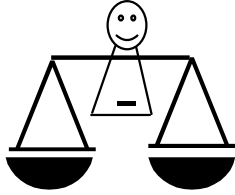
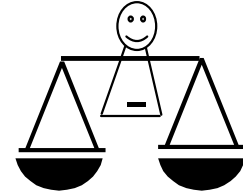


CAMEROON YOUNG JURISTS LEGAL RESOURCE CENTER



CYJULERC



Registration No 236/G.37/D.14/Vol.8/T/ OAPP

**Motto: "Securing livelihood for women and
children within a legal framework"**

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**Advocacy workshop with Female Parliamentarians to lobby for a law to punish
Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon**

ANNUAL REPORT 2006 -2007

**CAMEROON YOUNG JURISTS LEGAL
RESOURCE CENTER
(CYJULERC)**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2006 -2007**

**BUEA
SOUTH WEST PROVINCE**

CAMEROON - AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

CAMEROON YOUNG JURISTS LEGAL RESOURCE CENTRE known by its acronym as CYJULERC is a National NGO with its head quarters in Buea.

CYJULERC was founded by a group of individuals (mostly Female Jurists) who in 2003 with registration No. 237/G.37/D.14/1/VOL.8/I/OAPP of 03/05/2003, when they realized the need for the promotion of Human Rights in Cameroon. The organization is non profit, non sectarian, non governmental with a focus to enhance democracy through the development of a Human Rights and Rule of Law culture in Cameroon. CYJULERC members recognize that there is a critical need for Civil Society Organizations to work towards the promotion and protection of Human Rights with emphasis on issues that impact on abuse, poverty and inequality (discriminatory customary and cultural practices) against women and children; and the need to expose these ills, draw the attention of the stake holders and lobby to influence state policy and action. We work to promote and protect general Human Rights with emphasis on Women and Children's rights.

MISSION STATEMENT: Our mission is create a community free from abuse and marginalization for women and children, and to contribute to build a fair and equitable future society that guarantees the respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law for Cameroonian citizens.

OBJECTIVES:

CYJULERC was created by a group of Common Law Jurists (Judges, Magistrates and Lawyers) with a very wide role of promoting human rights in general, with focus on Women and Children's human rights.

Considering the fact that Cameroon is a developing country and most citizens are ignorant of the law, we thought it was necessary to include more broad activities related to the law so as to create legal consciousness and awareness among the citizens and enhance the implementation of human rights. This entails promoting legal education, access to justice through legal aid; peace building and alternative dispute resolution, democracy and good governance with due regard to the rule of law in our communities.

Specific Objectives:

-To promote women by empowering them economically, socially and politically, and by fighting against trends and tendencies that entrench a culture of gender exclusion, marginalization, poverty, ignorance and lack of self-esteem and specifically;

-To promote the enforcement of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discriminations on Women (CEDAW) and other international conventions, covenants and agreements in Cameroon;

-To use the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to promote and protect Children's Human Rights by fighting against child trafficking, child labour and delinquency;

-To implement strategies of the Global Platform for Action on violence against women through research, advocacy, campaigns and monitoring and implementation of laws;

-To do advocacy and lobby with the government on issues that touch women and children

-To ensure access to justice through Legal Aid to women, children, the poor and the abused;

-To collaborate with regional and international partners and networks on women's human rights issues and establish national and regional networks to promote and advocacy for women's human rights;

-To promote the implementation of all national and international laws on children's rights adopted and ratified in Cameroon.

Please, you can see detail information on our organization by logging at www.cyjulerc.bravehost.com

PROJECTS: 2006-2007

Three main projects were implemented with support from donor agencies in the year 2006-2007 and our routine legal clinic and legal education programs were also carried out. The three projects are:

-Civic education on the eradication of female genital mutilation in the Ejagham and Boki tribes of Manyu Division of the South West Province of Cameroon, supported by the Gender and Development Fund of the Canadian Cooperation in Cameroon;

-Civic Education on the Eradication of FGM in the Arabe Choa tribes of Logone and Chari Division of the Far North Province of Cameroon; supported by United States Embassy in Cameroon; and

-Snails domestication as an alternative source of income for women in communities which practice Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Manyu Division of Cameroon, funded by British High Commission for Cameroon.

-Fight against Girl-Child Slavery and Trafficking in Akwaya, Manyu Division, South West Province of Cameroon; funded by the organization.

In an effort to commence the implementation of the 1997 United Nations Joint Plan of Action adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children Fund

(UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Cameroon, CYJULERC wrote the afore mentioned three projects.

The **overall goal** of the FGM projects was aimed at beginning a **National Plan of Action on the Eradication of this gross discriminatory abuse on the Human Rights of women**. The *national plan of action comprises of Sensitisation Campaigns in all the communities which still practice FGM, and lobby for the adoption of a law to criminalize FGM in Cameroon*. The project is aimed at empowering women socially, economically and politically, thus increasing their self esteem and promoting equality with men in the community. In this way, their practical and strategic gender needs will be met.

Cameroon is among the 31 countries which practice Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Africa. A UN report show that an estimated 20% of women and girls undergo FGM in Cameroon. These communities still undergo Clitoridectomy or *Excision* between two weeks of age and the delivery of the first child.

Female Genital Mutilation has been a long time cultural practice in the Ejagham and Boki tribes in the South West Province; the Makaï, the Arabes Choas, the Sara, the kotoko and the Sirata. tribes in the Far North Province; and the Betaré-Oya and Garoua-Boulai localites of the East Province of Cameroon.

The UN report which estimated that 20% of women in Cameroon were affected did not include the East Province, the Bokis in Manyu Division and the other three tribes which still practice Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the Far North Province. The report talked of the Arabe Choas and the Ejagham tribes only.

It was recently discovered that Betaré-Oya and Garoua-Boulai localites in the East province still practice Female Genital Mutilation. Unconfirmed reports say there are some parts of the Ndian Division in the South West Province which still practice it, as such, the actual situation of Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon is not known.

The reasons for adhering to this practice are historic. They range from fear for the daughter's marriageability and honor, to conformity, insistence and pressure from older relatives and the community

The reasons often cited are marital fidelity, controlling the woman's sex drive, ensuring paternity, "calming" her personality, and hygiene. It is commonly considered an important rite of passage to womanhood.

Many of the victims revealed that even though they incur much pain in the process, some suffer from severe bleeding which sometimes result in death and infection which sometimes causes sterility in the young girls. There have also been some HIV infections contracted from the mutilation exercise considering that most practitioners use one old knife on all their victims.

The practice has a record of about 600 victims within the last 3 years in the Ejagam region and it is projected that all mature girls living in these villages would eventually be circumcised after the delivery of their first children. Today girl children are mutilated as early as two (2) weeks old in the Ejagham region.

The situation of Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon is very precarious. The efforts made by a few Non-Governmental Organizations to educate, sensitize and create some awareness in the affected communities cannot eradicate this gross violation of the Human Rights of the woman.

There is no National Plan of Action by the government for the eradication of Female Genital Mutilation.

There is No Law against Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon.

It is on the aforementioned premise that the Cameroon Young Jurist Legal Resource Center has conceived a Plan of Action for the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon.

This Plan of Action consists of the following:

- To carry out intensive sensitization and education in all the communities which still practice Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon within ten (10) years;
- To create Anti-Female Genital Mutilation associations in all the regions practicing FGM in Cameroon within ten (10) years;
- To fight for the adoption of an Anti-FGM law;
- To support all the Anti-FGM associations with income generating activities;
- To create alternative income for practitioners.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT: This project was aimed at creating awareness within the communities on the need to stop the practice of FGM, empower women socially, economically and politically, thus increasing their self esteem and promoting equality with men in the community. In this way, their practical and strategic gender needs will be met.

GOALS: The goals of project were to seek the protection of the human rights of women, lobby law makers and government officials to adopt legislation against FGM in Cameroon. It was also aimed at beginning the eradication of FGM in Cameroon.

This project marked the beginning of the implementation of the 1997 United Nations Joint Plan of Action adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Cameroon.

ACTIVITIES

(1) Civic education on the eradication of female genital mutilation in the Ejagham and Boki tribes of Manyu Division of the South West Province of Cameroon, supported by the Gender and Development Fund of the Canadian Cooperation in Cameroon.

SENSITIZATION CAMPAIGNS AGAINST FGM

Sensitization, mobilization and counseling on the need to stop female circumcision were done fifteen (15) villages of the Ejagham community and in five (5) villages of the Boki community. Women's Conferences were held in all the fifteen (15) Ejagham villages and five (5) Boki-Akwaya villages of Manyu Division. in March 2006 and Anti-FGM women's associations were created in all the twenty (20) villages which were sensitized.

Two (2) Unions of Anti-FGM Associations made up of the executive members of twenty (20) village associations were created in the two communities. The Boki anti-FGM associations had a membership of four hundred and seventy-nine (479) women while the Ejagham anti-FGM associations have a membership of nine hundred and eight-one (981) women.

Support was given to two Anti-FGM Unions to set-up offices. Two offices were equipped for the two (2) Unions of anti-FGM associations so as to create permanent offices for them to hold their bi-annual meetings.

Eighty (80) women were trained in two workshops in the following:

- Harmful effects of female genital mutilation;
- The effects of female genital mutilation on the health of a woman;
- The psychological effects of female genital mutilation on the woman;
- The legal consequences of female genital mutilation on the practitioner, the victim and the victim's family;
- Advocacy techniques for the eradication of female genital mutilation;
- HIV/AIDS awareness-mode of transmission and preventive methods.





Anti-FGM training workshop for executive members of the anti-FGM associations in the Ejagham community Eyumojock, March 2006



Boki Union of Anti-FGM associations at Kajifu I at the FGM training workshop in March 2006

WORKSHOP WITH FEMALE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

An Advocacy workshop was organized with all female members of parliament and Eyumojock and Akwaya members of parliament to lobby for the adoption of a draft law to punish FGM in Cameroon.

The workshop took place on June 8, 2006 at the National Assembly hall. Fourteen (14) members of parliament and ten (10) representatives of non-governmental organizations working for the protection and promotion of women's rights were present. These are Female Jurists, (ACAFEJ), Association de lutte contre de violence faits aux femme (ALVF), Inter-African Committee against traditional harmful practicesa(IAC-Cameroon), and African Indigenous Women Organization (AIWO).

It was presided over by Honorable Rose Abunaw Makia, the only female vice president of the National Assembly. The workshop is attached hereto at the end.

An opening speech was made by Honorable Rose Abunaw Makia where she emphasized on the existence of female genital mutilation in Cameroon and on the need for its eradication. She emphasized on the role of the female members of parliament and the need for them to contribute to the fight against female genital mutilation by adopting a law to punish the practice for it is an abuse of the woman and a gross violation of the human rights of the woman.



Opening ceremony of Anti-FGM Advocacy workshop with female members of parliament, Yaounde June 8, 2006

After opening the workshop, a video tape of life testimonies collected by CYJULERC during sensitization campaigns and training workshops on the in the Ejagham and Boki communities were projected to participants. They were shocked at the revelations they of

the victims. They were also shocked to hear some practitioners and women insist on the fact that the practice has to continue.

Victims told their life experiences of severe pain and torture when they were mutilated. Some went into coma for weeks and others died as a result of severe blinding. Some suffered severe infection and could not make children.

The opinions of some practitioners and some conservatives of the communities were also recorded. They insisted on the fact that the practice is their culture and so it must continue. They also said the practitioners earn some income in it so they need alternative income generating activities that will replace the income earned from the practice.



Female members of parliament watching a video tape of life testimonies recorded in the Ejagham and Boki communities.

PRESENTATION OF VICTIMS AND TESTIMONIES

One of the victims, Arung Delphine, whom CYJULERC met during sensitization campaigns at Mbakem, a village in the Ejagham community was presented to the female members of parliament at the workshop. She told her gory story in tears. She still had a vivid painful memory of her experience.



Left: FGM victim, Arung Delphine; narrating her story to CYJULERC team during the women's village conference at Mbakem, February 2006



Right: Arung Delphine telling her gory experience of circumcision in tears to the Female Members of Parliament, June 8, 2006.

Delphine could not hold back her tears when she gave a vivid life testimony of the ordeal she went through fifteen (15) years ago when she was circumcised or mutilated. She wept as she told her pathetic story to the fourteen female members of parliament and the other participants present at the workshop. Every participant was touched by her story and they could not hold back their tears.



Female members of parliament could not hold back their tears as Delphine narrates the ordeal she went through during circumcision

After Delphine's testimony, the members of parliament and the other participants of the workshop reacted to the testimonies and made suggestions which can contribute to the fight against female genital mutilation in Cameroon.

PRESENTATION OF DRAFT BILL TO FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIANS

The national coordinator of CYJULERC presented a paper on the situation of female genital mutilation in Cameroon. She also presented the Joint Plan of Action adopted by three United Nations agencies; The World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) and she also presented CYJULERC's plan of action on the eradication of female genital mutilation in Cameroon. She presented the precarious situation of female genital mutilation in Cameroon and the activities implemented so far by CYJULERC and the impact of the activities on the communities.



The National Coordinator of CYJULERC presenting the situation of FGM in Cameroon and a draft bill to criminalize FGM during the workshop

She presented a draft bill to punish female genital mutilation in Cameroon, drafted by CYJULERC. The bill is an amendment of Section 277 of the Cameroonian penal code. She proposed that the Female Parliamentarians table it as a Female Parliamentarians' Private Members Bill. The participants debated on the bill. They were unanimous that a law to punish female genital mutilation was necessary but resolve to move to the communities to meet the victim and practitioners so they can have a better appraisal of the situation before tabling the law.

The representatives of non-governmental organizations which were present presented some of the activities they have implemented on female genital mutilation. Doctor Nouthé, the representative of the National Association of Female Doctors (ACAFEM), presented the various methods of circumcision and educated participants on the health hazard of circumcision.



Dr Nouthé, member of ACAFEM presenting the various types of Mutilations to participants at the advocacy workshop.

WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Female Parliamentarians resolved to go to the Ejagham community to meet the victims and practitioners so they can have an appraisal of the real situation before they table the draft bill. This will enable them to be able to defend it at the plenary sessions of the General Assembly of the Parliament.

The non-governmental organizations which were present resolve to work together for a more concerted action to fight for the eradication of female genital mutilation in Cameroon.

MEDIA PRESENTATIONS

There was a TV Talk show and News paper write-ups to create awareness and sensitize the Cameroonian population on the situation of FGM.

A TV talk-show to expose the real situation of female genital mutilation in Cameroon was organized at the Cameroon Radio and Television Center, Mballa II, Yaounde on October 27, 2006 and projected on the National Television on Sunday, November 26, 2006, at 5'00 pm.

Many national and international press agencies wrote articles on the FGM activities. **Le Messenger** news paper wrote an article to sensitize the Cameroonian public on the precarious situation of female genital mutilation in Cameroon. The article was titled in the French language “ Bientôt une loi contre cette pratique au Cameroun?”. The article is found on page 5 of No 2146 of Tuesday, June 13, 2006. **Cameroon Tribune** published an article title “women Seek Legislation against Genital Mutilation” on page 14 of Monday June 12, 2006 edition, No. 8617/4816. **The Post** news paper No. 0772 of Monday, June 12, 2006 reported on female genital mutilation on page 6. All the aforementioned news papers are submitted herewith.

International media agencies reported in English, French, Dutch and German languages on the workshop with female members of parliament and on the situation of FGM in

Cameroon. They reported extensively on the workshop and the draft bill proposed by CYJULERC to be tabled as a Female Parliamentarians Private Members Bill. The internet search site 'Google' and 'Yahoo Search' carried their reports. (Please find attached hereto the Google page and a copy of one of the reports).

The project was managed and monitored by the National Coordinator and the Secretary General. The personally took part in the implementation of all the activities of the project. The also made up part of the resource team.

However the executive members of the various village associations equally play an important role in the monitoring of the project for they were charged with the responsibility of managing the newly created Anti-FGM associations in their villages.

(2)-Civic Education on the Eradication of FGM in the Arabe Choa tribes of Logone and Chari Division of the Far North Province of Cameroon; supported by United States Embassy in Cameroon.

CYJULERC worked in collaboration with a Kousseri based organization known by its acronym as AL FAN headed by one Mariam Mousa and the Assistant Divisional Delegate for Women and the Family, Mr. Miscouna Saliou. They were the two main resource persons who work relentlessly through out the implementation of this project.

Mr. Miscouna is a Social Welfare expert who wrote his end of course dissertation at ENAM on FGM practice in the Logone and Chari Division so he has a mastery of the situation of FGM in the Arabe Choa communities. The two resource persons are indigenes of this Division so they played key roles in the success of the project. They target population is an indigenous one with a below 1% literacy rate. Most of the sensitization was done through translation and directly by Mr. Miscouna.

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Female Circumcision (FC) otherwise known as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practiced in all the eight (8) Sub-Divisions of the Logone and Chari Division. It is practiced by the Arabe Choa, and the Sara, communities, with 100% practice rate among the Arabe Choa communities. The Saras are a minority group which migrated from Chad and settled along the Logone and Chari river. They have a practice rate of 25%.

Generally the girls are mutilated between 3-10 years with those between 4 and 5 most victimized. The age for mutilation ranges from 2 to 14 years in the aforementioned communities but girls aged 16 and adult women are also circumcised due to social pressure from their peers or families. Circumcision is done during the months of November, December and January for it there are less flies and mosquitoes during these months. It not also done on Fridays for it is believed accidents which can lead to the victim's death occur easily on Fridays. The circumcision is done on a group of girls at the same time and usually girls of the same family members. They are group into one large group in one of their parents' home and they are circumcised. They are nursed for a few days and then sent to their various parents.

OBJECTIVES: This project was aimed at creating awareness within the communities of the need to stop the practice of FGM, empower women socially, economically and politically, thus increasing their self esteem and promoting equality with men in the community. In this way, their practical and strategic gender needs will be met.

GOALS: The goals of project were to seek the protection of the human rights of women, lobby law makers and government officials to adopt legislation against FGM in Cameroon. It was also aimed at beginning the process of the eradication of FGM in Cameroon in the Arabe Choa tribes in the Far North province.

ACTIVITIES

SENSITIZATION, COUNSELING AND MOBILIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY AND FORMATION OF ANTI-FGM GROUPS:

Sensitization campaigns and mobilization was done in thirty (31) village. TEN (10) REASONS WHY STOP FEMALE CIRCUMCISION was the slogan used for a civic education program on the eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), otherwise known as Female Circumcision (F C), in the Arabe Choa communities of Logone and Chari Division, in the Far North Province of Cameroon sharing borders with Nigeria and Chad.

The project team moved to the village communities and held conferences and lobbied with the village heads known in their communities by the appellation ‘Blama’, to lend their support to the project.

A one (1) week intensive mobilization and sensitization was done from the 3rd – 9th day of December 2006, through village conferences with the village heads (Blama), men, women and youths in the targeted villages.

The following activities were done:

- Distribution of campaign materials; T-shirts, face-caps, and flyers.
- Posters were pasted around the community centers and certain strategic positions in the villages.
- Banners were tied around certain strategic points in five (5) villages.
- Examine the situation of female genital mutilation (FGM) in each village, that is, to closely examine the prevalence rate in the various villages and the communities’ perception on its significance;
- Educate village heads, men, women and youths on the harmful effects of female genital mutilation on the health of a woman;
- Educate the community on the psychological effects of female genital mutilation on the woman;

- Counsel the community on the legal consequences of the practice of female genital mutilation on the practitioners, victims and families of victims; and Obtain population’s view point on the best methods to eradicate the practice.

Village Conferences

Preliminary meetings were held with the village heads, men, youths and representatives of women’s groups in villages. The men accepted it is their culture to circumcise women but they are not against the eradication of the practice moreover, the men do not do the circumcision of women. They were educated on the dangers of female genital mutilation. About 6000 persons were sensitized in 31 village communities.

The following villages were sensitized:

Alaya,, Ngoumati, Mawak, Arkis, Djarangoubou, Al Khanam, Malak, Hidjelidjé, Ndjagaré, Yadjitouna, Ngamadji, Mboula, Fachir, Meserigué, Michédiré, Ibou, Massaki I, and Massaki II



Massive turn out of women from seven (7) villages in Ibou during the Village conference

Women’s Conferences

Women’s Conferences were held in thirty one (31) villages. The women shared their experience on FGM with the team and they were sensitized on the dangers of the practice. Each village created an Anti-FGM association and elected an executive committee to manage the association.



MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Media campaigns were also carried out by FM Kousseri radio. Mariam and These campaigns were done through out the two weeks, from December 1-15. These media campaigns were carried out in the local language called Arabic and by different persons. The local language broadcasters of Arabic carried out most of the campaign for he is works with the Kousseri FM Station. Some campaigns in French language were carried out by the one of the resource persons Mr. Miscouna. He also campaigned in the Arabic language. Mariam also sensitized the population over the radio in the Arabic language. All the campaigns were focused on the dangers and the harmful effects of the Female Genital Mutilation and the need to stop the practice.

WORKSHOP TO TRAIN COMMUNITY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS IN ADVOCACY TECHNIQUES AND THE USE OF MATERIAL FOR EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNS

One training workshop was organized at Kousserrie to train the executive members of all the 31 village anti-FGM associations in advocacy techniques and on the use of materials for effective campaigns.

Sixty-two (62) women had a three-day intensive training on the following:

- the Harmful effects of FGM on the health of the woman,
- the Psychological consequences of FGM on the woman,
- the Legal consequences on the practitioners, victims and family

They were educated on advocacy techniques so that they can be able to sensitize and educate the women in their various villages with the aid of posters and flyers on the dangers of the practice of FGM so they can be convinced to stop the practice.

The workshop brought the members of the executive committees of all the villages together to discuss and take common resolutions on the fight against FGM in their community.

Flyers, posters, T-shirts and face caps were distributed to each executive committee at the end of the workshop. Didactic materials were also distributed to them for use during their Anti-FGM village association meetings.

Women showed a lot of interest in the workshop. Various life testimonies on the dangers some of the women suffered when they were circumcised were made. They said their consent was never sought and recounted how they were tortured and forced to be circumcised. Some bled and went into coma and almost died. The women opened up and revealed that some women and children actually died as a result of FGM. All the aforementioned problems caused some families and villages to stop the practice.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurial skills development is part of activities intended to create alternative income generation for practitioners and victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the Arabe Choa tribes.

Training was organized in the two village communities; Hibou and Djagere, where the mills were installed. The mill in Hibou will serve six (16) neighboring village communities while that installed in Djagere will serve seven (11) village communities.

Fifty two (52) participants; thirty nine women (39) and thirteen (13) men participated in the training workshop in Hibou while twenty-nine women and men participated in the training workshop in Djagere. Participants were educated on the need for Arabe Choa women to get involved in income generating activities so as to improve the standard of lives and that of their families. They were educated on the importance of engaging in self-reliance income generating activities which will give them economic independence from their husbands and thus promote their self esteem. They were also educated on the importance of working together as groups with common interest for better productivity and income.

Examples of self reliance activities like commercialization of milk and group rice farming and group irrigation of farms were cited by participants as activities which can help the women generate income for themselves. Participants agreed that the mill were a good source of income considering the fact that, the main meals of the Arabe Choa tribes are rice, millet and maize which need to be ground. Every household will use the mills consequently, they will generate income for practitioners and the women. Participants said the entrepreneurial skills acquired will help them to manage the mills and that will mark the beginning of the economic empowerment and independence of the Arabe Choa woman. The practitioners will no longer rely on circumcision of women and girl children for income in their communities.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF VICTIMS AND WOMEN'S GROUPS

The economic empowerment of victims and women's groups is aimed at providing female genital mutilation (FGM) practitioners with alternative income generating activities. We thought that limiting the alternative income generating activities to the practitioners only will encourage other women to become practitioners. All women were organized into groups of Anti-FGM associations in the each village community and the mills were offered to several groups as aforementioned.



Some wild nuts and grains which make up most of the food stuff of the Arabe Choa tribe exhibited during CYJULERC's village conference in Hibou



Two women demonstrate how the coats of the nuts and grains are peeled off and ground manually for powder for powder on a stone during an FGM sensitization campaign

Two mills intended to generate income that will replace the income earned from circumcision were offered to two groups of eleven (16) and sixteen (11) village communities. One was installed at Hibou and Djagere village communities respectively. A management team comprising of representatives from all the village communities which have benefited from the mills made up the management committee of each mill. One man was included in each management committee to give technical assistance in the maintenance of the mills. The mills were handed over to the two management committees. There were demonstrations on the use of the mills by a technician from the company who manufactured them. The management committee members were trained to use the mill.



Multi-purpose Grinding Mills donated to Hibou and Djagere village communities.

ADVOCACY WORKSHOP FEMALE GENITALE MUTILATION (FGM)

The Advocacy Workshop was organized at the United States Embassy under the auspices of the Ambassador, Her Excellency Janet E. Garvey under the theme: Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon: the Role of the Legislature. The objective was to lobby government ministers, diplomats, law makers (parliamentarians) and other stakeholders in Cameroon on the need to adopt a law specific to punish female genital mutilation in Cameroon. A file made up of a copy of the proposed law and a photograph of mutilated female genitals- type 3, was distributed to all the over 70 participants in the hall.

PRESENTATIONS

The power point presentation titled: Female Genital Mutilation in Cameroon: the Role of the Legislator was delivered by Magistrate Ayuk Esther (National Coordinator of CEJULERC). In her introductory speech, the presenter emotionally expressed the pathetic nature of some images of female genital mutilation which she has observed from some African countries, including that of 14 months old Ojong from Babong village in Manyu Division of the Southwest Province of Cameroon. Such practices are generally carried out on young girls under the guise of initiating them into womanhood and to control female promiscuity, she said. The presenter went further to identify some areas in Cameroon which still practice FGM, specifically, in the Far North, Eastern and Southwest Provinces. While presenting the effects of such an inhuman practice on women (including, severe pain and bleeding, infections, long term depression and death in extreme cases), Magistrate Ayuk made an appeal to the guests to participate actively in the fight towards the complete eradication of FGM in Cameroon. The adoption of a law specific to punish FGM was identified as a strategic measure towards this drive.

The adoption of a law prohibiting FGM would:

- Deter practitioners against the practice;
- Legitimise campaigns against FGM in the field;
- Punish all those involved or associated with the act;
- Domesticating existing conventions, covenants and agreements (CEDAW, and CRC, African Protocol) related to the practice ratified by Cameroon;
- Adhere to the UN Joint Plan and Action to eradicate FGM in the world.

The presentation took about 9 minutes and reactions lasted for about 1 hour 18 minutes.

Reactions from guests were preceded by a testimony from an FGM victim from the Northern Province. In her testimony, the victim recounted the painful nature of FGM, which she underwent when she was six years old. She also feared that her inability to conceive after two years of marriage could be a consequence of FGM. She however wished that such a deadly practice should be completely eradicated from Cameroon.



Her Excellency Janet E. Garvey, the US Ambassador presenting her paper, the 1st Console for British High Commission, His Excellency the Vice PM, Minister of Justice, the 2nd and 3rd Vice Presidents of the National Assembly, and other stake holders listening keenly to the CYJULERC'S National Coordinator.

REACTIONS

Reactions to the presentation was open up by the Vice Prime, Minister of Justice – His Excellency Amadu Ali; he expressed complete rejection of FGM, observing that the negative effects of FGM on women greatly out ways the justifications given by perpetrators of the act. He said the entire Penal Code will be modified including Section 277 which had been modified by CYJULERC and proposed to the participants to table at the National Assembly for adoption. This was followed US Ambassador's and the representative of the British High Commissioner's papers.

The US Ambassador expressed the United State commitment to the UN joint plan of actions to eradicate FGM in the world. She concluded by congratulating CYJULERC for its tremendous effort towards the eradication of FGM in Cameroon. She also commended the efforts of some members of parliaments, especially Honourable Rose Abunaw, who is working hand in glove with CYJULERC in the fight against FGM in Cameroon.

On her part, the representative of the British High Commissioner to Cameroon, highlight a series of projects, funded by the British High Commission and executed by CYJULERC in some communities which practice FGM in Cameroon, as alternative sources of income to those who carried our FGM as a source of income generation. These include introduction of snail farming the some communities in Manyu Division, etc. she equally congratulated CYJULERC for its activism in the fights against FGM in Cameroon. Other reactions came from the 2nd Vice President of the National Assembly who represented the Speaker of the National Assembly. The 3rd Vice President of the National Assembly, Mrs Rose Abunaw Makia also reacted and narrated all she has been doing with CYJULERC to fight against FGM. Many members of parliament who were present there intimated their willingness to see FGM eradicated in Cameroon.

Reactions from other participants centred on the discriminatory and inhuman nature of the FGM. The audience condemned the discriminatory attitude of some parents who allow their daughters to undergo such a deadly and painful exercise. The audience also

reacted positive to the amendment of section 277 of the penal code, to include punishments for perpetrators of FGM. This idea was justified by the drastic drop in the prevalence of FGM in countries that have adopted a law against the practice, such as Nigeria, Central African Republic, Chad, etc.

Reactions lasted till 11:26am before the moderator closed the workshop. This was followed by radio and television interviews; the CYJULERC team left the premises at about 12:20am and to return to Buea the same day.

OBSERVATIONS

The representatives of the communities said the project and the mills in particular for they will not only provide income for the women they will alleviate the suffering of the women and girls who spend a whole day to grind cereals manually for household meals. They said the young girls will be encourage to go to school now since they will not need to spend the time on grind cereals.

CYJULERC observed that there is an urgent need for adult education to enable the indigenes to communicate with the organization so we encouraged them to start adult literacy classes in their village communities during the sensitization phase of the project. Some women in some five (5) village communities have started classes but they are unable to pay the teachers regularly. They pleaded for support from CYJULERC to continue the literacy classes for they needed them to be able to manage any income generating activities.

That no woman or girl could write, and very few boys and men could write and there were very few schools in the communities and this explain why there is a very high illiteracy level.

RESOLUTIONS

The women took the following resolutions:

- To remain committed to the fight against FGM until the practice is ERADICATED.
- CYJULERC resolved to organize adult elementary classes for the women in their various villages so as to permit them read and write as such they will be able to manage their groups
- The Prime Minister, Minister of Justice resolved to amend Section 277 of the penal code to punish FGM when amending the code which will soon be amended.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That CYJULERC should extend the project to all the Arabe Choa and Sara village communities and create a Union of anti-FGM associations, made up of all the representatives of the village communites in the Logone and Chari Division

- That some alternative income generating activities be provided to the old women who practice circumcision for the eradication process to succeed, for they gain material and financial benefits. They will certainly resist eradication if they have no other source of income;
- That the men should be included in the FGM eradication campaign for they have a strong role to play in the lives of their wives and girl children
- All the speakers at the workshop agreed that FGM was very bad and a law was necessary to stop it.
- That adult literacy classes be instituted in the communities;
- That children especially girls, should be sent to school.



CYJULERC's National Coordinator, Mme Ayuk Esther, granting an interview to the press after the Advocacy Workshop at the United States Embassy



Mrs Nathalie Lell, the Project Coordinator for Democracy and Human Rights Fund at the US Embassy, with FGM victims and CYJULERC team after the Advocacy Workshop at the Embassy, November 19, 2007

RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FGM PROJECT

20 anti-FGM village associations in Ejagham and 33 in Arabe Choa; and 2 Unions of anti-FGM associations were created;

- The project exposed the fact that FGM was still practiced in Cameroon to the world, more communities were courageous to speak-out, the FGM topic was no longer a taboo; and it marked effective beginning of action to eradicate FGM in Cameroon;
- The project revealed the existence of the 1997 UN joint plan of action on the eradication of FGM in the world to the Cameroonian society;
- The project also revealed that despite the 10 years UN plan of action, nothing had been done 8 years later and there is neither a law against FGM nor a specific plan of action in Cameroon as required;
- Parliamentarians, Ministers and Diplomats in Cameroon got involved in the FGM eradication process and the Minister of Women Empowerment and the Family organized an enlarged meeting with practitioners, victims, NGOs and other stake holders to draft a National Plan of Action;
- United Nations agencies represented in Cameroon got the true picture of FGM in Cameroon through this project and have resolved to support FGM eradication process as provided by the UN joint plan of action;
- A Bill to criminalize FGM in Cameroon was drafted and presented to Female Members of Parliament to table in the National Assembly for adoption. The workshop exposed the fact that there was No Law to punish FGM in Cameroon while all its three neighbors, Chad, Nigeria and Central African Republic had Laws against FGM. The bill has since become the topic of

The Success Story of FGM Project:

The project was considered a success story for it had an overwhelming and unexpected impact from the level of the grass root communities, to the highest level of the Cameroonian society, that is, the policy makers. It did not only expose the realities of the fact that FGM is still practiced in Cameroon, it also gives the true picture of the situation, that is, the practice in the communities, what has been so far by various actors and what ought to have been done since 1997.

A success story because, many stakeholders; the Parliamentarians, Diplomats and Ministers became interested in the issue, got involved and are prepared to lend support to ensure FGM is eradicated in Cameroon. The US Ambassador has urged Cameroonian stake holders, Ministers and Parliamentarians to adopt the draft bill to punish FGM in Cameroon at a workshop under her auspices and attended by the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, 2 Vice Presidents of the National Assembly, Ministers, UN Representatives, Diplomats and many stake holders.

The FGM issue has since become the topic on the agenda of many stake holders and the national and international media also got very interested in the project and they exposed the project to the world as 15 web sites reported the project in the world wide search,

“Google” (internet) and 24 web sites reported in “Yahoo Search” (internet). Just log “cyjulerc” into the two sites and you will find articles on our work in various languages. This project also contributed to earn CYJULERC an International Prize on Creativity in Rural Life awarded by a Switzerland based NGO, Women’s World Summit Foundation (WWSF). Please see <http://www.woman.ch/women/1-laureates.php#> for more information.

(3) Snails domestication as an alternative source of income for women in communities which practice Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Manyu Division of Cameroon, funded by British High Commission for Cameroon.

The Snails Domestication project was aimed at creating alternative income generating activities within the Ejagham and Akwaya communities which still practice FGM in Cameroon. These are communities made up of very poor people, most of them living below the poverty level. Their poverty makes them vulnerable to all sorts of abuses. There are practitioners who live on the act of female circumcision. They are paid to circumcise the girls. In most of the villages all the girl children are circumcised.

There was a need to create an alternative income for these practitioners. We strongly feel there should be an activity which addresses immediate needs of women in these communities for any civic education to be effective. Moreover the sensitization projects consist of the creation of Anti-FGM Groups in all the regions to sustain the eradication process for 10 years. There is nothing which can keep poverty stricken persons together and more committed to a course than a sustained income generating activity.

The **main goal** of this project was to improve local incomes of women in these regions by creating a sustainable alternative income generating activity which will promote and sustain the sensitization process on the eradication of FGM .in these areas without endangering the environment.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the project is to provide the women with new income generating activities that will empower them economically and socially thus permitting the women to regain their self esteem and sit up so they can put an end to this discriminatory practice of FGM meant to marginalize and subordinate them under men.

The project will substantially increase the incomes of the women in the short, medium and longer terms. It is going to create self employment, improve the living standards of the women and alleviate poverty amongst rural women in these localities.

Domesticating snails will not only provide income for the women; it will act as a regular and readily available source of proteins thus creating food security in these regions. Snail domestication will reduce poaching of wildlife as such the environment will be protected.

This project will,generate income, promote economic growth in the regions, provide food security for the communities thus improving the standards of living of families and reduce poaching in the regions thus protecting the wildlife and the environment.

ACTIVITIES

This report was based on; the establishment of one **Snail Multiplication facility** in the Ejagham community and **Training of group representatives**.

One snail multiplication farm was established to serve as a parent farm which has been providing snails to the female groups for breeding and marketing to the communities. Land was acquired, pens for breeding, fattening and hatching were constructed; preparation of land and laying out snails pens, and stocking pens was done. Land of 30 x 20 m dimension was acquired at Mfuni, one of the villages of the Ejagham community for the construction of the snails' multiplication farm. CYJULERC decided to establish the snails multiplication farm in Mfuni because it is centrally located for the Ejagham and Boki communities which still practice Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

CONSTRUCTION OF VARIOUS TYPES OF PENS

There were two types of pens constructed in the farm. One type was constructed entirely with Indian bamboos which are found in abundance in the forest of the Manyu Division. The other type is constructed with wood and mosquitoes nets.

The **Indian Bamboo pen** is constructed entirely with local material got from the forest. The advantage of this pen is that the material is readily available to the community. They do not need money to build the pens. However the disadvantage of this type of pen is that, young snails cannot be stocked in it for they will escape through the space between the bamboos. They are used only for adult snails. Another disadvantage is the short lifespan of the pen. The Indian bamboos and the ropes easily give way as they are subjected to water and sun. It is also more difficult to construct. See Indian bamboo pen below:

Construction of Indian Bamboo pen



Below is a sample of an Indian Bamboo pen



The **second type of pen** was constructed with wood, cement and mosquitoes nets. The pen was constructed with wood, cement and mosquitoes nets. Though easier to construct, the community needs money to buy the material. It is the best pen for snails for it harbours snails of all ages. Its duration is very long for the wood can last for many years. The mosquitoes net can be replaced when necessary.

Twenty (20) large pens, each replacing three pens of the original size, were constructed to minimize the surface area used. See pens below.

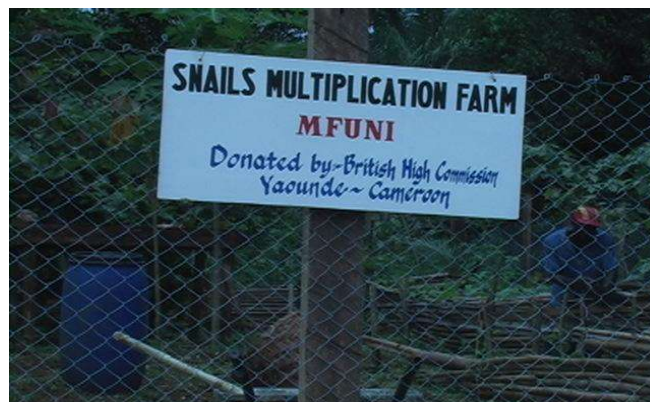


Please, see construction of the pen as demonstrated to the women during the training workshop below:

When the farm was constructed we discovered that there was no security for the snails. Though there was no provision for a fence we thought it was necessary build a fence round the farm to provide security for the snails. See a front view of the farm below.



The front-view of the Snails Multiplication Farm





The side view of the Snails Multiplication Farm

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON SNAIL DOMESTICATION

The workshop on snail domestication held on the 22-23 September, 2006. It was divided into two parts; the theoretical and the practical parts.

The theoretical training part of the workshop started with **registration** of identified groups and the registration of all the participants present.

Nineteen (19) women's group came from nineteen (19) villages with a total of one hundred and seventy-one (171) participants registered far above the target number of sixty (60). Many women came who were not invited and did not belong to groups. They said, they were very interested in snail domestication for it is a delicious but rare food item within the Manyu community, that is why they attended the workshop though they were not invited.

Thirty –five (35) members of the Mfuni village traditional Council, the village head inclusive, took part in the opening ceremony and Chief Takang of Mfuni inaugurated the farm. Sixty-five (65) men from Mfuni and four neighbouring villages participated in the workshop without haven been invited. They queried why only women were invited. They said snails are such an important foodstuff in Manyu Division that every person needs to be trained in its farming.

There were about three hundred (300) women and some one hundred (100) men who attended the seminar and present in the hall. Others stayed out for the hall for they could not accommodate all those who came.

The field extension worker for the Central Ejagham community came without an invitation. He said snails domestication is very important to the Manyu community for the Division has no constant source of protein. He said the community complained that the piggery project introduced in the area was very expensive and they had no money to keep pigs. He intimated snails farming should done by every person for they do not need

much money to rear snails.

He commended CYJULERC for the wonderful initiative and prayed that more training workshops be organized as soon as possible to enable more women start farming snails. He pleaded with CYJULERC not to train only women for men are equally in need of protein and income from the sales of snails.



Participants listening attentively To CYJULERC's National Coordinator

The opening ceremony was marked by presence of the Mfuni traditional authorities. The village head in his speech, lauded the wonderful initiative of CYJULERC and The British High Commission in Cameroon. He cautioned the participants to take the training seriously for it will not only generate income, it will make an impact on the lives of the population, for it will provide a source of readily available protein in the community. The Mfuni village traditional council moved to the Snails Multiplication Farm for inauguration, ushered by the Tabong quarter women's dance group.



The Mfuni village head and a cross section of the traditional council at the workshop

The theoretical part of the workshop continued with lectures on the following topics: Steps in setting up a snail farm, Food and feeding, Management and record keeping, Problems in snails farming, Importance of snails farming.

The workshop was interactive and participatory, considering the fact that the community is acquainted with snails. The innovation is the fact that snails can be domesticated. The snails consumed in the community are picked from the forest and they are almost extinct as the forest is almost non-existent. All the forest has been transform into farmland for food crops.

Participants shared their experiences and one man who came without invitation recounted his experiences in trying to keep 300 snails which snails all died.



Women listening attentively to the lectures during the snails training workshop



The field extension worker and Nat Coo

The expert in Snail farming giving lectures at the workshop



TRAINING GROUP REPRESENTATIVES AND PARTICIPANTS

Practical workshop

The women moved to the farm for the practical part of the workshop. They were many as such they were held along the fence of the farm for some minutes to permit every participant follow-up and see all the preliminary demonstrations made by the technician. See photographs below.



Participants constructed a wood/net pen; prepared and laid some pens; stocked them with snails and fed the snails.

Construction of **wood/net pen**



Above are photographs of participants taking active part in the construction of a wood/net pens



The **President of Ejagham Union of Anti-female Genital Mutilation Associations** fitting the mosquitoes net onto the wood with nails during the training workshop as other women watch.

PREPARATION AND LAYING OUT OF PENS

Women were taught how to prepare pens for snails. Each identified group was assigned to prepare a pen. The other women and men who did not belong to any group were distributed into groups as per villages and quarters and assigned to prepare pens. See photographs below:

Below is **Mbakem Anti-FGM Association's** representative and **Ntenako group, made up of 11 CIGs** preparing their pen.



The man filling the pen has once kept 300 snails but they all died because he did not know how to keep them. He told his story during the theoretical part of the workshop. He said when he heard that the training was for women only he made up his mind to come though he was not invited because of the importance of snails to their community.

STOCKING OF PENS WITH SNAILS AND FEEDING

After preparing the pens, the women stocked their various pens with snails and fed them with pawpaw and vegetables. See photograph below.



The photographs above show snails in the pens

The participants saw the various species and the various sizes of snails. They also saw snails of different ages. Eggs management was equally demonstrated. See photographs below.



Demonstration of egg management as exhibited to the right.



Demonstration of care for young snails.
See ten (10) days old snails on the resource person's palm.



Below is the demonstration of snail reproductive age and eggs and three months old snails at the beginning of reproductive age



Above are mature snails ready for the market

RESULTS OF THE SNAILS' FARMING PROJECT

The project had a remarkable success which was unexpected for there was an overwhelming response from the population. Due to the lack of regular and affordable sources of protein in the region, it was not feasible to limit the project to FGM practitioners only.

About 600 women and men from 25 villages were trained in Snails Farming and about some 30 individual and group Snails' Farms have been set up in the region.

It has since become a project that provides food for household consumption, income for the men and women, an alternative source of income for FGM practitioners and it also promotes forest conservation as it reduces poaching.

The project also motivated the government to start a wide program on Snails' Farming in the country and the Ministry of Livestock has embarked on its vulgarization in the whole country.

(4) CHILD PROTECTION AND FIGHT AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING

In collaboration with the Arch Diocese of Manfe, CYJULERC has to start a **legal aid project on Child Betrothal in two tribes** of the Akwaya Sud-Division and in the Lebialem Division in December 2006. In these communities, girls as young as five (5) are betrothed, and some are used as collateral for debts by their parents. Some are sent to forced marriages either in exchange for debt or for the dowry to be used to send the boys to school. These communities are enclave with very bad road network. The inhabitants are very poor with an average family of 7 living on less than \$2 US a day. There is a very high rate of birth in these regions for girls and women are considered as baby makers and they are meant to take care of the men. The girls have no right to education that is why those who revolt are not welcome in their parents' home. They seek refuge with relatives until their dowry is refunded to their husbands and can be liberated only when this is done.



CYJULERC team en route to Akwaya with Project Coord. MIVA Netherlands to visit the Girl-Child trafficking project



CYJULERC team and MIVA Project Coordinator visiting the Catholic Mission primary school, the Catholic Health Center and the Catholic vocational training center in Akwaya.





Above Judith Macho was sold for 60 000FCFA (\$120) at 9 years and Magdalene used to pay a 250 000FCFA (\$500) debt at 8 years, on the day they narrated their ordeal to Fr Leonard, the Akwaya Parish Catholic Priest, 2005.



Judith and Magdalene, carrying their kids during our visit, June 2007; with just two years of assistance, from CYJULERC and Catholic Church, the change in their lives and health is visible. Judith who had never been to school, was enrolled into Catholic primary school Akwaya and she received double promotion at the end of last school year so she is class 4 now. Magdalene is enrolled in the Catholic Vocational training center in Akwaya.

RESULTS OF THE AKWAYA PROJECT

Six (6) girls are free from the bondage their parents subjected them to. Their bride prices have been refunded to the men and they no longer live in hiding. They have been re-inserted into their families.

Three are in Secondary Schools out of Akwaya with part support from CYJULERC.

Two are in a Vocational Training Center and the one who never had the opportunity to attend primary school is in her third year in the Catholic Primary school Akwaya.

Our plan of action for them is three fold; in collaboration with the Mamfe Diocese, intensive sensitization of the all the communities; financial support to liberate the girls and educate them and finally to re-insert them into their families and society.

We will also prosecute new cases for it is a criminal offence punished by the Cameroon penal code.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

- Difficulties in reaching target communities;
- Difficulties in communicating with some target population;
- Limited strategies to raise needed funds to carry out our activities;
- Insufficient funding from donors.

You can also see annexure “A”, our 2006 – 2007 annual report.

PERSPECTIVES: Please see annexure “B” our Strategic Plan.