



CAMEROON GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT WATCH (CAMGEW)

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CAMGEW WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROJECT - OKU

Funder: Associated Country Women of the World

Project leader: Sevidzem Ernestine Leikeki

OKU COUNSELLING AND COMPUTER LITERACY CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SECTION A

WORKSHOP ON EARLY PREGNANCY AND USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES

OUTCOME: *Reduce early pregnancies and sexually transmitted disease*

- A. Monthly radio talks on sexually transmitted disease and use of contraceptives. These talks were done in the Oku Rural radio on sexually transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS which is the most common in teenagers in Oku. Most teenage girls are victims of this illness as they have little or no knowledge on methods of prevention; prevent transmission from mother to child and/or how to live with HIV/AIDS. Coupled with the stigma and rejection from family and friends associated with this disease, most teenage victims see no hope of life and prefer death. Radio talks are made to change mentality of community members on how to prevent and/or live with this disease. They are educated on best sexual practices and the use of contraceptives.
- B. 3 workshops with teenagers to improve their knowledge of safe sex and reduce sexually transmitted disease have been held. The first and third workshops took place in Manckok-Oku during the months of January and March 2016. The second workshop took place with the indigenous Mbororo community located at Akeh in the Out-shirt of Oku(See appendix on attendance list). During the introduction, the project leader told the participants their health determines what they will become in future. She said to them that health is a key factor to

ones mental, social and economic development. She called on them to be flexible and open during this two days workshop on sex education.

GAMSHA GILBERT a senior nurse at OKU DISTRICT HOSPITAL was the health expert at the workshop in Manchok-Oku. He told the teenagers that sexual health is part and parcel of them. Day 1 had presentations outlining most of the crude and ineffective traditional methods of contraception used by girls in Oku such as sponge and traditional herbs. Such crude methods have several consequences including sterility, high chances of cervical cancer and attempted abortions when made pregnant and higher chances of acquiring wound during sexual intercourse. Some of the participants shared various experiences during sexual intercourse saying that the use of sponge soaked with acid as a method of contraception that is widely practiced by most girls. They however acknowledged that they end up with bruises that take 4 to 5 days to heal but they never knew that was the effect of the crude method of contraception. He educated the girls on the negative effects of early and unprotected sex to their wellbeing. Day 2 of the workshops had presentations on best sexual practices. Abstinence remained the best but will teenagers abstained from sex? They were trained on methods of contraception ranging from natural to artificial methods. Some of the teenagers that are in to early marriages shared their experiences using the *CLOTUS INTERRUPTUS* method of contraception. They complained that they feel deprived of the natural intimate feeling during sexual intercourse. They appreciated the workshop for the knowledge on sexual education and use of contraception. Teenagers participated fully asking question about sexual behavior with so much curiosity.

The second workshop was held with the Mbororos. Mbororos are an indigenous and Muslim community. They are located on the out sketch of Oku with many of them found in Akeh. They are mostly grazers and their homes are largely (about 85%) polygamous. Mbororo girls are known for teenage high birth rates, and low literacy rates. Their religion teaches that women are meant only for marriage and child bearing and their religion does not accept the use of artificial contraceptives and family planning. During the sensitisation and project awareness raising visits in this community, Sevidzem Ernestine the project leader visited the Chief of centre for Akeh Health Unit LOH ISAAC. He said that besides sexually transmitted infections Mbororos are victims of high maternal death in his health unit caused by infections, high blood pressure because of early and frequent deliveries, cervical cancer and haemorrhage. He said that most Mbororos do not follow-up antenatal clinic and prefers home delivery with crude and unhygienic unsafe methods.

During the workshop, LOH ISAAC trained these women on the use of contraceptives to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and frequent pregnancies. She encouraged women to go for antenatal clinics so that the health expert can diagnose, treat or prevent some situations of maternal death. He condemned any home deliveries and told them that many of their dear people loss their lives during delivery. This workshop was appreciated by many participants. 18 years old SAMTA HAMI with 3 children said she is one of the teenage girls in her community that practice home delivery. As young as she is, she is suffering from high blood pressure. She appreciated the workshop saying that the knowledge acquired will change her health situation as she will visit the health unit for proper medical care. They appreciated the talk on best sexual practices and use of contraception to prevent sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. **110 participants took part in the workshop**

Counselling of those women and children in need. Sevidzem Ernestine receives counselees on a daily bases especially on health issues. This has created a big impact in the community as most victims have been able to walk out of the stigma associated with sexually transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS.



The project leader SEVIDZEM ERNESTINE welcome the participants during the workshop



Health expert GAMSHA GILBERT during the presentation on sexual health

WORKSHOP 2:



Health expert of AKeh Health unit LOH ISAAC talks to the mbororo women



Indigenous Mbororo women participated during the workshop

Workshop 3:



Participants during the workshop



Health expert of Oku District hospital Gamsha Gilbert gives health talk to participants

SECTION B

WORKSHOP ON NUTRITION OF THE MOTHER AND CHILD

- A. weekly sensitisation in the Oku Rural Radio and women and youth social and cultural groups such as KONGFEYIN WOMENS GROUP, FOFEYIN WOMENS GROUPS, NEFEYIN WOMENS GROUPS, NDINEFEYIN WOEMNS GROUP, and WEHLEMUM ACTIVE WOMEN, JOFEKENCHITEH WOMENS GROUP AND AKEH MBORORO WOMEN GROUP on the ills of early pregnancies and the importance of a balance nutrition to the health of the mother and child.
- B. 3 mentality change training workshops. (see appendix on attendance lists) Day 1 of the workshop involved theoretical lessons on the different cases of food that make up a balanced diet and the importance of breast milk to their babies. They were trained on the value of locally available foodstuffs one of which is soya beans. This beans is commonly cultivated by farmers in Oku. It is locally available and affordable. The nutritionist told the teenage mothers that soya beans contain first class protein. These beans could be transformed into soya beans milk for the baby's breakfast and soya beans flour used as an ingredient for preparing soup, tubers and vegetables (see copy on recipes for available food stuff) They also received lectures on hygiene on mother and child care as this is very important for their babies. The second day was more on practice on preparing a balanced nutritive meal with locally affordable foodstuffs. The food was prepared using a three stone fireside and sawdust pot. In Oku sawdust pots are hardly used but the sawdust is available and could be gotten free. Being an environmentally oriented organization we promoted sawdust used because it is available in large quantities and it is left overs from produced furniture. It was very important to educate these teenagers on how to use a sawdust pot as cooking fuel. During the wet season firewood is scares, wet or expensive. Sawdust can be prepared and kept for use during such moments. One of the teenage girls SUNG GLORY said that it was her first time of witnessing cooking using the saw dust pot. This was a great opportunity for teenagers as they use the 3 stone fireside and sawdust for cooking. She told other participants that she will introduce this in her family.

During the first workshop that was held in January 2016 porridge plantain was chosen as the meal for demonstration. Porridge plantain has as main ingredients raw plantain banana, fish, groundnut and palm oil was chosen the meal for demonstration. The choice of this meal was because raw banana is locally available, affordable and rich in Iron but most people believe preparing raw banana for a family meal signifies poverty. Teenagers received knowledge on the nutritive value of porridge raw banana and were surprise with many saying they will never give any ready banana out for free to pig and goat farmers as was the case in the past. They said this will be food for their children. (see appendix on recipes for porridge plantain).

The second workshop took place in February 2016 with the Mbororo community. Mbororos are an indigenous and Muslim community. They are located on the out sketch of Oku with many of them found in Akeh. They are mostly grazers and their homes are largely (about 85%) polygamous. This is one of the 2 vulnerable indigenous communities' (another group is the pygmies) allover Cameroon. During sensitisation and awareness raising visits in this

community, the women and girls proposed that Rice should be chosen as the meal for demonstration during workshop. They said they enjoy rice but do not know how to boil. Boiled rice and enriched groundnut soup was chosen as the meal for demonstration. This meal has as main ingredients white rice, groundnut, fresh fish, crayfish, vegetable oil, fresh tomatoes, onion, salt and magi to taste, ginger and garlic. (see appendix on recipes).

The third workshop took place in March 2016. The meal chosen for demonstration was **'EKWANG'**. [grattered(to produce paste) coco yams porridge in palm oil and vegetable]. This meal was chosen because the ingredients are locally available, affordable and rich in all classes of food that make a balanced diet. In oku, coco yam is cultivated in large quantities but most families lack knowledge on good recipes to prepare it. Cocoyams is sold very cheap as compared to other areas in the region. They mostly boil the yams and this is eaten as snack not considered a main meal. Coco yam transformed into Ekwang is a rich and affordable meal having as main ingredients tubers of coco yams, coco yam leaves, fish or meat optional, crayfish, palm oil, salt and magi to taste, onion, ginger and garlic. (see appendix on recipes).

At the end of each workshop, participants both young and old women who came with their children had a common meal and copies of various recipes(made from local food stuff) shared out to them.

The Mbororos women never wanted to send their children for the training and we had to include the women in the training. They came along with their children. We had the problem of language for communication and in each community a literate woman community did the translation to the local language. Mothers of these teenagers were involved and allowed to participate in the workshop, this encouraged them to come along with their children. A literate community woman did the translation to the local language. 114 participants took part in the workshop.

WORKSHOP 1:



Nutritionist presents the ingredients of Porridged plantain while participants learn how to cook



Three stone fireside and sawdust pot used during workshop as cooking fuel

WORKSHOP 3



Nutritionist gives talk on importance of a balance diet to the development of the human body



Nutritionist gives talk on nutrition and coordinated the preparation of the food with participants

SECTION 3

WORKSHOP ON LEGALISATION OF MARRIAGES AND CHILD TRAFFICKING

OUTCOME: reduce child trafficking, Increase knowledge on legalisation of marriages and Computer literacy centre

- A. Radio sensitisation on importance of legalisation of marriage and ills of child trafficking. During the first week of December 2015, the project leader had 2 radio programs on this issue sensitizing the entire community about the effects of domestic violence and child trafficking to women and girls. She emphasized during the radio program that noticing and acknowledging the signs of an abusive and exploitative relationship are the first step to ending it. She encouraged women and girls in such relationships to speak-up.
- B. Mentality change training workshop on the need to assist a child to get formal training or education and the importance of legalisation of marriages. These workshops took place in the months of February and March 2016 respectively. During the workshops, participants said that in Oku, several women suffer violence within the confines of their homes and young girls often fall victims of child trafficking. Most of these women and girls suffer in silence as the problem is often under looked, excused or denied. Child trafficking is mostly driven by poverty and the search for greener pastures in the city has several consequences to the girl child ranging from low education, reduced opportunities, prostitution, death and frustration, rape, illnesses. Women were encouraged to assist their children get informal or formal training or education for them to be independent in future.

During the workshop women were trained on the importance of legalisation of marriages and to avoid concubinage commonly referred to as '**CAME WE STAY**'. Many people in Oku are currently living together and are not married. Sevidzem Ernestine told the women during the workshop that none legally married couples who live together hardly have as much rights when compared with legally married couples. They only find this out when the relationship has broken down. 'Came we stay' has the following effects on both parties:

Lack of team spirit, Presence of individualistic attitudes that make both parties less committed to marital union, Increase acceptance of divorce amongst young people, Selfishness and lack of openness to children, Depression, Poorer relationships with the extended family, Behaviour problems and lower academic performance in children etc. Women were encouraged to legalise their marriages and to avoid giving out their girls into non legalised marriages. The procedure for legalisation of marriages was made known to them which is as follows: Spouses-to-be must freely and willingly accept to get married, Registration of marriage is done at the civil status registry usually found at the local council or approved centre, The civil status registrar makes publication of the intention at least one month before the marriage, Each person getting married needs at least 2 witnesses, In the absence of any objection from the public during publication, the marriage can be legalized. The project leader ended the workshop with words of reflection for the participants '**PARENTS AND CHILDREN, SEEK FOR AN INDISSOLUBLE MARRIAGE, REMEMBER THAT STRONG FAMILIES ARE BUILT ON STRONG MARRIAGES AND STRONG SOCIETIES ARE BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF STRONG FAMILIES**'. The workshop was greatly appreciated by the women saying that the knowledge gained will help the strengthen their homes and

lives of their girl child. After the workshop, many men husbands of some participants appreciated the knowledge their wives shared home after the workshop and they are hoping to get their marriages legalized in the nearest future as they now understand the importance of legalization of marriage. (*see brochure on legalization of marriages*). 66 participants attended the workshop.

- C. Identification of children who are victims of children trafficking and rehabilitate through vocational or computer training. From November 2015 to January 2016 three women and two girls were identified as victims of domestic violence and child trafficking respectively. Child trafficking has several consequences on the girl child Peculiar has been the case of one teenage girl. She is 18years old as of date and a teenage mother. She comes from a poor family of seven children. Her mother said she thought sending her daughter to town as a domestic worker was a way forward for the entire family to end their poverty. Little did she know that her daughter will only return home with so much frustration and worst than ever. Parents are encouraged to assist their children learn a trade the will enable them become self-reliant in the future. The computer literacy centre has five pupils enrolled into computer literacy. (*see list of enrolment*).
- D. Setting up of a computer literacy centre for women and the girl child. Funds from ACWW were received in January 2016. This delayed the purchase of computers, related equipments and the progress of computer literacy training. However, sensitization about this program was going on. We have five pupils enrolled for computer literacy namely: NSHOM COLLETTE YAYEN, JAI BERLINDA KOLEM AND SEVIDZEM EMMACULATE BERINYUY, NCHINDA NIVERSE AND PATRICK. (*see list of enrollment*)

Workshop 1





Workshop 2







Women share their different experiences on issues on violation of women's right and child trafficking in their community

SETTING UP OF COMPUTER LITERACY:





The computer training centre went operational on the 27TH January 2016

Counselling to those in needs especially women and girls who have been stigmatised due to ill health, child trafficking or domestic violence has been going on daily. 64 counselees have been attended to and 15 are still been followed-up for the process to be successful.

MONITORING OF THE PROJECT:

The activities of this project were monitored by the Director of the organization WIRSIY EMMANUEL BINYUY. At the end of every week, the project leader presented the activities she had to carry out through the week and a plan of work for the following week to him. He gave his comments on the proposed work and made recommendations looking at the project aims, timeline, practicality and financial resources. WIRSIY EMMANUEL told the project leader that the success or failure of any project starts right from the beginning and so it is very necessary to be practical in executing the activities mindful of the project aim and time line. He told the project leader that good work comes with good results, great impact, public acceptance, positive change, team building and professional maturity of the executing team. At the end of each activity, payment forms, attendance list and receipts of purchases made are verified by the Director of the organisation.

FEMALE STAKEHOLDER EVALUATION WORKSHOP

The evaluation workshop took place on the 26th of January 2016 in Oku. This workshop had female leaders representing the police security, women empowerment, youth vocational training, women and culture, women's health and the indigenous women and girls in Oku. Participants including the project leader were seven in number.

No	Name of female leader	Area of leadership
1	BAMUH BONGA CHRISTINA	PUBLIC SECURITY POLICE OFFICER
2	NGUM MARY STELLA	TRADITIONAL WOMEN LEADER
3	NFOR GRACE GINJE	FEMALE NURSE IN OKU
4	MESSI GLADYS	DIRECTOR WOMENS EMPOWERMENT CENTRE OKU
5	NJIOH BANARDINE YAFE	MANAGER CAMGEW VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE OKU
6	ABDOU SALAMATU	FEMALE YOUTH LEADER AKEH MBORORO WOMENS GROUP
7	SEVIDZEM ERNESTINE LEIKEKI	LEGAL AND SOCIAL OFFICER IN CAMGEW/ACWW PROJECT LEADER

These female leaders discussed the key areas of concern surrounding women, teenage girls and their children that were to be focused on this project. These issues ranged from teenage early pregnancy, poor nutrition, child trafficking, domestic violence and non legalization of marriages. Ending with a 'PROBLEM TREE', these stakeholders started with a close examination of the root causes and consequences of the key areas of concern in the project. (see appendix on pictures of the evaluation workshop) Talking about teenage early pregnancy, NFOR GRACE GINJE said she has had cases of child bearing of teenagers as young 13 years of age. Discussing the way forward for such issues BAMUH BONGA CHRISTINA said that teenage pregnancy is linked to many social, cultural, educational and economic factors influencing teenage risk- taking behaviours. To her efforts to prevent teenage early pregnancy must be multi-dimensional. All the stakeholders agreed to sensitize both parents and teenagers in their area of leaderships on the ills of unhealthy sexual behaviour, mobilize more teenagers for up-coming workshops and recommend difficult cases for counselling. Talking on child trafficking and domestic violence NGUM MARY STELLA said that this practice has a cultural dimension. In Oku cultural practices are male domineering and compel women and girls to bear domestic issues in silence. As a female traditional leader she said such actions must be discouraged. There is need to build the self-esteem of women in this light. Discussing about non legalization of marriages, the indigenous Mbororo youth leader ABDOU SALAMATU shared with the stakeholders that non-legalization of marriages is very common in her community. She said low literacy rates, early marriages by the teenage girls; early pregnancy, young motherhood and non legalization of marriages have profound consequences in the development of her community. To her there is need for training and

education to change mind set and behaviour of the women and girls and community member toward marriage issues. At the end of the workshop, these female stakeholders agreed to sensitise the community on the issues this project seek to address in their various domains of leadership, follow-up activities that will be coordinated by the project leader and make recommendations for improvement where necessary. They agreed to come together again and make comments on the progress of the project in the month of May 2016. The session ended with feeding and payment of transportation cost. (see purchase receipt of food and payment form for transportation cost)



Progress against Outputs

No.	Output Description (Results) (Based on your proposed activities, mention the results you achieved to date. You should use the same outputs as stated in your M&E Plan)	Progress to Date (You are expected to use your proposed indicators to describe what has been accomplished to date)	Issues Arising (you should mention any issues (difficulties) you faced in order to produce this output)	Action Taken (mention any action you have taken in order to meet the issues arising)
1	Carrying out 3 workshops on early pregnancies and use of contraceptives	110 participants took part in the workshop (see attendance lists)	Mobilising these participants. The Mbororos women never wanted to send their children for the training and we had to include the women in the training. They came along with their children. We had the problem of language for communication and in each community a literate woman community did the translation to the local language.	Mothers of these teenagers were involved and allowed to participate in the workshop, this encouraged them to come along with their children. A literate community woman did the translation to the local language.
2	3 training Workshops on nutrition	114 participants	Mobilising these participants. The Mbororos women never wanted to send their children for the training and we had to include the women in the training. They came along with their children. We had the problem of language for communication and in each community a literate woman community did the translation to the local language.	Mothers of these teenagers were involved and allowed to participate in the workshop, this encouraged them to come along with their children. A literate community woman did the translation to the local language.
3	2 training Workshops on legalisation of marriages, violence against women and child trafficking	66participants attended the workshop	Women do not like to discuss issues concerning violation of their rights	Sensitisation on the importance of the respect for women's rights in the radio and cultural groups created wide

				awareness in the community before the workshop and help change mentality of community members
4	Identification of teenage mothers, female victims of domestic violence and child trafficking	5 victims identified	Most women and girls who have been victims of domestic violence and child trafficking are often scared to speak out. Identification of such victims has been very challenging.	Parents of these victims are contacted and after 5-6 visits they speak out and share their experiences
5	Women were received for counselling services and there were at least 3 follow-up sessions per counselee.	Counselling was done on a daily basis with 62 counselees received so far	Couples often became violent during the session and counselees oppose photographs	-couples are given time to air out their differences and follow-up sessions with them
6	computer literacy and vocational training for women and girls to acquire skills	5 pupils enrolled into computer literacy	Women and girls that are victims of human right violence wish to be economically empowered. They lack the funds to pay for this training. CAMGEW lacks the funds to support them learn a trade that will enable them to be self-reliant and independent.	They started learning and we are giving them options on how to raise money to pay the subsidised fees.