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Cameroon Ministry of Social Affairs Signs MoU with CBC Health Services

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STOP PRESS!!

Read the HS Chronicle and pass it on to the next person

BIBLE VERSE

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV).

Corrigendum

In the April 2020 issue of this newsletter, page 7, we published in error in a headline that “PWDs Furnished with COVID-19 Testing Kits” instead of “PWDs Furnished with COVID-19 Prevention Kits”. We apologize for this grave error, which can be misleading in some quarters. (Editor)

Cameroon Ministry of Social Affairs Signs MoU with CBC Health Services



Gov't, CBC Health Services stike MoU to foster inclusion in Cameroon.

The Cameroon Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS) to foster collaboration framework in the domain of prevention of disabilities, promotion of disabilities rights and mainstreaming of disability in local and national development.

The signing ceremony took place on May 15, 2020 at the Ministry of Social Affairs under the auspices of the Minister Pauline Irene Nguene, the Country Representative of the Christofell Blinden Mission (CBM), the Program Manager of the Empowerment and Disability Inclusive Development (EDID), Mrs. Agho Glory and the Director of CBC Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih.

The MoU formalises the mutual interaction and strengthens the existing relationship between MINAS and CBCHS at the strategic and working levels, focusing on jointly advocating for the rights to education and the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream ed-

ucation opportunities. Both parties will also collaborate in rehabilitating, protecting and promoting the rights of vulnerable children in Cameroon. Notwithstanding, both parties will commit to mobilise resources for the implementation of interventions aimed at achieving the purpose of the MoU, organize seminars, conferences or workshops on topics of mutual interest and engage in research training programs among others.

Speaking during the event, the Director of CBC Health Services (DHS), Prof Tih Pius cited a few results that the CBCHS with support from the government and other developmental actors has achieved over the years. He emphasized that "The CBCHS has successfully prevented disabilities from a total of 6,720,000 Cameroonians through huge investment in Eye, Ear, Nose, and Throat, Clubfoot and Mental Health services.

The DHS reiterated that in 2014, with support from the Liliane Foundation, the CBCHS expanded its disability programs to a total of 9

regions. Prof. Tih noted that these activities benefitted over 3000 children and youths with disabilities from poor families every year.

"The CBCHS, with support from the Ministry of Social Affairs and partners like CBM and Liliane Foundation has been working tirelessly to ensure that persons with disability including children and youths are not left behind during this COVID 19 pandemic," Prof. Tih remarked. He revealed that emergency response kits composed of food stuff, personal protection equipment and first aid medications have been provided to 1500 persons with disabilities in the North West Region.

Within this framework, MINAS will facilitate custom duties and tax exoneraton to CBCHS for the importation of rehabilitation and assistive devices to foster inclusive education and social inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Minister of Social Affairs pledged that the MoU will reinforce the integration of Children living with disabilities in Cameroon.



CBCHS Leaders examine own-self to improve on Inclusion

Self-evaluation is necessary for any individual or organization that intentionally needs to stay relevant. An outsider that sees the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS) as a glorified institution is, perhaps, blind to the fact that “Ye who wears the shoes knows where it pinches”. To stay above waters, the CBCHS is conscious that self-examination is key. This was the *raison d’être* of a 3-day workshop that held from April 4-6, 2020 at the CBCHS Resource Center in Mvan-Yaounde.

The workshop that served as an auto critic moment of a system that is doing well but striving to do better, laid emphasis on Inclusion. Peter Mue Ngha, CBM Director for West and Central Africa and international trainer artfully opened up the minds of CBCHS hospital administrators, program managers and other leaders to identify gaps in their daily businesses with persons with disabilities (PWDs) vis-à-vis international conventions and the vision and mission of the CBCHS.

Mr. Mue used the CBCHS Mission Statement to drive home his presentations for the three days running. The mission states that the CBCHS shall provide compassionate health care to all who need it as an expression of Christian love. According to the CBM Regional Director, ‘all’ includes PWDs and if the CBCHS must stay relevant in contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals Number 3 on Health, which stresses on health and well-being for all, then issues of disabilities should concern every department and program of the Board and not limited to the Socio Economic Empowerment

of Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD) program.

Mr. Mue was assisted in facilitation by Mr. Awa Jacques Chirac, SEEPD Program Manager who made it clear that SEEPD is changing paradigm from service provision to providing technical support to stakeholders that should normally provide services to PWDs.

Stretching his argument, Mr. Mue said Contemporary Health lays emphasis on Universal Coverage and Universal Access, key among which are available services that should not place a financial burden on those accessing them. He challenged service providers to consider PWDs primarily as human beings made in the image of God who deserve equal opportunities and treatment like all others. He commended the authors of the CBCHS Mission statement many years ago when they embraced the concept of “All” but wondered aloud how inclusively are PWDs included in this lofty mission. “The devil lies in the details,” Mr. Mue remarked as a challenge to CBCHS leaders to review the way they do business with PWDs who need their services.

To help stakeholders relate well with PWDs, Mr. Mue said, there is no disability if there is no barrier on the way of someone with impairment. Thus, the key to eliminating disability is by taking off barriers paramount among which are: attitudes towards PWDs, awkward structural environments like buildings and walk ways, policy framework that does not favour all, economic situation limiting everyone from accessing services and the absence of data and

information to inform us if we’re actually meeting the needs of ‘all’.

According to the workshop trainer, these barriers can be minimized through medical intervention, acts of charity, social inclusion and respect for human rights. Mr. Mue defined human right as what you are due because of who you are and where you are. He observed that PWDs are part of human diversity and therefore deserve the same fair treatment.

“This workshop is an eye opener for me as a clinician,” Dr. Bakor, a participant observed. He acknowledged that the workshop has sufficiently informed him to change his approach to work with his (HIV) patients who include PWDs.

Another participant, Dr. Tumasang said the workshop challenged her many years of practice as a gynecologist. She marveled at the fact that the CBCHS Mission Statement crafted many years back has remained very relevant to this date. “We learn everyday,” the medic said with open hands.

Opening and closing the three-day workshop on Inclusive Health, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, Director of CBC Health Services (DHS) called on the participants to give serious thought to the reflections on the three key things: Understanding Disability in your program context, what does disability inclusion mean to healthcare and why and how to change the narrative. “Leave no one behind,” is the take home message!



CBCHS Leaders, Heads of Services and Programs pledge to ensure inclusion in their respective departments

Survival Cameroon donates COVID-19 Kits to CBCHS

On the sidelines of the workshop on Inclusive Health, an NGO named, Survival Cameroon came to donate kits to the CBCHS to fight the Coronavirus pandemic in Cameroon. The kits included: 950 medical masks, 300 rapid test kits and 1500 disposal masks. Speaking on

behalf of the 3-man team, the Director of Survival Cameroon, Prince M. N. Ekosso said their choice of the CBCHS was based on the Church's goodwill and commitment to fight COVID-19.

Receiving the kits, the Director of Health Ser-

vices, Prof. Tih Pius said, every gift is useful in the fight against the deadly pandemic. Immediately, he distributed the kits to the various hospitals via their Administrators who were participating at the workshop on Inclusive Health.

"Protect our staff, Patients, Caregivers," - Prof. Tih Pius cautions at Goals, Budget Review Meeting



CBC Health Services' leaders review goals and budget for 2020 to continue rendering quality healthcare to all

Leaders of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services have been admonished to make most of every opportunity as they steer the affairs of the organization in the wake of the Coronavirus Pandemic. Rev. Mbuh Julius, Head Chaplain at Nkwen Baptist Health Centre made the call on May 29, 2020 during the Goals and Budget Review meeting.

According to the prelate, making the most of every situation entails acting wisely, paying attention to godly counsel and striving to maintain defined standards. Rev Mbuh drew inspiration from Ephesians 5:15-17 and captioned his devotional, "Make the Most Every Opportunity".

Prof. Tih Pius, Director of CBC Health Services

in an opening statement, called on key leaders of the organization to reduce goals and setup supervision at all levels in their respective facilities.

"At the time we adopted the 2020 goals and budget, the Anglophone Crisis was the major problem steering us to the face. We accepted our goals and budget on the basis that the situation will get better and our patient turnout will increase or will drop if the situation got worse. But barely 5 months into the year the coronavirus has come to compound the situation. The Coronavirus, I must say, is worse than HIV/AIDS," recounted Prof Tih.

"In the face of Coronavirus pandemic that is sparing no one, you must do all it takes to "Pro-

tect our staff, patients and caregivers against this disease," entreated Prof. Tih.

The Director took out time to appreciate the leaders of CBC Health Services for the hard work they are doing in the field to keep the organization above the waters in challenging times like COVID-19. He urged them to think strategically for the bigger picture of the organization during and after the goals and budget review sessions.

It is worth stating that the goals and budget review session was aimed at looking at the trends and adjusting goals accordingly for the current year. The in-camera meeting also provided the organization's kingpins to review on postings and transfers of staff.

CBCHS, Education Stakeholders in NW Region take commitment to foster Inclusive Education

The University of Bamenda (UBa) alongside the Northwest Regional Delegations of Secondary and Basic Education have taken commitment to continue fostering inclusion in the educational system. Prof. Mbiffi Richard, representa-

tive of the Vice Chancellor of UBa, NW Regional Delegate of Secondary Education, Mr. Ngwang Roland and his counterpart of Basic Education, Mr. Wilfred Ndong documented their commitments on behalf of their institutions through

the formalization of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the CBC Health Services on May 26, 2020 at the Baptist Center Nkwen, Bamenda.

Signing on behalf of the CBC Health Services (CBCHS), the Director, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih who presided over the formalization ceremony commended the educational stakeholders for promoting inclusive education in the region. The Director of Health Services (DHS) noted that this MoU is the second one signed with fruitful results given that there is an increased enrollment of students in the University and many successful graduates with disability. Prof. Tih, on a hopeful note, urged all the parties to continue investing efforts in ensuring that learners with impairments study alongside their peers without impairment in their institutions.

In an interview with the media, Prof. Mbiffi Richard highlighted that the doors of UBa are open for all students with disability. He emphasized that the partnership is coming to reinforce their commitment in ensuring that inclu-

sion remains a reality in UBa.

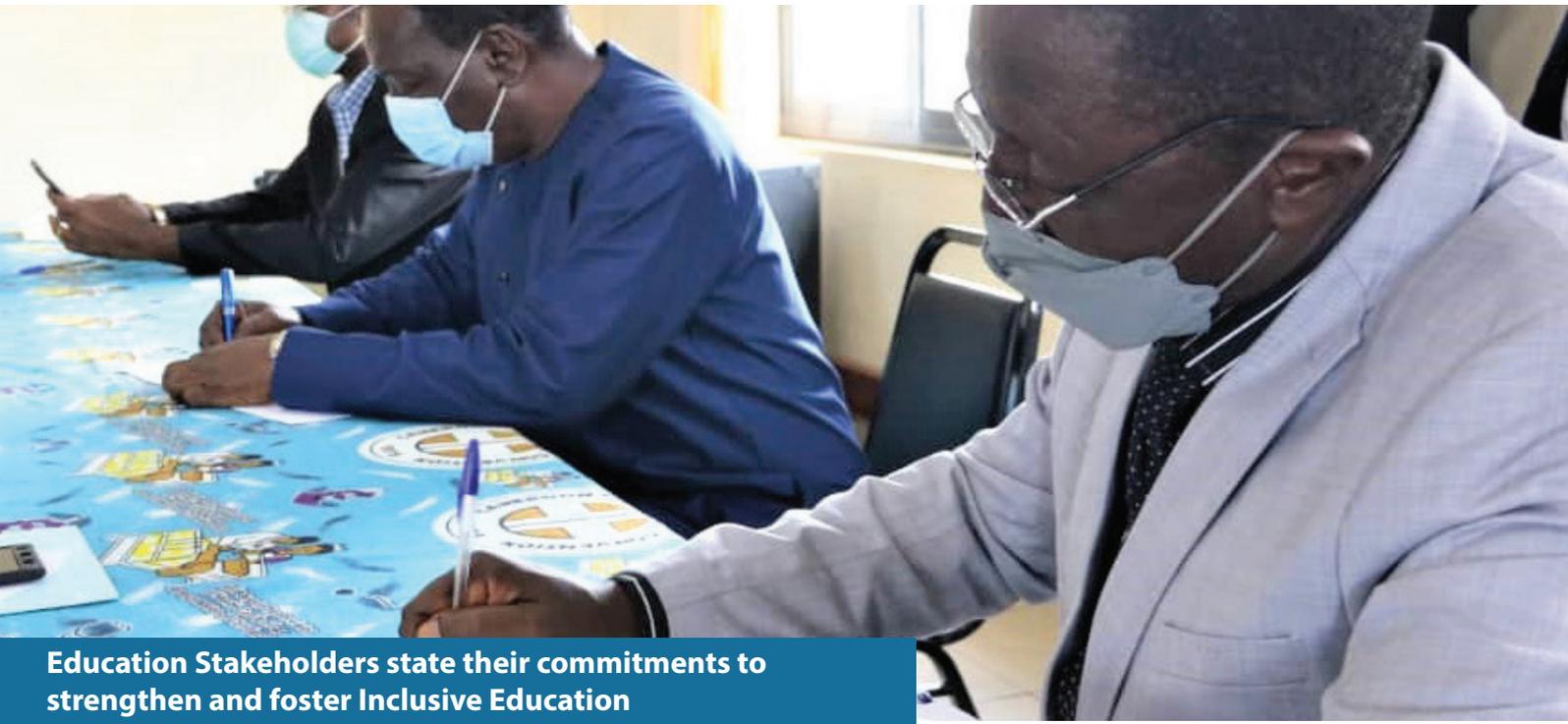
For his part, the Delegate of Secondary Education underlined that the CBC Health Services is assisting in doing what the government is supposed to be doing. He recounted that many of his teachers have been trained on inclusive education, thanks to the CBCHS. On this premise, he said, the government is willing and ready to collaborate with the CBCHS, reason why all hands will be put on deck to ensure that the MoU is appropriately implemented.

The Delegate of Basic Education, Mr. Ndong Wilfred used the opportunity to inform parents to take *advantage of the efforts by the CBCHS and the government by sending their children with disability to school so as to benefit from inclusion, which his delegation is already implementing given that majority of his staff have been capacitated on inclusive education.*

The objective of the MoU, which runs for 3 years (2020 to 2022), is intended to strengthen the educational system in order to promote inclusive education. Article 3 of the partnership states that all parties shall thus be committed to work together to achieve outcomes consistent with the objectives of UBa, the Delegations of Basic and Secondary Education and the SEEPD Program. The CBC Health Services shall carry out its own responsibilities, thanks to funding from CBM AusAid.

The signing of the MoU by the education stakeholders is an indication that access to education for learners with disabilities will be enhanced in the days ahead. Meantime, many educational stakeholders have continued to hail the CBCHS for standing tall in promoting inclusive education in Cameroon.

Secretary of State Visits one of COVID-19 Testing Labs in SW Region



Education Stakeholders state their commitments to strengthen and foster Inclusive Education

H.E Alim Hayatou, the Secretary of State to the Minister of Public Health in charge of Control of Epidemics and Pandemics has visited the National Early Infant Diagnosis Reference Laboratory (NEIDRL) in Mutengene. The visit, which took place on May 7, 2020, was part of his tour to COVID-19 treatment units/centers and testing laboratories in the South West Region of Cameroon.

H.E Alim Hayatou came to see and ascertain the level of preparedness of the National Early Infant Diagnosis Reference Laboratory towards testing.

The Supervisor of the Lab, Mr. Masha Roland indicated that the laboratory is ready for testing but for the unavailability of testing reagents for the Abbott Platform and Personal Protec-

tive Equipment. These needs were promised to be made available in 10 days owing to the stock the Ministry is expecting.

Worthy of note is the fact that NEIDRL is amongst the laboratories earmarked to test samples for COVID-19 in Cameroon with two of their staff being trained in April 2020 in Douala.

Maintain a 1M Distance



Sabga Baptist Health Centre Dedicates Surgical Block

Inhabitants of Sabga and neighbouring villages, whose health conditions need surgery, will no longer have to travel long distances for that purpose. They can now have this service right at Sabga Baptist Health Centre, which now has an operational ultramodern theatre. The theatre and an exquisite surgical ward were dedicated and put to full use on May 23, 2020.

Mr. Vegah Pius, representative of the Fon of Kedjom Ketinguh whose subjects are the immediate beneficiaries of the services offered by the new surgical block, saluted the staff of the health center for their hard work in the past which led to the setup of the unit. "My people rely on this health centre for their health needs, which in turn depends on your sustained hard work. Thank you for the quality care you have been and are rendering," the Fon's representative recounted.

Presiding at the dedication, Rev. Kicha Emmanuel reiterated that the mission of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services as an arm of the church is to provide holistic care to all. "The

church has to teach and heal, hence setting up theatre and wards to house and care for the sick is in perfect harmony with the healing-mission of the church," he said.

The prelate further admonished the staff who will work in the surgical block to depend on God to sharpen their skills to not only meet the health needs of the people, but that through their work many will be brought to God.

The new theatre is already meeting the need for which it was set up. According to Dr. Dimla Emmanuel, barely a week following the provisional opening of the theatre to the public before the dedication proper, 16 operations have been carried out. "The operations range from appendectomy, and myomectomy to open hysterectomy; and the patients are doing fine," the medic said.

Speaking in place of the Director of CBC Health Services, Mr. Jator Alex called on the population of Sabga to utilize the services of the theatre and health centre as a whole. Going by the times, the

senior nurse practitioner called on patients and caregivers to scrupulously respect all prevention measures against the Coronavirus while in the health facility. "Let's keep wearing the mask until a standard vaccine or treatment is found. Prevention is better than cure," Mr. Jator Alex stressed.

Mr. Ekfui Godlove, Chief of Centre (COC) of Sabga Baptist Health Center thanked the Director of CBC Health Services and the Quality Assurance Committee from his Office that worked relentlessly to source and acquire the equipment needed to set up the surgical block. The COC urged his staff to use the steady growth of services in the facility as a catalyst to render quality and standard care for clients. "We hope that in the days ahead we will dedicate yet another new unit," the COC announced.

The newly dedicated theatre has a Resident Doctor, Anesthetist, and Scrub Nurse who will be on 24/7 to meet patients' needs.

Non-Communicable Diseases in the Era of COVID-19

By Dr. Epie Njume, General Supervisor, CBCHS NCDs Program.

People living with non-communicable diseases (PLWNCDs) are as susceptible as the general population to infection with SARS-CoV-2 (official name of the novel coronavirus). However, trends in case series and other observational data show more severe COVID-19 (official name of the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2) disease in persons with poorly controlled pre-existing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including hypertension, diabetes, heart failure etc. Even NCD risk factors such as tobacco use and obesity have been linked to increased susceptibility to infection. The underlying mechanisms responsible for this have not been fully described but the impact of NCDs and their risk factors on the strength of the immune system may play a role.

The COVID-19 pandemic has stretched even the most advanced health care systems to breaking point, such that more focus is being placed on emergency care, perhaps, to the detriment

of routine care services. There is real danger in "neglecting" routine NCD care, because, patients who were heretofore well-controlled, may relapse, thus increasing their risk of manifesting severe disease, and dying, if infected. There are suggestions to extend the follow-up durations for NCD patients. This may sound like common sense, but this decision needs to be taken on a patient-by-patient basis, considering levels of disease control, presence/absence of co-morbid disease(s), and the need to balance infection risks.

Further, social distancing and other infection control measures which are absolutely necessary in context, to curb the spread of COVID-19, may be restrictive to the extent of predisposing apparently healthy persons, to NCDs or worsening pre-existing NCDs. Decreased physical activity levels linked to the stay at home, and limited social interactions may negatively impact mental health.



Dr. Epie Njume,
General Supervisor,
CBCHS NCDs Program.

Thus, the need to adopt healthier lifestyles, to moderate our individual and collective NCD risks has never been more urgent, as is the need for innovation in risk factor modification strategies. This must be seen as an investment in the body's immune health.

Integrating HIV/AIDS and NCD Care within the CBC Health Services: A Pilot Model

The CBC Health Services kick starts a pilot model to integrate HIV and NCD Care services in six of her facilities namely: Nkwen Baptist Health Centre, Banso Baptist Hospital, Mbingo Baptist Hospital, Baptist Hospital Mutengene, Kumba Baptist Health Centre, and Bafoussam Baptist Health Center. This move stems from the need to maximise the use of the platforms heretofore silos, to enhance case detection of both conditions.

The initiative engages both Care Programs to conduct routine screening at health facility and community levels, have linkage systems to initiate positive cases to care and enroll them into dedicated clinics, and well-organised peer-support.

Prior to the start of the activities, a series of workshops were organised at the various Pilot Sites

with the staff in both units to introduce the various screening modalities and tools to capture the data. Linkage systems were also defined to ensure that positive cases receive the appropriate referral, treatment and follow-up in the various units within the facility.

"Routine screening for NCDs was not being done for persons living with HIV (PLWH), and HIV screening was not being done for people living with NCDs, before this pilot began," submitted Dr. Epie Njume, General Supervisor, NCD Prevention and Control Program.

"One month into the pilot, we have noticed that the screening uptake is low for both conditions especially among those who are already in care and the principal factors responsible for this include; the inability for patients to pay for the

screening. PLWH are given ARVs and tuberculosis medicines free of charge but these subsidies do not extend to screening for NCDs.

Patients living with NCDs have to also pay for the HIV test, which adds to their already significant financial burden related to their care, which is not subsidized. These challenges can be opportunities and serve as arguments for funding support," Dr. Njume analyzed.

"The hope is that lessons learned from this pilot phase will enable us to scale up in the rest of our institutions and establish more comprehensive approaches to reducing the burden created by these disease domains in the population we serve," explained Prof. Tih Pius, the director of CBC Health Services.

“Cleaning Hands is the Difference between Life and Death.” Dr. Tedros, WHO Boss on World Handwashing Day



**Regular washing of hands
is the most effective way to
prevent infections**

“I just washed my hands next door and here you are asking me to wash again,” laments Cliff Kimbi, a Bamenda City-dweller as he tried to make his way into Nkwen Baptist Health Centre but was stopped by a security agent. “I only am doing my job, sir, it’s either you wash your hands or you will not go in,” stated the man in yellow with a stern look on, standing by Handwashing Station.

This is the new way of life for people in Bamenda and other parts of Cameroon. Handwashing, especially when accessing public services has become the new normal here since March 5, 2020, when the first case of COVID-19 was reported in the country.

Handwashing and alcohol sanitizer based stations are what greet visitors and workers alike at main entrances and doorposts of offices these days in facilities of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services, all in a bid to promote hand hygiene and limit or bar the way to the new Coronavirus.

The need for hand hygiene has never been emphasized more than in the advent of the Coronavirus Pandemic raging across the globe, challenging nations with state of the art health facilities and putting those with weak health

systems in a limbo.

The call to wash hand regularly came stronger during this year’s Hand Hygiene Day, last May 6, 2020. The day was celebrated within the context of a campaign organized by the World Health Organization (WHO), aimed at recognizing that handwashing is one of the most effective actions you can take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including the COVID-19 virus.

Bakari Didymus, Infection Prevention Control Nurse at Banso Baptist Hospital after championing hand hygiene for years says, “Handwashing is very important. When you wash hands it reduces infection rates.”

According to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO’s Director-General, “The simple act of cleaning hands can be the difference between life and death, and remains one of the most important public health measures for protecting individuals, families, and communities against diseases.

WHO, on the occasion of the 2020 Hand Hygiene Day equally spotlighted nurses and midwives under the rolling slogan, “Nurses and midwives clean care in your hands!” Given that

nurses and midwives are at the front in health-care delivery, spotlighting them on a day like this was to highlight the critical role they play in infection prevention, of which handwashing is crucial.

Worthy of note is that apart from frontline heroes like nurses and midwives, WHO says, “Health workers in general and community members alike can play a role in preventing infections by practicing regular and frequent handwashing.”

Despite the cardinal role handwashing plays in preventing infections, Dr. Tedros regrets that “3-billion people worldwide are unable to practice this most basic of precautions due to lack of soap and water, with less than two-thirds (2/3) of health facilities equipped with handwashing stations.”

Sensing this lack, WHO and partners like the CBC Health Services are calling on governments and policymakers to make hand hygiene a global priority; inspire behavior change towards hand hygiene; engage health workers in clean care and prevention of infections. The time to do that is now because we are living in unprecedented times with disease outbreaks happening at breakneck speed!

Any humanity gesture gives or offers a smile, saves a life!

Arnold is a 16-year old boy living with a disability, born into a family of three. His mother Claris, and brother Gildas also live with this severe physical disability (mobility impairment). Life for Arnold's family has been very difficult, but if there is one remarkable thing in the family, it is their smile and happiness in the way they embrace life. They brave their challenges and would not relent at any opportunity that can give them a better life.

Arnold and his family live in Bangang, a little village in Batcham Sub Division in the West Region of Cameroon. In 2010, Arnold was discovered in the community. Thanks to funds from the Liliane Foundation through their strategic partner the

CBC Health Services, Arnold and family started receiving services to assist him. He was offered a tricycle, sponsored in school, and his family provided with an accessible toilet and most recently a borehole. The initiative to construct a borehole for Arnold's family was borne in 2017 during the supervision visit by the EDID program with the objective of empowering the family to generate income for the basic needs of the entire family as the community pays a token to fetch the water.

In collaboration with Choose Life Generation, a partner Organization of the EDID program in Mbouda-Bangang, the family now has water flowing from the borehole. This has been a great

relief as Arnold's family no longer has to travel long distances to fetch water. The water also serves the entire community that carries it for drinking, laundry, cooking and all other household chores.

The borehole project also improved the livelihood of Arnold's family in another dimension. The house has been electrified to generate electricity needed to pump the water. The local community has offered much gratitude to the Liliane Foundation, the CBC Health Services and their partner Organization for bringing development to their community through a family with disabilities.

Family Bond Matters in Diabetes Care in Cameroon

"My life took a new turn when I couldn't feel strong as I was before. I found it difficult to work on my farm, and at night, I will urinate about 20 times before dawn," - Peter

Peter (not real name) is a farmer in a village around Ndog in the Northwest Region of Cameroon who cultivates maize, rice, and processes palm oil for a living. Peter was devastated when on January 15, 2020, he consulted at a Baptist Health Center around his village and a diagnosis of diabetes was made. He pondered on what could have caused this. He was shocked and frightened. Like a dream, a disease he only used to hear of, as if from far away, had now become his fate.

"It was traumatizing for me to learn that my husband had become diabetic, because I know that when you have diabetes, a wound on your body does not heal and diabetes cannot be cured" lamented Susan (not her real name and her words paraphrased for clarity), Peter's wife

For Peter, life after the revelation of his diagnosis has not been the same. The changes and choices he needs to make regarding his lifestyle can only

happen with the support of his wife and the rest of his family. 'Families should be ready to assist their relatives with diabetes, and diabetes patients should not be afraid to make their status known to their family and those around them. Now that my relatives are aware of my status and the importance of fruits and vegetables, they assist me by bringing fruits and vegetables every now and then.

"I eventually learned to accept my condition thanks to my amazing wife who has been a great source of encouragement for me from the very beginning of my journey with diabetes. The Bible says two are better than one, I appreciate my wife".

Susan testifies, *"I have made a lot of changes at home to favour my husband's condition. I have decided not to cook for my husband differently. We all eat the same meals because I want our children to adapt to the new recipes and other changes: eating,*

with little salt and no 'maggi' (bouillon cubes), has become the norm at home. I follow the advice from the Diabetes Educators of the Nkwen Baptist Hospital Diabetes Clinic and make sure that my husband eats more vegetables and fruits, and less carbohydrates daily."

Three months after diagnosis, Peter's blood sugar level is under control. There is little doubt that the involvement of Peter's family in the adoption of healthier lifestyle choices has made a significant contribution to his achieving blood sugar control. Family support enhances adherence to lifestyle modifications which are the cornerstone of managing diabetes and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs). It also encourages apparently healthy family members to adopt healthier lifestyles, thus reducing their risks of developing diabetes and other NCDs.

Nurses charged to nurse World's Health



Nurses are at the Forefront of disease outbreak

Nurses across the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services and peers worldwide have been hailed for nursing the world to health. The commendation came on May 12, 2020 during the International Nurses Day (IDN).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nurses from time immemorial, as well as today, are at the forefront of fighting epidemics and pandemics-providing high quality and respectful treatment and care. They are often the first and sometimes the only health professional that people see during medical consultations. *“The quality of their initial assessment, care, and treatment is vital in the [healing and recovery of the sick],”* adds WHO.

During the IDN at Bango Baptist Hospital (BBH), nurses were reminded of the cardinal role they play in healthcare delivery. Collins Tanyuy, a Mental Health Nurse in an elaborate presentation, said a nurse assumes three principal roles in healthcare; an educator, surrogate, and a technical expert.

“As an educator, he/she sensitizes the population on prevention of diseases; as a surrogate, they assume the role of caregivers to the sick in delicate conditions and as a technical expert they operate sophisticated health equipment like ventilators and dialysis machines,” expatiates Collins.

This year’s IND was observed within a particular context. This was in the heat of the Coronavirus pandemic that is putting nursing care through a litmus test, no doubt, WHO says the COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the role of nurses, and without them, the battle against outbreaks will not be won.

Given that COVID-19 has put the lives of many health workers and nurses on the line, WHO used the 2020 nurses day to launch a tripartite call on government and policymakers to ensure:-
The occupational safety and health of nurses and all health workers, including notably, unrestricted access to personal protective equipment so they can safely provide care and reduce infections in health care settings.

Nurses and all health care workers have access to mental health support, timely pay, sick leave, and insurance; as well as access to the most up-to-date knowledge and guidance required to respond to all health needs, including outbreaks. Nurses are given the financial support and other resources required to help respond to and control COVID-19 and future outbreaks.

Nurses account for half of the health workforce worldwide. Despite this number, WHO says, *“The world is in urgent need of 5.3 million more nurses”* to meet the shortage of nurses especially in low and middle-income countries with weak health systems. Inferring from this shortage, it is time to chart feasible policies that will push governments to invest in nursing so that Health for All goals can be a reality.

The International Day of Nurses was a perfect opportunity to say thank you to nurses and midwives, for we need them now and in future to nurse the world to health!

CBC Health Services’ Adoption of Biogas Technology; What Gains?

The management of biowaste in hospitals especially in limited-resource countries like Cameroon remains a major worry to managers and organizations in the health business. Make mention of waste management especially in the early 90s, and you will hear the then Administrator of Bango Baptist Hospital (BBH) and other facilities of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services recount their ordeal, having to grapple with huge amounts of biowaste [faeces] from patients and staff.

At the outset, they resulted in the use of pit latrines to handle biowaste. Though it served the purpose at the time, the disadvantages outweighed the advantages. Many pit latrines had to be sunk [dug] now and then to replace old or dilapidated ones. Come to think of it, this was never going to be a reliable waste management method especially in a health facility with a limited land surface area.

As necessity is the mother of invention or innovation, the leadership of the CBC Health Services has no choice but to look for a reliable and efficient waste management method. Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, Director of CBC Health Services contacted Bread for the World Germany to come up with a solution. Feasibility studies were done and the most efficient waste management option was to

come with a biogas plant.

Thanks to Mr. Koffi and another German-based Biogas Plant Construction Specialists in synergy with the Technical Services Department (TSD), the first biogas plant was set up at Bango Baptist Hospital in 1999. Few months in its early days, the Biogas Project made the hospital environment user-friendly, free from the stink of faeces generated by staff and clients. It equally voided the repeated excavation of pit latrines.

The biogas technology, which has today spread to almost every facility of the CBC Health Services, is not only an efficient waste management method, but its byproducts are utilized to meet other needs.

According to Emmanuel Ndem, Fixed Assets Manager who served as Storekeeper during the first days of the biogas project, the plant’s by-product like gas are used to power burners to sterilize theatre equipment and to heat water for patients in the wards in the hospital. Besides gas, we have manure that is used to grow crops in Hospital Gardens.

The gains of biogas technology are huge. *“The biogas technology has been a means for the CBC Health Services to penetrate other regions with*

Healthcare services. You can immediately think of Mboppi Baptist Hospital Douala (MBHD) and how impossible it is running this health facility without the use of this technology. The waste generated by staff, caregivers, and the patient population on a daily bases, would have overwhelmed hospital management and the populace,” says Emmanuel.

He further purports that the use of biogas is economical in the place of domestic gas and wood energy, making it cost saving. Biogas technology is really an asset to the CBC Health Services and if properly utilized, it will bring an increase in income.

Biogas, otherwise called Methane Gas, is produced from a slurry, manure from large scale farming, and even animal droppings. This waste is collected and channeled through Pipes to digesters.

Biogas produced from organic wastes is stored in bags (balloons) designed for this purpose and from there the gas is tapped to any desired and needed place in the hospital or health centre.

Conjecturing from the vantage position of a biogas plant to the CBC Health Services, one can readily say it was a shift worth the weight.

LF, CBCHS put smiles on faces of CWDs at outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic

Over 200 children with disabilities from the West, Northwest, and Adamawa Regions have received COVID-19 emergency kits and food items worth 5 million fcfa donated by the Liliane Funds in collaboration with the CBC Health Services (CBCHS) through the Empowerment and Disability Inclusive Development Program (EDID) Program. This gesture was extended to 24 Partner Organizations (POs) of the EDID Program in Cameroon with the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Services of the CBCHS

being a recipient as one of the POs. The distribution took place in Magba, Bango, Bamenda, Banyo, Nyamboya, Bafoussam, Fombot recently.

The CBR used the community stakeholders they work with in the different communities to preside over the distribution ceremony as a strategy to involve them and draw their attention to the needs of children with disabilities. According to the CBR Supervisor, Mr. Kenchi

Joseph said, CBR is ensuring that sustainability measures are put in place by different structures in the community to corroborate the actions of the CBCHS. He explained that the beneficiaries of the items were consulted by the CBR field workers through a need assessment which informed them on the type of items each child needed, a way of ensuring that persons with disabilities actively participate in decision making, he reiterated.



Persons with disabilities in areas like the Magba Community were pleased to receive COVID19 Kits and food items from the CBC Health Services.

At different distribution points, the stakeholders hailed CBCHS for always extending love and care to the minority population, especially during crises period. The Mayors of Magba and Fombot in the West Region noted that it is the responsibility of the Councils and Government to take care of the needs of children with disabilities, but often time, there are limited of resources. They can only collaborate with NGOs and Faith Based Organizations like the CBCHS to include the minority group who need great

er attention, the Mayors insinuated.

The President of Association for Parents with Disabilities, Liliana Njema and President of Association for Persons with Disabilities in Magba said since the outbreak of the pandemic, it was the first time persons with disabilities in that area were receiving preventive kits. They expressed gratitude to LF and the CBCHS.

Cartidri Neris, a mother of a child with Cerebral

Palsy explained that she lost her job after the pandemic and was not able to take care of the nutrition of her child as recommended by CBR field workers. Receiving food items that could boast the nutrition of her child, Rejoice, was a big relief to her. Like Neris, many parents of the beneficiaries shared the same story.

The items consisted of hand sanitizers, washing buckets, soap, face masks, first aid kits, garri, rice, corn, palm oil, groundnut, milk, and sugar amongst others,

CBC Health Services installs Committee to foster Inclusive Education in West Region

The Regional Delegate of Secondary Education for West Region has installed the Management and Steering Committees for Inclusive Education (IE) in the West Region. Dr. Francois Ngabnya, while installing the Committees on May 21, 2020 told them to ensure the effective implementation of quality education for All in the region. He reiterated that education is a right for all children. It is hoped that learners with disabilities (LWDs) in the region will now have more access to education.

The installation ceremony took place during the opening of a 3 day workshop on Inclusive Education which took place within the "Quality Education for All" project in Lycee Classique and Lycee Bilingue, both in Bafoussam. The objective of the workshop was to enable members of the Committee have a better understanding of the Project and their roles in promoting inclusive education.

During the workshop, the Committee members in a presentation by the Coordinator for Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD), Awa Jacques Chirac identified some of the problems which prevent children with disability from accessing education. These include: weak capacity for inclusive education staff, limited

administrative support for inclusion, lack of teaching and learning assistive devices, inaccessible curriculum, and stigma amongst others. The installed Committee will thus have the task to ensure that the access and participation of learners with impairments in Lycee Classique and Lycee Bilingue is improved, ensure teachers from these schools teach inclusively and for the Regional and school authorities to take over the responsibility to continue inclusive education in Lycee Bilingue and Lycee Classique.

For these results to be achieved, Mr. Awa noted that the following activities shall be carried out; sensitize and educate the community on the right to education for children with disabilities, empower 35 parents of children with disabilities (CWDs) to take responsibility in the education of their children, review and document the experiences of CWDs living with their parents and attending school amongst other activities.

Aware of their role and responsibilities, members were divided into three committees; Technical, Logistics, and Communication. The various committees mapped out their action plans on how they will be able to achieve the objective of the project for the next 3 years.

The EDID Program Manager, Agho Glory drilled participants on disability and impairment to help them to identify the different forms of disabilities.

At the close of the workshop, the Regional Delegate appreciated the CBC Health Services for its efforts in supporting the government to take up its responsibility to promote inclusive education. Dr. Francois pledged the willingness and readiness of the government in ensuring that inclusive education becomes a reality in the West Region.

It should be noted that the 'Quality for Education for All' project is funded by the Liliane Funds through the EDID Program of the CBC Health Services and implemented in two pilot schools in the West Region Lycee Classique and Lycee Bilingue. The objective of the project is to foster inclusive education in the mainstream schools.

The workshop was thus attended by education stakeholders from the two pilot schools. They were commended for their efforts in collaborating with the CBC Health Services in admitting students with impairments since 2018 when the project started in the schools.

Nkwen Baptist Health Center (NBHC)

NBHC Accomplishing Multiple projects with PBF Funding



Nkwen Baptist Health Centre (NBHC) is exploiting every opportunity to providing ample comfort to the numerous clients that access services. In this regard, a shed has been constructed in front of the facility where clients can seat and rest during their period in the hospital.

According to the Administrator of the facility, Mr. Kangong Joyce, the shed is constructed with funding from PBF, which was awarded to Nkwen Baptist Health Centre in December 2019. He ex-

plained that the shed is intended to serve as rain and sun shed for patients and clients waiting to be served. The shed, which extends to the second block of the hospital is also intended to ease the movement of people from the first block of the hospital to the second block when it is rainy.

Also, the children's ward of the hospital is being extended to meet the increasing need for space in the children's ward. According to the Administrator of the hospital, this project is also being re-

alized with funding from the PBF. He added that these projects, which cost not less than ten million francs CFA is expected to be accomplished by the end of September, 2020.

Reports say, other acquired paraphernalia from the PBF funding include; zinc, bedside cupboard in the wards, three in one chairs at the OPDs, patient monitor in the theatre, and a hot air oven for culture and sensitivity tests in the laboratory.

COVID19 fight intensifies at Nkwen Baptist Centre

The NBHC remains determined to curb the spread of COVID19. The Administrator of the facility says the hospital is even stricter than ever before in ensuring that those who do not have face masks are not given access to the facility. Other measures include: addition of more tap heads at the entrance of the hospital to ensure that without exceptions, everyone entering the

hospital washes his or her hands, and use of hand sanitizers. The hospital has also intensified sensitization campaigns on COVID19 prevention in wards and at OPDs. There are also educative videos displayed at the OPD screens that address myths on COVID-19, give facts about the disease, prevention tips, hand wash and hand sanitization tips, and many other health related messages for

the publics.

The hospital has reinforced the referral system of working in close collaboration with the Regional District. NBHC refers suspected cases to the regional hospital.

Clients turn over remain on steady increase at NBHC

Nkwen Baptist Health Center has continued to witness persistent rise in clients turn over despite the atmosphere of fear created by the outbreak of COVID-19. According to the Administrator, the facility sees an average of 300 to 400 patients daily. In January, the hospital saw 12,300 clients and monthly average of over 11,000.

Quizzed on the rationale for the steady increment, the Administrator explained that the services offered by the CBCHS remains highly qualitative, affordable and accompanied by compassionate care. The strategic location of the health centre, well trained medical staff and infrastructure also account for this.

The Administrator, however, says that the facility is looking forward to having the Block B of the hospital that is near completion so that more clients can have space in the facility. He announced hopefully that the new block will go into use by December, 2020.

NBHC gets new Head of Surgery

According to the Hospital Administrator, Mr. Kangong Joce, the theatre department of the hospital has grown in staff strength and services offered. The number of minor and major operations in the theatre remains on a tremendous increase and thus, the need to have a well-coor-

ordinated department. "This was a motivation for the appointment of Dr. Ngwa Tangang Ebogo Titus, a Neurologist as the Head of Surgery in the hospital". The appointment by the Director of CBC Health Services, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, went into effect on April 16, 2020. This new position in

the history of the hospital requires the new head to plan, organize and coordinate surgeries in the theatre. With this new appointment, according to the Administrator, work is said to be more coordinated and organized in the NBHC theatre than ever before.

NBHC Laboratory commences with Bacteriology

Bacteriology is the branch and specialty of biology that studies the morphology, ecology, genetics and biochemistry of bacteria as well as many other aspects related to them. This subdivision of

microbiology involves the identification, classification, and characterization of bacterial species. For patients who are affected by bacteria that have developed resistance to drugs and treat-

ment, the hospital is now able to study the resistant bacteria and through culture and sensitivity, have the best prescription for the patient.

A **culture** is a **test** to find germs (such as bacteria or a fungus) that can cause an infection. A **sensitivity test** checks to see what kind of medicine such as an antibiotic will work best to treat the illness or infection. This new service at the Nkwen Baptist Centre commenced in May 2020.

HOW TO USE HAND SANITIZER

1



Dispense the hand sanitizer on your palms.

2



Rub well over palms, back of hands and fingernails until dry.

3



Waterless use for refreshingly clean hands.



- 1 Pray about the Coronavirus pandemic that is a real challenge to global health systems.
- 2 Pray that Scientists would find a solution to the disease before long.
- 3 Also pray that God in his sovereignty can take away the plague for good.
- 4 Pray for medical personnel around the globe and those of the CBCHS in particular that are battling to keep the COVID-19 disease at bay.
- 5 Pray that people would be disciplined to abide to the safety measures outlined by WHO and Governments around the world.

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