

HEALTH CAMPAIGN IN WESTERN BAKOSSI: A SUCCESSFUL ADVENTURE

The Bakossi Cultural and Development Association (BACDA USA) has again proven its recognition for the need to bring healthcare closer to their people back home. During the last convention in Washington DC in July 2012, it was resolved that a health campaign be scheduled for the Western Bakossi communities to be held in Nyandong and Bakolle from December 6, 2012 to December 9, 2012. This comes on the heels of previous health initiatives sponsored by the Association including the Mobile Clinic campaigns that covered all the Health Areas of the Tombel and Bangem Health Districts in June and October 2007, the Cataract Surgery Program in Bangem and Tombel District Hospitals in July 2009, free medical consultations prior to the all Bakossi Conferences held in Bangem and Tombel in November 2009 and 2011 respectively and the baseline survey to identify patients suffering from epilepsy in Bulutu and neighbouring villages some months ago.

The team consisting of two Medical Doctors Dr. FOGANG Pascal and Dr. NZUME Gilbert, the Chief of Centre for the Integrated Health Centre in Nyandong, the Chief of Bureau Health representing the District Medical Officer for Konye Health District, two nurses from Konye District Hospital, the Pharmacy Attendant in Nyandong, the Nyandong Elite Point Person Mr. NGALAME Alphonse, BACDA USA Health Event Coordinator Ms. Mercy NGONE and of course the BACDA USA Health Committee Chairperson, NHON James MBIDE had as mission to carry out consultations and distribution of drugs to patients free of charge in Nyandong and Bakolle.

The story began as the squad embraced the dreaded Kumba-Mamfe road in the afternoon of Thursday, December 6, 2012 on board a 4WD Toyota Hilux offered by Dr. FOGANG Pascal, himself being the driver and his passengers being Nhon Mbide, Dr. Nzume, Mr. Ngalame and Ms. Ngone. It was a rough ride especially as it had rained in some portions of the road. The ordeal however started around Kurume village when the car got stuck in a deep pull of mud and after a couple of hours of futile trials, it was finally pulled out by another heavy duty vehicle, damaging the front bumper in the process. Arrival at Konye was at about 10 pm. After some inquiries were made with regards to the state of the Konye-Nyandong road and arrangements sorted out for nurses from Konye to be transported the following morning, the team took the chance to move on that night. Unfortunately, barely some few kilometers away (between Mekom and Nyandong) a similar problem was encountered and this time the vehicle had to be abandoned on the spot. With the assistance of a bike rider who too was plying the road, alternative arrangements were made with an all-weather pickup from Nyandong to transport the team. Arrival at destination was at about 2 am on Friday, December 7, 2012. Early that morning, arrangements were made for the vehicle to be pulled out and driven back to Mekom since it was practically impossible for it to get to Nyandong.

The consultation exercise in itself was preceded by an opening ceremony that began with prayers by an elder of the village. Mr. Ngalame Alphonse who happens to be the Secretary General of the Western Bakossi Development Association (WEBDA) went ahead to introduce the members of the team to the enormous population that had been streaming into the Health Centre as early as 7 am. Nhon Mbide then came on stage to elaborate on the rationale behind the campaign and the importance of basic health care. He stressed on the harmful effects of abusive consumption of alcohol especially the crude gin which was very obvious in the area judging from the sachets of *Gold Bond*, *Fighter* and *Ginton* littered all over the village. He ended by emphasizing on the importance of fidelity amongst couples so as to minimize the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STDs. The Chief of Nyandong I, Chief Ngalame Divine who was overwhelmed with joy on behalf of his people appreciated this gesture, pledged their support for the smooth running of the exercise and prayed for God's abundant blessings for all who contributed to the realization of the campaign.

To facilitate the reception of patients, three consultation points were prepared, two points for recording vital signs and another point for recording the names of the patients, sex, age and the global diagnosis as well as dispensation of drugs prescribed. Nhon Mbide took charge of blood sugar testing. The exercise ran all day and into the night to the extent that lamps had to be used so as to attend to as many people as possible. At the end of it all, 274 patients were consulted and given medication as prescribed by the doctors. It was rather unfortunate that a good number could be attended to for obvious reasons. It was more or less the same scenario in Bakolle on Saturday, December 7, 2012. Here, 174 patients were consulted and given medication. Therefore, a total of 448 patients benefitted from this formidable initiative.

The extent to which the people from this part of Ekosse appreciated this gesture was spectacular. Apart from the warm reception by the various chiefs (Ngalame Divine of Nyandong I, Nseme Sylvester of Nyandong II and Nkede Alfred of Bakolle) and the massive turn out of the population, WEBDA took the initiative to make sure that the team was comfortable and their stay in the area enjoyable. Accommodation was just so convenient, a modern self-contained apartment, one you would hardly find in most of our villages. Breakfast and lunch were superb and then the get together at the end of the exercise in Nyandong all offered by WEBDA. In fact, there was much to eat and good wine to drink. In effect this phase ended up with real dancing at *Fall in Love* bar in a bit to shed off the fatigue. Special gratitude also goes to our host Mr/Mrs Enongene Kolle for their hospitality and the wonderful dinner they offered which could not be denied though we returned late from the club. A big thank you also goes to our rescue driver, Martin in Nyandong who was just so serviceable.

All the members of the team put in the best they could for the successful realization of this venture. Reason why the Health Committee Chairperson Nhon James Mbide on behalf of the National President of BACDA USA Mr. Joseph Ngalle and the entire Association expressed his sincere gratitude to all and this was symbolized by the handing over of Certificates of Appreciation at the end of the exercise in Bakolle followed by group photographs. The story was crowned with the abundant blessings of the Most High God as all the campaign team members got to their various destinations safe and sound.

COMPOSITION OF HEALTH CAMPAIGN TEAM

S/N	NAME	FUNCTION	CONTACT NUMBER
1.	Nhon James MBIDE	BACDA USA Health Committee Chairperson	93 44 19 45
2.	Ms. Mercy NGONE	BACDA USA Health Event Coordinator	77 84 34 04
3.	Dr. Pascal FOGANG	Medical Doctor, DMO Bakassi	77 65 87 45
4.	Dr. Gilbert Nzume	Medical Doctor, Ejed Clinic Kumba	77 75 35 70
5.	Mr. Gideon Nebah	Chief of Bureau Health, Konye Health Area	74 87 73 55
6.	Mr. Cosmas Awasume	Chief of Centre, Nyandong Health Centre	
7.	Ms. Evon Agbor	Nurse, Konye District Hospital	
8.	Ms. Roseline Ayuk	Nurse, Konye District Hospital	
9.	Ms. Sabina Ngasu	Pharmacy Attendant, Nyandong Health Centre	76 63 99 61
10.	Mr. Alphonse Ngalame	Nyandong Elite, SG WEBDA	75 99 09 97