of the FF

Objective 3

To have the capacity to do surveys in order to obtain relevant data useful in designing intervention programs in health and to conduct surveys as part of its own activities as well as on the request of other organisations e.g. health management authorities.

Objective 4

To have available culturally relevant health education material and use this in the development of innovative ways to promote health education in schools and at community level.

Objective 5

To have a School Health Club (SHC) programme, with community activities.

Objective 6

To have the ability to stage regular drama performances (Stage, TV and Open Air) on health topics and particularly the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Give regular performances.

Objective 7

To make the bio-scientific foundations of life, health and disease more accessible to the African population.