

## Councils Get Involved in Co-Financing Health Care in their Municipalities

### Introduction

According to Cameroon's Constitution the duty of the councils of regional and local authorities is to promote the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development of the said authorities. Given the role of municipal councils as stipulated by the constitution, the council of each municipality is supposed to allocate and budget for the implementation of health care development in its municipality. Despite the existence of these laws governing the municipal councils, it is rather unfortunate that some councils are not actively involved in the health affairs of their municipality.

### LCI Areas of Intervention

Coming from the backdrop that some municipal authorities were ignorant of their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the healthcare of their citizens, the Local Capacity Initiative (LCI) Project intentionally involved the local council mayors in their project implementation plan in various ways:

- ◆ In 2014, the LCI invited all the 5 councils of the implementing districts at the rollout, district sensitization and workshops. In keeping with the second objective of the LCI Project, the project revitalized and built the capacities of municipal councils for good governance, co-financing and co-management for sustainability of health services. They were also trained on proper health system strengthening.

- ◆ Through continuous supervision, the LCI team advocated for and encouraged these mayors to take their roles seriously and advocated for a better health care of persons in their municipality.

- ◆ The LCI project decided to set the pace by financially supporting newly recruited staff in some health facilities with limited or no staff. This aid went on for a period of three to four months



*Borehole Built for Banteng IHC by Wabane Municipal Council*

before the community and councils took charge. For example Otu and Ajayukindip health facilities in Eyumojock health district

### **Informed Councils Effect Changes in the Health System**

After series sensitizations and mobilizations, workshops, and the organization of regional forums; the municipal councils have given more attention and support to health activities in the community. Today, councils have been more involved in health activities; and have demonstrated serious efforts in different areas to co-finance and co-manage health care. Prominent amongst the five councils are Wabane, Eyumojock and Bangem Councils.

#### **Wabane Municipal Council**

- ◆ After signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Board through the LCI Project, Wabane Municipal Council recruited 5 (five) staff of diverse specialties to work at CMA Wabane, Bamumbu Integrated Health Centers and Banteng Integrated Health Centers in November 2016. While CBCHB paid the staff's salary for four months as agreed on the MOU, the council has unfailingly kept to its promise to pay these staff salaries till date. Hence, a staff will always be on seat at the health facility to attend to community members in need of medical services.
- ◆ The Council has also constructed a water project at the Banteng Integrated Health Center to facilitate health center activities. This has helped in infection prevention practices as well as satisfied the immediate needs of health facility users.

#### **Eyumojock Municipal Council**

- ◆ The Eyumojock Municipal Council purchased and distributed hospital equipment to some health centers including CMA Eyumojock. Thanks to this, the health facility will soon start conducting surgery when other key equipment is purchased in the near future.
- ◆ For a period of 4 years, the Eyumojock Municipal Council engaged and consistently supported 1 staff (lab technician) at Ekok Integrated Health Centre.

*“Different tests are now conducted in the health Centre. Our referral cases have been cut down; there by increasing the health center's fund which the Dialogue Structure has been using to motivate three staff at the health center...”* Mrs. Bate Rose, COC Ekok

#### **Bangem Municipal Council**

- ◆ The Bangem Municipal Council has been supporting EPI vaccination activities in Bangem Health Area which is spearheaded by the Bangem District Hospital.
- ◆ The council hired and is currently paying the salary of a night watch at the Bangem District Hospital. This contract has been operating for the last three years.
- ◆ A toilet and shelf for medicines in the hospital pharmacy are some of the recent interventions

made by the council.

- ◆ A tricycle and some trash cans were bought by the council to facilitate the management and disposal of wastes in the municipality.
- ◆ It has been supporting the health fairs organized (by making publicity in churches, providing chairs and canopies) in Bangem through which pregnant women have been tested and those positive linked to care and treatment.

### **Conclusion**

Through advocacy, the LCI project was able to raise awareness, and ensure that local authorities take their responsibilities. It even went the extra mile to help the local authorities to understand their roles and responsibilities by guaranteeing that these municipal councilors contribute in creating strong health systems. It is therefore a fact to ascertain that the LCI Project is an “*eye opener*” in raising awareness and pushing dormant stakeholders to action.