



THE ALIATOU AYOUBA STORY

Aliatou Ayouba, 11 years old, was born with bilateral clubfoot which had developed to very severe and complex clubfoot before she was treated. According to Aliatou's father, he was so frustrated and discouraged when he discovered that his second child, whom he loves heartily, was having a deformity. They sought for solutions for their child's feet with traditional healers for some time and after discovering that no solution was forthcoming he gave up all hopes of ever having a solution to her daughter's deformed feet. After some years he decided to officially declare his daughter disabled by registering her at the Divisional Delegation of Social Affairs as a child with disability.

One day in 2018, Aliatou's father recounts, he was called to the divisional delegation of social affairs where he was told that there is a CBC Health Services intermediary who will come and assess his daughter for possible treatment. After the assessment he was told that treatment was possible. "This brought me great joy and I accepted that the treatment of my daughter's feet should commence immediately". According to him, he had hoped for this for a very long time and that is why he committed all his energy, time and resources for his daughter to be treated.

Clubfoot treatment using the Ponseti technique is most effective when the child is just delivered or is a few months old. For Aliatou's case, treatment started when she was already 10 years old and her feet had become very stiff. With support from the CBM funded Cameroon Clubfoot Care Project, treatment started with the Ponseti technique in one of the CBC Health Services Ponseti treatment clinics which is not very far from their community. She was a bit afraid of the treatment, but supported the pain and was happy because she wanted her feet to be corrected so that she can be able to play and do things the same way her friends did. After 10 weeks of treatment she was referred for surgery which was done by the Clinical Supervisor of the Cameroon Clubfoot Care Project.

An Amazing Father Follows Her Daughter Through Clubfoot Treatment.



Aliatou during Treatment

Sixteen months after treatment, Aliatou is happy for she no longer walks with the sides of her feet. She has gone back to school and is now a form 3 student. She recounts that before treatment, she could not put on shoes, walk long distances and if she tried to run the feet pained. She says “before my treatment, I was not happy seeing my feet twisted, and being the only one among my friends with such feet used to make me feel bad though I concluded it was God’s doing”. Beaming with a smile Aliatou said “Today I am happy my feet have been corrected and I put on shoes like my friends, I walk well now, I carry water, fetch firewood, go about selling groundnuts for my mother, unlike before when I could not do these”.

Aliatou wants to become a medical doctor so that she can provide treatment to other children who present with clubfoot, “so that I do to them what was done for me”, she said. Her father who left his job as a driver and accompanied his daughter as caregiver during her treatment is today a happy father and says he cannot find words to express his happiness. “As you can see, if you are not told that she had clubfoot before you will never know”, Aliatou’s father says in excitement. “I used to buy shoes for the rest of my 5 children except Aliatou who would ask me Papa, what about me?” and I would reply that “my daughter, I love you so much but there is nothing I can do. One day God will provide a solution. And actually the solution has come as you can see she is able to put on shoes like her brothers and sisters”.

Aliatou and the father are very happy because what the CBC Health Services has done is what he could never have done since his income could not have permitted him to afford for treatment. The entire community is very happy and moved with the outcome of her treatment.

Aliatou and her father remain very grateful to all those who contributed for her treatment and pray that God should bless them.



Aliatou can now fetch water and do other household chores that she could not before



Aliatou before treatment



Aliatou with that smile and confidence that comes with seeing her feet straight like her



Aliatou in school, studying to fulfil her dreams of becoming a medical doctor