STOP PRESS!!

Pine Trees Towers

Bible Verse

"Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, walk.' Taking him by the hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong." ~ Acts 3:6-7 (NIV).

DHS, Chaplaincy Supervisor visit to galvanize Northbound Stations...pg03
Media Organs in Cameroon Called to Raise Awareness on Trans-fatty Acids pg05
Disability Inclusion Humanitarian Audit Reveals Barriers to Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities...pg07
The sound of bells has resounded loudest in Cameroon to call on all, to get on board in promoting and fostering the education of children with disabilities.

Children with disabilities are more likely to miss out on school than other children. In Cameroon 9 out of 10 children with disabilities are out of school. Not too often because of their disability, but, due to ignorance on the part of parents and attitudinal barriers in the immediate communities, worse in the school milieu.

Even if they go to school, they are more likely to leave before finishing their primary education because of lack of finances to acquire assistive devices and unadopted structures limiting access, especially to those with mobility and vision impairments.

Despite the gloomy situation, breaking all barriers stalking the education of children with disabilities is paramount - for it is a fundamental human right that can only be achieved with all and everyone involved.

It is in that light, that both government and civil society in Cameroon have subscribed to making the loudest noise on and about the education of children with disabilities. Through the “We Ring the Bell Campaign”, they are making their voices heard: “Every child with a disability deserves quality education”.

“We Ring the Bell,” an initiative of Liliane Fonds is aimed at promoting good quality and inclusive education for all children not limited to children with disabilities. Organized yearly in 120 countries, it has become the rallying point for awareness-raising in matters of inclusive education.

Pauline Irene Nguene, Cameroon’s Minister of Social Affairs says the “We Ring the Bell” in Cameroon is a campaign bent on mobilizing all stakeholders to take necessary measures to allow children with disabilities access education. “We strongly support this advocacy and will do all it takes to garner the support of local and international partners towards it,” she said. Everyone has a right to education. I hereby called on families of Children with Disabilities to send their children to school. I call on key actors to come on board the train and support the education of these children, said Mrs. Nguene.

The “We Ring the Bell” 2022 was organized by Cameroon’s Ministry of Social Affairs. Having the government take over the initiative from the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services in 2021, after several years of successful editions, is proof of what private-public partnership can do.

The CBC Health Services, strategic partner of Liliane Fonds began the campaign in Cameroon as part of its services to persons with disabilities under the flagship of the Empowerment Disability Inclusive Development (EDID) program. At the start, it was an eye-opener and advocacy to government. Having come thus far to have the government take relay to organize subsequent editions is a huge win to the CBC Health Services and Liliane Foundation.

From the successful organization of the 2022 edition with CBC Health Services providing just technical support, there is hope on the horizon that the government is committed to doing more for the education of children with disabilities.

This is indeed a right step, in the right direction in opening the world for a child with a disability through education.

Rev. Dr. Nditemeh Charlemagne, Executive President of Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) has encouraged the staff of Sabga Baptist Health Centre to uphold the truth and treat all clients fairly in their day-to-day work. The CBC Executive President made the call at the facility in what was a technical stopover in his meeting the Christians Tour of Gebauer Field on April 26, 2022.

During the visit, Rev. Nditemeh highlighted the tenets of his mandate and noted that as part of the church, what is true should not be denied and what is fair should be promoted for the holistic attainment of the mission of all departments of the CBC.

Speaking during the visit, Ekfui Godlove, Chief of Centre of Sabga Baptist Health Center expressed joy to have the number one of the Convention visit his facility, which is regarded as one the fastest growing health centre in the Tubah Health District.

Y aoundé-Cameroon, April 17, 2022

Bells Go Ringing in Cameroon for Education of Children with Disabilities

Sabga Receives CBC Executive, Dedicates Mobile Ultrasound

Cont. pg 3
According to correspondent report, the visit was a unique opportunity to listen to the plight of the staff. Amongst the inexhaustive list of challenges, Awah Calipride, Staff Representative outlined lack of routine supervision by supervisors to their various departments to better understand the need in the departments; reconsideration of zonal classification especially zone 3 for they are highly affected by this crises causing a high increase in living standard; reinstitution of 75% rent subsidies; and motivation to staff in the lower categories for them to plan for their retirement well in advance. According to the staff representative, their lot will be better up if these issues are looked into by the Executive President.

One of the high points of the visit was the dedication of a newly acquired mobile ultrasound machine. According to the Chief of Centre, the device will facilitate diagnosis during community outreaches and doctors support visits.

The Director of Health Services (DHS), Prof. Tih Pius Muffih and the CBC Health Services Chaplaincy Supervisor, Rev. Ngwang Simon toured the northbound stations from April 17-22, 2022 to assess the services and to encourage the staff.

According to reports, the visit started from Tibati Baptist Health Center down to Baptist Hospital Banyo, Allat, Sarkibaka, Njamboya and Ngounso Baptist Health Centers. They also visited two PHCs along that line namely: Kouata and Mbamti.

“It was a very exciting moment with the DHS and the BHB Staff when they presented the Njang for Sports dance,” Rev. Ngwang recounts. The staff of Allat also went out about two kilometers to wait for and lead the Director in an entourage which was described as the triumphal entry into Allat from the Banyo end.

At each station, the Director and the Supervisor of Chaplaincy Services took turns to inform, encourage and listen to the staff individual concerns. It was also a moment of communion with the various village health committee members of the various stations that were visited. The pastors of these various communities that were visited also turned out with the staff to welcome the DHS.

Leaders of Regional Health Programs and Administrators of Health facilities within the Cameroon Baptist Health (CBC) Health Services have shared experiences in promoting inclusive health within their various hospitals and health programs. This was during a two-day outcome monitoring workshop organized by the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SEEPD) program, at the CBC Resource Centre Mvam, Yaounde from April 13-14, 2022.

The two-day workshop brought together Program Managers and Coordinators of five Regional Health Programs (HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, Non-Communicable Disease, Malaria Prevention and Control, Life Abundant Primary Health Care and the Women’s Health programs) and administrators of 12 hospitals and health centers within the CBC Health Services.

In his opening address to the participants, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih, Director of CBC Health Services said the workshop was to promote inclusion in health service delivery in the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services. This, through strengthening the institutional and organizational capacities to mainstream gender and disability in policy, as well as in practice, he emphasized.
Northwest Authorities Recommend Enforcement of Laws to Prevent Hearing Loss

Some authorities of the noise regulation sector in the Northwest Region have intimated that hearing loss resulting from loud noise can be mitigated if awareness is raised of its consequences. To them, the enforcement of existing laws regulating loud noise is crucial.

The recommendation was the substance of a regional policy dialogue on the ear and hearing care on April 6, 2022, at the Baptist Center, Nkwen in Bamenda. The dialogue was organized by the CBC Health Services within the context of the CBM-funded Ear and Hearing Care Project.

Prof. Tih Pius Muffi, Director of Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services, greeted the participants said in line with the World Hearing Day (WHD) 2022 theme, the CBC Health Services thought it wise to bring together key regional stakeholders to reflect on legislation regarding non-occupational noise, potential consequences of hearing loss, integration of ear and hearing care in school health and regional healthcare strategy, as well as the promotion of neonatal ear screening, and availability of assistive devices to people with hearing loss. This year’s WHD theme is, “To hear for life, listen with Care.”

Two-panel discussions were the high point of the dialogue. One on “Legislation regarding non-occupational noise, awareness-raising on the potential consequences of hearing loss,” moderated by Dr. Fondo Richard, Administrator of the North West Regional Fund for Health Promotion.

Following a very insightful discussion, panel one concluded that there was the need for enforcement of existing laws by stakeholders and for the population to be informed about existing legislation for them to report experiences of deafening noise.

The second panel focused on the integration of ear and hearing care in school health and regional healthcare strategy, as well as the promotion of neonatal ear screening, and availability of assistive devices to people with hearing loss, moderated by Prof. Tih Pius, the panelist underlined strides made in identifying challenges from the governance, technical and operations level. In addition to these measures, participants at the follow-up workshop were guided to define a monitoring and reporting system with KPIs, deadlines and persons responsible.

At the close of the workshop, the Director of Health Services encouraged the participants calling on them to be ambassadors of inclusion which is the comparative advantage of the organization. The workshop brought together 40 participants.

The SEEPD Program acknowledges the support of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) in the implementation of this activity.

Stakeholders poised to make their health services inclusive
The Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services has drilled journalists from across the country on their role in raising awareness and advocacy on Trans-Fatty Acids (TFAs), in a one-day workshop on March 14, 2022, in Yaoundé.

During the session, the journalists from public and private media houses across Cameroon were reminded of the crucial role the media can play in educating Cameroonians on industrially-produced trans-fatty acids. Emphasis was laid on the urgent need for the media to join the CBC Health Services in advocating for a national policy to regulate the production and consumption of foods containing TFAs in Cameroon; as well as to educate the public on the dangers of TFA.

“Trans-fatty Acids are a type of fat found in fried foods, fast foods, baked food, and stick margarine. They have no nutritional value, but their health effects are devastating. They increase the risk of coronary heart diseases and stroke and are responsible for over half a million deaths every year globally,” explained Dr. Epie Njume, General Supervisor for the NCD Prevention and Control Program of the CBC Health Services.

The World Health Organization has established a road map for eliminating TFAs worldwide, and many countries have put in place regulations to meet this WHO benchmark. Sadly, while many countries are already aligning to the benchmark and regulating industrially-produced TFAs using legal instruments, Cameroon has not implemented such policies yet. Therefore, there is a dire need for Cameroon to join the trend, Dr. Epie emphasized.

Talking on “Policy Dialogue with Media, The Urgency of a Strong Regulatory Framework in Cameroon,” Dr. Foyeth Eugene, Advocacy Advisor at CBC Health Services expounded on the regulatory options that other countries have adopted to control TFAs and policy options for Cameroon. According to Dr. Foyeth, the Government of Cameroon could reduce TFA intake by imposing a legislative limit on TFA, mandating labeling, raising awareness in the community, and working with industries on healthy substitutes.

“The first step could be to issue a circular or ministerial decree with relevant stakeholders in advancing of advocacy efforts, waiting for the competent authority to promulgate a law regulating industrially-produced trans-fats” he recommended.

At the close of the workshop, participants left with a commitment and mission to raise the consciousness of TFAs in their communities. “It is my first time hearing about TFA. I know about fats in the body, but trans-fat is a whole new thing, and it is our social responsibility as media practitioners to safeguard the health of our audience,” remarked one of the participants.

The workshop was supported by Resolve To Save Lives.
Community-Based Inclusive Development, Gender and Child Safeguarding (CBID/GBV) have been underlined as key components of the Inclusive Eye Health Project (IEH). This was during a one-day workshop, at the Baptist Center Nkwen, Bamenda on March 31, 2022.

Declaring the workshop open, Mr. Wango Barnabas, Assistant Administrator on behalf of the Director of Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services encouraged participants to avail themselves and grasp concepts thought. “The lessons dispensed here will go long to make access to inclusive eye health a reality in your different institutions. Therefore, make most of this workshop,” he stressed.

Drilling stakeholders on the project, Mr. Tamon James, Project Coordinator explained that inclusive eye health is ensuring eye care services are accessible and welcoming to all members of the community, including persons with disabilities. “Equally, it means proactively guaranteeing that people with long-term vision impairment access wider opportunities in rehabilitation health, education, livelihood, and social inclusion,” stressed Mr. Tamon. According to him, 20% of the world’s poorest population are persons with disabilities, thus eye health staff need to be skilled in responding to this proportion of the population with irreversible blindness.

Women and girls suffer from gender-based violence that keeps them sometimes silent from opening up even to health care providers. Conscious of these issues, Nsono Josephine, Supervisor of the Gender and Child Protection Services drew the attention of the stakeholders to put in place strategies, right policies, and protocols at all levels to curb the incidence of gender-based violence and ensure that victims speak up as well as receive the right health care.

There are many barriers limiting access to eye health in societies. Hence, participants were equipped with firsthand skills in surmounting them. Loshie Eugene, SEEPD Program Officer emphasized further that existing barriers such as attitude, communication, policies, and physical structures amongst others must be faced head-on to achieve the inclusive eye health goal.

Nfor Comfort, an attendee representing the Director of the Nkambe District Hospital testified that the workshop was an eye-opener as they have learned strategies on how to foster inclusion in the context of the project and beyond. She like other stakeholders promised to work with their hospital staff to put in place strategies that will enable them to offer inclusive health care. Inclusive Eye Health is being implemented, thanks to funding from CBM.

The workshop attendees were Directors, Administrators, Eye Nurses, and Ophthalmologists from the partner health facilities of the project.
"Humanitarian actions in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon can be more inclusive if all stakeholders play their role effectively and place persons with disabilities at the center of all humanitarian actions," observed Mr. Wango Julius, Consultant of the disability inclusion audit of humanitarian organizations in the Northwest and Southwest Regions.

Mr. Wango made the observation a workshop for the dissemination of the audit results on March 30, 2022, at Djeuga Palace Hotel, Yaounde. The audit was conducted in February 2022, within the context of the Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Action (DIHA) Project, to assess the level of inclusion of people with disabilities and other vulnerable people in the ongoing humanitarian response programs of local and international humanitarian organizations in the Northwest and Southwest regions. Equally, it was aimed at identifying barriers; training needs, and actions needed to foster the inclusion of people with disabilities in the Health Sectors.

The findings of the study revealed that the crisis has harmed persons with disabilities including loss of mobility and increased dependency, psychological disorders, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, and gender-based violence, and limited access to food and quality health care among others.

Deducing from the January 2022 fact sheet of humanitarian response statistics in the two crisis-hit regions by the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Consultant revealed that only 2.8% of the 266,800 beneficiaries were persons with disabilities which is very insignificant as in any given population at least 15% are persons with disabilities.

According to the Consultant, Mr. Wango Julius, findings showed that persons with disabilities are not fully included in the humanitarian response activities during the ongoing crisis because humanitarian organizations collect insufficient disability disaggregated data and their staff lack sufficient knowledge on disability inclusion. In addition, staff of humanitarian organizations and some host community members view persons with disabilities as people who cannot make decisions for themselves. As a result, actions or donations are usually made to persons with disabilities that don't meet their specific needs because they are not consulted. Long distances to distribution points and information in formats that are inaccessible to persons with disabilities were also highlighted as barriers that limit persons with disabilities from benefitting from humanitarian actions.

To remove barriers and enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian response, Mr. Wango Julius recommended the collection of disability disaggregated data, making offices, structures, and distribution and activity venues accessible to persons with disabilities. He further recommended messages and information in accessible formats, simple and disability-friendly language, development and implementation of policies on inclusion ensuring that all staff are exposed to it, engage and collaborate with organizations of persons with disabilities in all stages of humanitarian actions.

Speaking during the event, the CBC Health Services Director, Prof. Tih Pius Muffih expressed his gratitude to CBM for supporting the CBC Health Services to influence disability inclusion by other development stakeholders in Cameroon. He noted that some years back, the focus was only on treatment and rehabilitation.

For his part, the CBC Health Services, DIHA Project Manager, Mr. Awa Jacques Chirac among other things disclosed that after training on disability-inclusive humanitarian response, some humanitarian organizations have taken measures to ensure effective inclusion of persons with disabilities in their actions.

The event was attended by CBM and implementing partners (CBC Health Services and PCC) staff, representatives of humanitarian organizations from the Northwest and Southwest Regions, humanitarian actors, and members of the press.

Meanwhile, still within the context of the DIHA Project, tablets have been provided to some field workers, data clerks, and Volunteers to ease data entry into the CBC Health Services DIHA Project Data Base. They were given the gadgets and taught how to use them on Saturday, March 21, 2022, at the Nkwen Baptist Hospital Hall.

During the training, they were told to be meticulous in data collection and entry as it deals with the personal information of beneficiaries which needs to be properly protected.
IEH Takes Stock on Activity Progress

Committee members of the Inclusive Eye Health (IEH) Project have highlighted challenges facing ear care provision in the Northwest region. Top on the list remains the lack of requisite resources and to a larger extent, the contemporary COVID-19 and socio-political crises. This was the substance of the top management committee meeting in Bamenda to assess progress made thus far in the project implementation. The project in its second year is to ensure that eye care services are accessible to all including persons with disabilities and other minority groups as well as to link those with visual impairment to Community Based Rehabilitation Services.

At the start of the meeting, Prof Tih Pius Muffih, Director of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Services commended management committee members for being so instrumental in the implementation of the project. He noted that their support and contribution cannot be over-emphasized.

Mr. Tamon James, Project Coordinator presenting the project implementation, noted that in its efforts to prevent COVID-19, some 180 health personnel have been trained in Infection Prevention and WASH, 5 project facilities remodeled to improve access, especially to IPC/WASH facilities, Personal Protective Equipment have been supplied to project facilities including face masks, disposal gowns, hand sanitizer, rags, soap and psychosocial support provided to 577 health workers and 2,724 patients.

Shedding light on capacity building, the Coordinator disclosed that one staff is currently in training to improve his skill in the provision of low vision services, 36 nurses have been trained in primary eye care while 80 community volunteers and 67 leaders of the Organization of Persons with Disabilities have been trained to provide health education on eye care.

According to Mr. Tamon, the project will begin eye screening in schools and improve collaboration between primary and secondary eye care. Despite the progress, he noted that the project has faced challenges like not being able to meet up with the target, late acquisition of surgical instruments, production and supply of some recommended eye drops and late reports from health facilities among others.

The progress report was applauded by all present who marveled at the outcome of the project so far. Reacting to the report, Dr. Kingsley Cho Soh, Northwest Regional Delegate of Public Health praised the CBC Health Services for its commitment to ensuring the access to eye services by the population of the Northwest Region.

Amongst other recommendations made, he urged the project team to revise the referral path to fully enable patients to have access to services. The project should work in collaboration with the Delegations of Public Health and Transport to carry out screenings for drivers.

The meeting was attended by Regional Delegates of Secondary Education, Social Affairs, Women’s Empowerment and the Family, District Medical Officers from the partner health facilities, heads of Eye departments, and some hospital Administrators.

The CBC Health Services is implementing the Inclusive Eye Health Project, thanks to funding from CBM.

CAMEROON BAPTIST CONVENTION HEALTH SERVICES
REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE ON EAR AND HEARING CARE

Key Recommendations/Resolutions of the Multi-Stakeholder Policy Dialogue

1. Act intentionally during our planning and implementation to consider any intervention that will alleviate occupational and non-occupational noises.

2. Take into account the learnings from this dialogue in our various sectors considering particularly:
   - The need of all stakeholders to know the regulatory framework and all the national instruments regulating occupational and non-occupational noises.
   - The need for individuals to attain good hearing across the life course through ear and hearing care.
   - The need to dispose of appropriate skills and tools to identify, evaluate and address noises.
   - The need for hearing loss resulting from preventable causes including hearing loss caused by exposure to loud sounds to be reduce.
   - The need for stakeholder to mitigate the risk of hearing loss associated with recreational sound exposure.
   - The need for governments and private institutions to dispose of internal policies to regulate noise at workplace.
   - The need to strong collaboration among regional stakeholders towards the promotion of safe hearing.
   - The need for a strong monitoring system with a regional task for put in place to monitor sound levels within the region.
   - The need to develop a regional plan for awareness raising on safe hearing especially in public milieus targeting all the sectors.
   - The urgency to develop and disseminate a guiding document with regulations and protocols to be follow by the various sectors and actors.
   - The urgency to systematically screening all learners for ear and all impairment conditions to ensure learning accommodates the needs of all learners including those with impairments.
   - The need for CBC Health Services working together with the different regional stakeholder continue with the implementation of the ear and hearing project while preparing stakeholders for proper transition to ensure sustainability.

3. Develop a policy brief and share with various ministerial departments and regional authorities to stress on the need to strengthen promotional activities and control measures related to hearing care.

4. Conduct a follow-up dialogue to evaluate the level of implementation of the resolutions of the present policy dialogue a week ahead the next world health hearing day.
Background

- Education is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of development. Yet, 90% of Children with Disabilities still do not access education.

- “We Ring The Bell” is a global campaign initiated by the Liliane Foundation (LF) and commemorated yearly in more than 120 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to improve access to education for Children with Disabilities.

- This campaign is commemorated yearly by the Ministry of Social Affairs and partner Ministries together with disability stakeholders in a bid to achieve SDG4 (Inclusive Education)

Objectives

- Engage key decision-makers to strengthen their commitment to the education of Children with Disabilities.

- Raise public awareness on the needs and benefits of educating all children equitably without discrimination

Interventions

- Advocacy
- Signing of manifesto
- Conferences, Webinars and panel discussions
- Community mobilisation and media campaign
- Symbolic ringing of the bell

Call to action

“We Ring the Bell” to sound the importance of quality inclusive education for children with disabilities in Cameroon.

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The Organizing Committee of the We Ring the Bell Campaign 2022

EDID Project Manager presents results of a research on inclusion

Mr Soh Rodolphe, Adviser No. 2 to the Minister of Social Affairs opening the panel discussions on April 26

The Minister’s launching of the We Ring the Bell Campaign in Cameroon

Participants during the panel discussions

People clamouring to sign the commitment

The Organizing Committee of the We Ring the Bell Campaign 2022

SEEPD Program Manager presents updates on the situation of Disabilities in Cameroon

Sign language interpretations

The Director of the CBCHS Prof Tih Pius Muffih welcoming all participants for the Panel Discussions on April 26

Stakeholders in Inclusive Education in Cameroon

Children with disabilities making a loud call for their rights to education

The Minister signs a commitment that states her support for the education of Children with Disabilities
QUALITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL

It is high time that Inclusive Education becomes a reality in Cameroon. All children with a disability must feel really welcome at school.

10 URGENT ACTION POINTS:

1. All children want to be able to reach school.
   Provide children with a disability (adapted) transport to school

2. All children want to be able to enter and pass through the school.
   Make school buildings, furniture and grounds accessible for children with a disability.

3. All children want to be able to visit the restroom.
   Provide an adapted restroom at every school for children with a disability

4. All children want to receive ‘honest’ education
   Adapt lessons and rules for children with a disability

5. All children want to play.
   Allow children with a disability to participate in sports and games at school.

6. All children want friends.
   Teach children how they can be there for children with a disability

7. All children want parents to help.
   Stand up as parents for children with a disability.

8. All children want good guidance
   Train teachers how they can better counsel children with a disability

9. All children want positive attention.
   Children with a disability have the right to go to school.

10. All children want to just be a kid.
    Let children with a disability advance and enjoy.

‘It is time that inclusive and accessible education becomes a reality everywhere.’

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STAY SAFE

PRAYER CONCERNS

1. Thank God for his protection over us and for all the successes recorded in the CBCHS so far.
2. Thank God for the partners of the CBCHS and pray for their continuous collaboration in our drive of providing quality care to all.
3. Pray that God will provide for us the required resources to carry out services in 2022.
4. Pray for more commitment and good health for all the CBCHS staff as they serve this year.
5. Continue to pray for peace to reign in Cameroon especially in the English speaking regions so that our services will be offered without the many challenges we have encountered so far.

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