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E-mail: [helpdesk@cri-project.eu](mailto:helpdesk@cri-project.eu)

# COUNTRY SHEET CAMEROON

November  
2008

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The Country Sheet name of country is a product of the CRI project.

CRI-country sheets are prepared mainly on the basis of publicly available information, completed with data gathered by local partners in the specific countries, and will be updated periodically.

Our local partners in Cameroon are:

- CRAT: a non governmental organisation with its main office in Yaoundé. It provides facilitating and catalytic services, such as counselling to IDP's, health counselling and treatment, as well as psychosocial interventions to vulnerable groups such as refugees, prisoners and victims of torture
- HAFI : a non governmental organisation with its main office in Yaoundé. It promote the defence of women and children rights.

## FOREWORD

The Italian Council for Refugees - in collaboration both with the Centre for the Rehabilitation and Abolition of Torture (CRAT) and Hope for African Family Initiative (HAFI) - did gather relevant information on the Republic of Cameroon.

The first fact-finding mission was carried out in Yaoundè city - from 22<sup>nd</sup> of August to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008

- A second mission was carried out in the city of Douala, from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2008.

The research was carried out using a questionnaire covering different topics, regarding women; children; elderly people and people with disabilities.

Interviews were generally conducted with experts in their respective fields, government officials, medical and religious groups, NGOs and private establishments.

Some of the consulted sources have consented to the use of the information provided on condition of staying anonymous. In those cases, efforts have been done to corroborate the information given.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon guarantees protection to indigenous populations and minority groups in its attempt to ensure a society free from discrimination. There are few specialised centres or institutions for vulnerable groups in Cameroon, dispersed over the national territory.

Apart from States initiatives, some NGOs, Churches and Associations also work for the benefit of vulnerable persons, running orphanages and specialised centres. All of these operate according to the laws and regulations in force related to the mandate of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS)<sup>1</sup>. Such institutions are entitled to receive State subventions but only a minority of them have access to those, as conditions for eligibility are demanding and the procedure is rather long.

Though provisions, included in various laws, vulnerable persons are entitled to some advantages such as, for example, free health care, and exemption from school fees. They are often unable to enjoy these privileges because of difficult access to quality services. The social assistance system is slow also due to the fact that these groups generally suffer from some form of social exclusion.

In his book of political thought entitled “Communal Liberalism” published in 1987, Paul BIYA, stated that

*“If modern Cameroonian society, the dawn and development of which we are heralding, were not nurtured on its numerous and enriching traditional values, it would be a giant with feet of clay. One of these fundamental values is the community spirit, presented here as the duty of solidarity”.*

Though the government of Cameroon is still active on National Solidarity, there are indications that Cameroonians are shifting from a spirit of national solidarity to individualism, as it is reflected by the breakdown of family structures and social processes, deteriorating relationships between men and women, and the disintegration of necessary support systems. Customary structures or processes, while still familiar and appealing, may no longer be entirely functional, given the shifting values of Cameroon society. At the same time, profound economic changes have caused migration of men, thus increasing the number of unmarried mothers and women-run single parent house-holds, leading to an array of potentially conflicting new rules and practices, and consequently, for example, the increasing phenomena of street children, abandoned elderly persons etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Decree # 77 - stating the conditions of creation and functioning / operation of apolitical private social structures, 7 December, 1977, chapter 4, sections 1 and 2

## CHAPTER 1

### Returnees with special needs

#### 1.1 Women

##### 1.1.1 Special risks faced by women

Different forms of violence:<sup>2</sup>

- *Domestic violence* - Wife battering is not prohibited by law. However, a woman can file a complaint under the assault provision of the Cameroonian penal code, which is however precarious as the traditional set up generally considers that a man has disciplinary rights over his wife and the government does not effectively enforce the law in cases of assault on women.

Spousal abuse is not a legal ground for divorce. In cases of sexual assault, the victim's family or village often imposed direct, summary punishment on the suspected perpetrator through extralegal means, ranging from destruction of property to beating.

- *Sexual violence* - It is very common while in prison, by hands prison officials and sometimes of male prisoners under condition of promiscuity.

- *Rape* - though punishable by law, 'whosoever compels a female whether below or above the age of puberty to have sex with him ...'<sup>3</sup> the victims however remain silent to avoid social stigmatisation. In case of marital rape, it is generally not recognised under customary law as an offence because when a woman gets married she consents to sexual intercourse with her husband at any time. This is a case of conflict between written laws and local habits.

- HIV/AIDS - according to SWAA (Society for Women and AIDS in Africa) Cameroon, women are victims of infidelity, sexual abuse, rape, lack of respect, financial poverty, prostitution, and divorce, which make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmissible diseases<sup>4</sup>

##### HIV/AIDS in Cameroon<sup>5</sup>

Population, 2007	18,100,000
People living with HIV/AIDS, 2005	510,000
Women (aged 15+) with HIV/AIDS 2005	290,000
Children with HIV/AIDS, 2005	43,000
Adult HIV prevalence (%), 2005	5.4
New HIV infections, 2005	nd
AIDS deaths, 2005	46,000
nd = No data	

<sup>2</sup>CRAT Interview with Paschaline Fonyuy Tar, Executive Secretary CAWOLED. Douala, Sept. 2008

<sup>3</sup>Cameroon penal code, section 296

<sup>4</sup>HAFI interview with Society for Women and AIDS in Africa Cameroon, Yaounde

<sup>5</sup>Population Reference Bureau and [USAID 2006 and update 2007](http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2007/2007WorldPopulationDataSheet.aspx) [Accessed 24 October 2008]

Estimates by UNAIDS/WHO shows that HIV/AIDS interests mainly the population between 15 and 45 years representing 5.1% with 543,294 persons infected.<sup>6</sup>

Some Useful contacts:

Dr. Maurice Fezeu  
Permanent Secretary, NACC  
Ministry of Public Health  
Tel: (237) 22 22 57 57  
Fax : (237) 22 23 34 39  
[mauricefe@yahoo.fr](mailto:mauricefe@yahoo.fr)

Dr. Etienne Nnomzo'o  
Assistant Permanent Secretary, NACC  
[nnomzoo@yahoo.fr](mailto:nnomzoo@yahoo.fr)

Obnoxious obligatory cultural practices:<sup>7</sup>

- *Widowhood practices* - Cameroon has over 250 ethnic groups and an overabundance of native laws and habits such as the hideous rite linked to widowhood. Widows in different parts of the country go through varied treatments once their husbands die, some of which are repugnant. The rationale for the traditions of widowhood rites, according to its adherents, is meant to purify the widow from ill fortune provoked by her husband's death. This purification which takes different forms according to cultures, includes - amongst others - sleeping on uncovered floor, eating with unwashed hands, dancing nude and, at times, avoiding to take a bath for weeks. In some cultures, widows are not allowed to talk to or greet anybody, stay or sleep alone at home.

The Committee of Assistance to Needy women of Cameroon (CAFENEC), a NGO, is carrying out sensitisation campaigns on the problematic conditions of widows.

- *Female genital mutilation* - a harmful traditional practice involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia. It includes the most severe form of abuse, infibulation, usually practiced on preadolescent girls. The Government has criticized the practice; however, no law prohibiting FGM is implemented. At present, the practice of FGM by groups is tending to decline, albeit slowly. This is due to its condemnation by the State -even if not prohibited by law, the discreet but effective influence of the NGOs and the threat of HIV.

FGM continues to be practiced especially in the Ejagham tribe of the South West Province and the Hausas and Araphous in Northern Cameroon. Furthermore, migration contributed to the spread of FGM to different parts of the country. Public health centres in areas where FGM is frequently practiced counselled women on the harmful consequences of FGM; however, the government did not prosecute any one for performing FGM.

- *Breast ironing* - a practice that involves pounding and massaging the developing breasts of young girls (pre-pubescent women) with heated objects - most commonly spatulas (24%) and stones (20%) to try and make breasts disappear. Organisations such as the National Network of the Association of Aunties (Réseau National des Associations de Tantines, RENATA - [www.tantines.info](http://www.tantines.info)), the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Family, and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ - [www.gtz.de/en](http://www.gtz.de/en)) are conducting a campaign to educate mothers and daughters on the dangers involved.<sup>8</sup> Statistics show that 26% of Cameroonian girls at puberty undergo this practice.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>6</sup> Cameroon, 'Mise en Oeuvre de la d'Engagement sur le VIH/Sida', Progress Report N° 3 UNGASS, National AIDS Control Committee, Pages 12-17

<sup>7</sup> CRAT interview with the Provincial Chief of statistics at the Delegation of Women Empowerment and Family for the Littoral. Douala, Sept. 2008

<sup>8</sup> Breast ironing in Cameroon. Women in Africa Bear A Painful Tradition by Roxy Varza, Assistant Editor. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/5107360.stm>



Association of Women Against Violence continued to conduct a program in Maroua to assist victims of FGM and their families and to educate local populations.

Trafficking and Exploitation - Cameroon is a source, transit and destination country. Also serving as a source for the women transferred to Europe through sex-trafficking rings. The law does not prohibit all forms of human trafficking in spite of reports of persons trafficked to, from, and within the country. The law criminalises child trafficking and slavery and prohibits slavery, prostitution, forced labour, and other crimes related to human trafficking but the government does not include the victims of trafficking among vulnerable groups nor does it monitor the number of the intercepted victims.<sup>10</sup>

Cameroon, has been included on the *Tier 2 Watch List* for having failed to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat human trafficking in 2007, particularly in terms of efforts to prosecution and conviction of offenders. Specifically, Cameroon reported some arrests of traffickers, but none of them were prosecuted or punished.

### 1.1.2 Special forms of support available for women in a vulnerable situation

#### 1.1.2.1 Single women (with no children)

#### 1.1.2.2 Widows (with no children)

#### 1.1.2.3 Female-headed households with children born within wedlock

#### 1.1.2.4 Female-headed households with children born without wedlock

In Cameroon, the Constitution does not provide for women as household heads, except when the husband dies or he is unable to encounter his responsibilities. State employed women belonging to this category will benefit from the family allowance scheme of the public service.

Private sector employees may also benefit from the above mentioned allowance, when the employers adhere to the Cameroon Labour Code (a great number do not adhere to it and proper disciplinary measures are seldom applied)<sup>11</sup>. Other sources<sup>12</sup>, however, contradict the statement that a woman cannot be head of a family especially where a marriage was contracted, even in case of death of the spouse. This is due to the provision of widow inheritance (Levirate) under common law; where a widow is expected to marry her husband's brother. This customary practice is contrary to Article 77(2) of the 1981 Ordinance, which permits a widow to freely re-marry without any of her deceased husband's relatives laying any claims to her. Assistance is judicial for divorce.<sup>13</sup>

The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF)<sup>14</sup> coordinate any special support to women in Cameroon and there is little or no distinction as to whether they are single/widow with or without children, household heads with children born in/out of wedlock.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://current.com/items/88852332\\_breast\\_ironing](http://current.com/items/88852332_breast_ironing)

<sup>10</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (Content source); Lakhdar Boukerrou (Topic Editor). 2008. "Cameroon." In: Encyclopedia of Earth. Eds. Cutler J. Cleveland (Washington, D.C.: Environmental Information Coalition, National Council for Science and the Environment). [First published in the Encyclopedia of Earth August 7, 2008; Last revised August 23, 2008; Retrieved October 24, 2008].

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.eoearth.org/article/Cameroon>

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Mr Bakalack David of the Divisional Service of Social Affairs Akwa - September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> 2008

<sup>13</sup> Women in Alternative Action, organization based in Yaounde

<sup>14</sup> HAFI Interview with the Association for the Promotion and Defence of the Rights of the Women (APDF), Yaoundé 2008

<sup>15</sup> CRAT Interview with personnel, Provincial Delegation of Women's Empowerment and Family for the Center, Sub Directorate for family Welfare.

There are policies to empower women, but there is no specific policy for sub-groups such as single women, widows etc. However, any woman in a vulnerable position can receive some form of assistance depending on the problem at hand. For example a widow is entitled to 50% or 100% (depending on the existence of children) of her husband's old age pension (if eligible before death), otherwise she is entitled to the survivor pension. This pension only ceases in case of re-marriage.

This Ministry generally carries out the following activities amongst others:

- Sensitisation of communities against female genital mutilation
- Educative and sensitisation programmes on the use of condoms, targeting groups such as prostitutes and widows.
- Training women and young girls aiming at self-employment in Women Empowerment and Family Centres (WEC) through Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPIC) funds
- Preparing youths for marriage through counselling
- Financial and material support to widows at re-opening of the school year
- Granting micro credits within the framework of Rural Family Revenue Improvement Programme funded by the African Development Bank
- Development of support projects for rural women groups through the creation of pilot units for the transformation and preservation of agricultural and livestock products (cassava, fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, spices, ... )

- **The Delegation of Women Empowerment and Family for the Littoral<sup>15</sup>**  
B. P. 202 Douala  
Tel: (237) 33 42 68 51 / 33 42 68 49

Works according to the Ministry's five priority areas:

- Improving women's living condition
- Improving the legal status of women
- Promoting equality and whereas possible equity
- Promoting family welfare
- Reinforcing institutional structures and mechanisms of good governance

In the light of the above, the Delegation encourages solidarity actions in partnership with companies, groups and individuals, such as:

- Occasional free will donations to widows and unmarried women with children (food, school fees)
- Financial and material assistance in the case of twins especially for the low-income families
- Counselling and orientation in favour of couples with marital problems in order to promote family welfare especially as the State does not encourage divorce and seeks to limit disintegration of the family unit.
- Legal assistance especially in favour of non informed women
- Encouraging and sponsoring collective/community marriages for women living in concubinage.
- Encouraging women to create community farms and cooperatives in small groups (3 to 5 persons) for which subventions up to 200,000 FCFA (307.69 EUR) are provided and are refundable in the long term.
- Encouragement to mount projects for sponsorship.
- Training for self-employment in Women Empowerment Centres (WEC<sup>16</sup>).

- **Women Empowerment and Family Centre (WEC/CPFF)<sup>17</sup>**

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<sup>15</sup> Provincial Chief of statistics at the Delegation of Women Empowerment and Family for the Littoral. Douala, Sept. 2008

<sup>16</sup> Decree # 2000/001/PM - on the organization and functioning of WEC/CPFF, 8 June, 2000

Tel: Director, (237) 96 58 24 91

Tel: Office, (237) 77 03 63 03/79 30 44 92; 8:00am to 2:00pm

This centre has the objective to educate, train and facilitate the socio-economic inclusion of young girls/women, also through elaboration and financing of micro-projects.

*Mission*

- Moral, civic, intellectual and professional training
- Education to the spirit of entrepreneurship
- Ideation and management of projects
- Reproductive and preventive health education
- Financing of micro projects
- Family counselling and follow-up

*Target Groups* Young girls, women, adults and families

*Branches* Textile and Clothing  
Catering and Hotel management  
Computing  
Hairdressing  
smoking of fish and chicken  
soap manufacture  
dyeing  
sewing  
handicraft  
elaboration and management of projects

*Professional Training*<sup>18</sup>

Monday - Friday 7:30am to 3:30pm

Registration:42,500 FCFA (65.38 EUR), non refundable

➤ Telephone INFOLINE Program "SOS Family SOS FAMILLE"<sup>19</sup>

Tel: (237) 22 06 94 17

This is a timely assistance desk of the provincial delegation of women empowerment and the family based in Douala, responding to all kinds of problems affecting women or children with relation to any form of violence against them. Victims who do not find an immediate solution to their problems are referred to social workers for in depth interviews.

The Ministry of Social affairs (MINAS) also carries out other activities in favour of women especially mothers of vulnerable children<sup>20</sup>. It encourages the creation of associations of especially poor widows, informs on the dangerous widowhood practices and provides financial and material assistance especially at re-opening of the schools.

### 1.1.3 International/Charity Organisations or NGOs with particular programmes for vulnerable women

- Women in Alternative Action (WAA)<sup>21</sup>  
Nsimeyong, Face College Vogt-Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 15 93 17

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Mbogbe Abenoun Angele Marie, CPFF Douala

<sup>18</sup> CRAT interview with Mbogbe Mbogbe nee N. Mbenoun Angele Marie

<sup>19</sup> HAFI Telephone interview with INFOLINE receptionist, "SOS FAMILLE" call help desk, always ready 24/24hours a day.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with a Social Assistant, "Brigade de Controle", Divisional Delegation of Social Affairs for Wouri

<sup>21</sup> CRAT Correspondence with Kwachu Justin, Yaoundé in Sept. 2008

E-mail: [waacameroon@yahoo.com](mailto:waacameroon@yahoo.com)

WAA seeks to alleviate destitution of women through poverty reduction schemes, literacy, integration, protection of women's rights and raising awareness on gender based violence. It also supports victims of violation and abuse and helps prosecuting those responsible for such crimes.

- Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA)<sup>22</sup>  
B. P. 5607 Douala  
Tel/Fax: (237) 33 42 32 43 / 77 70 72 25  
E-mail: [swaalittoral@yahoo.fr](mailto:swaalittoral@yahoo.fr)
- Society for Women and AIDS in Africa  
Pharmacy Mandela Building, Opposite CHU  
B. P. 8046 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 31 52 35 / 99 66 13 90  
E-mail: [swaacameroon@yahoo.fr](mailto:swaacameroon@yahoo.fr)

SWAA Cameroon advocates on behalf of women, children and families in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It mobilises the community by strengthening its capacity to prevent, control and mitigate the impact of the pandemic through information and education. It provides medical and psychosocial support (care, counselling) to HIV/AIDS seropositive persons and their families, free consultations and care for infected persons.

- African Women's Association (AWA)<sup>23</sup>  
Rue 1095 Etoa Meki  
B. P. 14075 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 21 97 26  
E-mail: [awa21@hotmail.com](mailto:awa21@hotmail.com)
- Amour du Prochain<sup>24</sup>  
Sis 125, Rue La Perousse Plateau Joss, Akwa  
B. P. 5848 Douala  
Tel: (237) 33 43 41 93  
Fax: (237) 33 43 41 27  
E-mail: [info@amourduprochain.net](mailto:info@amourduprochain.net)  
Website: [www.amourduprochain.net](http://www.amourduprochain.net)

Amour du Prochain promotes assistance (financial, material), solidarity and moral/ psycho-intellectual well being. Its activities are multidimensional but focus on vulnerable cases. Generally, it supports people through other organisations and affiliated NGOs, providing - amongst others - the following services:

- Save and assist the sick, street children, the handicapped, widows and prisoners
- Promote social integrity amongst the vulnerable
- Provide opportunity to underprivileged children to be trained for a job
- Empower women

Affiliated NGOs can apply for a maximum of 2,000,000 FCFA (3076.93 EUR) to assist the vulnerable within the framework of their activities.

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<sup>22</sup> CRAT Interview with Dr. Sanga Margaret, National Secretary general, President, SWAA Littoral, Sept. 2008

<sup>23</sup> CRAT Interview with Manga Marie Mathilde, President of African Women Association Yaoundé

<sup>24</sup> CRAT Interview with Petit Ngwa, IT and Communications Officer, Amour du Prochain, Bonanjo-Douala, Sept. 2008

However, Amour du Prochain, occasionally, supports individuals (especially youths) in critical situations; widows of men died while protecting the flag/state; mothers with twin children; victims of accidents. Public Health and Social Affairs usually refer the elderly. Other gestures include: Christmas presents to orphans, provision of school materials to children of very poor homes.

- Cameroon Women in Leadership and Development (CAWOLED)<sup>25</sup>  
P. O. Box 357 Douala  
Tel: (237) 77 53 69 55 / 44 43 34 48  
E-mail: [cawoled@msn.com](mailto:cawoled@msn.com) / [passytar@yahoo.fr](mailto:passytar@yahoo.fr)

It seeks to promote leadership and gender training; protect girl children against exploitation and violence; provide grassroots civic education to women and youths; raise women and young girls awareness in human rights and good governance; enhance information sharing, communication and exchange with women information and research programmes.

CAWOLED acts in the following areas:

- Capacity building
- Mobilisation for advocacy
- Education in partnership with other sectors
- Research

Therefore, CAWOLED acts as a facilitator and promoter, identifying groups, their problems and space for help.

- Cameroon Association of Female Jurists / Association Camerounaise des Femmes Juristes (ACAFEJ)  
2<sup>eme</sup> Etage Immeuble CECPROM,  
Akwa Douala (Face Pharmacie des Portiques)  
Tel: (237) 99 98 11 79 / 99 91 24 27 / 77 79 88 39
- Cameroon Association of female Jurists / Cameroon Association of Women in the Legal Professions  
BP: 14057 Yaoundé  
Tel/fax: +237 22 21 79 51  
Tel: 99 98 11 79 / 99 91 24 27 / 77 79 88 39 / 99 28 52 37  
Email: [acafej@camnet.cm](mailto:acafej@camnet.cm)

ACAFEJ provides the following services:

- Free legal and judicial consultations twice per week (Wednesdays and Fridays (from 10am to 5pm)
- Legal and judicial counselling
- Runs a mobile judicial clinic
- Assistance to women and children who are victims of violence
- Sensitisation of human rights

The mobile clinic operates through meetings held in various communities where question and answers sessions are used to educate and counsel. Here familiarity with the local practices and the sociological realities of the community is of prime importance. Paralegal staff make preliminary contacts and serve also as mediators.

- Association de Lutte contre les Violence faites aux Femmes (ALVF)  
BP: 2350 Yaoundé, Cameroun  
Tel / Fax: (237) 22 20 52 94  
Tel: (237) 99 86 24 09

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<sup>25</sup> CRAT Interview with Paschaline Fonyuy Tar, Executive Secretary CAWOLED, Douala, Sept. 2008

- CODAS CARITAS  
Tel: (237) 99 20 65 53 / 77 11 17 11  
E-mail: [codascaritasdouala@yahoo.fr](mailto:codascaritasdouala@yahoo.fr)
- Association Veuves en Detresse (AVD)  
Akwa Douala  
Tel: (237) 99 86 06 27
- Association Veuves et Orphelins du Cameroun (AS-VEOCAM)  
Derriere Lycee Brazaville Akwa-Douala  
Tel: (237) 77 76 03 5 / 77 60 92 66
- Les Synergies Africaines  
B. P 3526 - Yaoundé - Cameroon  
Téléphone : (237) 22 23 09 15  
Fax: +237 22 23 11 63  
<http://www.synergiesafriaines.org>  
E-mail: [contact@synergiesafriaines.org](mailto:contact@synergiesafriaines.org)
- International Women's Club of Douala  
BP: 589 Douala  
Tel + 237 3342 62 61 / + 237 3342 78 59

#### Cameroon Association for Women Entrepreneur (CAWE)

An apolitical, non-profit making, and an economic and socio-cultural NGO, facilitating services with regard to the benefit of trade, investment, industry, acquiring and transfer of technology, exports promotion, international exchanges and development of infrastructure, and the promotion of the women and the families in general. It mostly lays emphasis on youths and street children.

## 1.2 Men

### 1.2.1 Special risks faced by men

According to stakeholders, in Cameroon, men face sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS, (see section 1.1.1) discrimination because of homosexuality, secret societies (Cults),<sup>26</sup> alcoholism, drug-addiction, sexually transmissible diseases, unemployment.<sup>27</sup>

### 1.2.2 Military Service<sup>28</sup>

Military service is not compulsory in Cameroon except for the military, gendarmerie, police force and students of the:

- Ecole Militaire Interarmées et d'armée (EMIA - Military school)  
Tel: +237 22 23 51 77 / +237 22 22 91 91
- National Gendarmerie School
- National Advance Police School (ENSP)  
Tel: +237 22 21 36 03

<sup>26</sup> CRAT Interview with Mr. Agamba, Provincial Delegation of Social Affairs for the Littoral, Douala

<sup>27</sup> HAFI Interview at the Centre de Santé Mentale Saint Benoit Menni, P O Box: 15 630 Douala; Tel: +237 99 66 18 33, Email: [hscdouala@yahoo.fr](mailto:hscdouala@yahoo.fr); Septembre 2008

<sup>28</sup> CRAT Interview with a soldier at Garnison- Military Hospital Yaoundé

-National Advance School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM)  
BP: 7171 Yaoundé  
Tel: +237 22 22 37 54 / 22 23 13 08 / 22 23 09 31  
Fax: +237 22 23 11 40 / 22 23 46 01

Administrators who are trained in the ENAM are supposed to undergo 6 months military training. However, the present practice shows that it only lasts 30 - 45 days, with the goal of teaching them, self defensive service capacities.<sup>29</sup> The minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 18 years, although volunteering before 18 years is permitted with parental consent.<sup>30</sup>

### 1.2.3 Legal Regulation and Practice

For the military, legal implications for abandonment are spelt in the Military code and are dealt Within the military law courts.

For a period up to 30 days, absence without leave [AWOL] is treated as 'irregular' and sanctions range from salary deductions to forced labour. Continued AWOL for more than 30 days is considered desertion. Penalties include military imprisonment for up to six months in the first instance.

The code does not foresee any legal provision dealing with conscientious objection.

## 1.3 Children

### 1.3.1 Children in general<sup>31</sup>

In Cameroon the term children is generally used to indicate dependents and between 0 and 18 years old. In the practice most institutions continue assisting those persons who are vulnerable and dependent, after 18. The general mission of Ministry of Social Affairs includes social protection of children, marginalised populations, the elderly and the disabled. Cameroon ratified - amongst others - the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the ILO's Conventions related to Children. Action plans have been elaborated on the fight against child trafficking and sexual exploitation of children. Recently, Cameroon has instituted a National Solidarity Service. Work is underway to put in place a National Solidarity Fund.

#### 1.3.1.1 Special risks faced by children

Child trafficking, sexual exploitation rape, child prostitution and child labour.<sup>32</sup>

Cameroon is a source, transit, and destination country for the trafficking of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour. Most of the trafficking is internal. Girls are trafficked from Adamawa, North, Far North, and Northwest provinces to Douala and Yaoundé to work as street vendors, domestic servants, and for sexual exploitation. Boys and girls are also trafficked for black labour in restaurants, bars, sweatshops, and in tea plantations. Children are trafficked from Chad, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Congo, Benin, and Niger for forced labour in street selling and agriculture.

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<sup>29</sup> HAFI interview with Mr. Kiven a former student of ENAM, now working with the ministry of Finance.

<sup>30</sup> Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Cameroon," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, London, 2004; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/home>.

<sup>31</sup> Bakalack David, Chief of service, Social Centre Akwa-Douala

<sup>32</sup> Idem to 8, See section 4.1.1

Cameroon also serves as a country of transit for children trafficked between Gabon and Nigeria, and from Nigeria to Saudi Arabia.<sup>33</sup> Children from Chad are trafficked to Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Nigeria. Children from Benin, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic, and Togo are trafficked to Chad.<sup>34</sup>

According to the *Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon*<sup>35</sup>, the minimum age to start working is 14, which is the same minimum age for starting an apprenticeship. Children are prohibited from working at night, moving heavy weights, performing dangerous and unhealthy tasks, or working in confined areas. Children are prohibited from working longer than 8 hours a day. The law specifies that children cannot work in any job exceeding their physical capacity, and the Labour Inspectors can require child labourers to take a medical check to verify whether they are physically exploited.<sup>36</sup>

Violations of child labour provisions are punishable by fines.<sup>37</sup> The law prohibits slavery and servitude.<sup>38</sup>

Other risks faced by children include:

HIV/AIDS (see section 4.1.1), single parenthood, domestic violence, lack of information flow and communication between parents/instructors and children, exposure to negative information from the Mass media, the internet (pornographic material, etc.), poverty, , drug abuse, malnutrition<sup>39</sup>, juvenile delinquency, pulmonary infections, abandonment by one or both parents, rape, marginalisation,<sup>40</sup> becoming an orphan, bandit, school dropout or runaway from home.

With reference to under- scholarisation, for example, according to an article issued by UNICEF dated 25 May 2007, "In the village of Gayak [Northern Cameroon] only 49 per cent of the children go to school against the national average of 79 per cent. Only one out of two girls is able to attend school in this poor village...

They also face violation of their rights, paedophilia<sup>41</sup> imprisonment (nocturnal vagabonds), sexual promiscuity, domestic violence and public violence.<sup>42</sup>

In May 2008, the Minister of Social Affairs launched a program to support 150 street children, which also helps returning them to their families. In June, the Government signed an Anti-Sex Tourism Charter that outlines ethic rules for tourism management. The Minister of Social Affairs continued to participate in a project with France and UNICEF aiming at establishing a legal protection system for children.<sup>43</sup>

An organization that fights for the prevention of paedophilia and aid to victims is:

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<sup>33</sup> United States Department of Labor, *2007 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor - Cameroon*, 27 August 2008. Online. UNHCR Refworld, available at:

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/48caa464c.html> [accessed 14 October 2008]

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.protectionproject.org/human\\_rights\\_reports/report\\_documents/chad.doc](http://www.protectionproject.org/human_rights_reports/report_documents/chad.doc)

<sup>35</sup> Government of Cameroon, *Labour Code*, Law no. 92/007, 14 August, 1992, sections 86(1) and 82(2)

<sup>36</sup> Government of Cameroon, *Labor Code*, section 87.

<sup>37</sup> Idem, Section 167

<sup>38</sup> Government of Cameroon, *Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon*, Law no. 96-06, 18 January, 1996, article 4; *Labour Code*, section 2(3).

<sup>39</sup> HAFI Interview with Tagne Tapia of the Association pour la charité, la scolarité et l'Humanité, Douala

<sup>40</sup> HAFI Interview at the Fondation pour l' Education des Déficients Mentaux et Auditifs 'le Caméléon' Douala

<sup>41</sup> CRAT Interview with Korot Anne Marie, CRES Douala, Sept. 2008

<sup>42</sup> CRAT Interview with the Program Coordinator, Chain des Foyers Saint Nicodeme, Douala

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports - 2007: Cameroon," section 5.



*La Colombe*  
B.P. 15186 Douala-Akwa  
Tel: (237) 75 47 52 12/ 99 53 54 52  
Email: [contactcolombe@yahoo.fr](mailto:contactcolombe@yahoo.fr)

### 1.3.1.2 Kindergarten and schooling opportunities

Such opportunities are quite many in the country. However, fewer kindergarten opportunities exist in comparison with nursery, primary, secondary and higher educational institutions. There are various kind of schools such as: lay private schools, , mission/religious, private schools offering technical, commercial, vocational and general education. Some of them include boarding facilities.

Costs for fees and books range from 35,000 FCFA (53.85 EUR) to 450,000 FCFA (692.31 EUR).

A non-limitative list includes:

➤ Kindergarten:

Les Merveilleux Chérubins, Nsimeyon-Yaounde  
BP: 31487 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 99 57 31 99 -  
Email: [merveilleuxcherubins@yahoo.fr](mailto:merveilleuxcherubins@yahoo.fr)

MADA Day Care, Carrefour Obili - Yaounde

➤ Nursery:

MANGA School, New Bell - Douala

Tuition fee here ranges between 65.000 - 250.000 FCFA (100.00 - 384.61 EUR) according to different categories.

➤ Primary:

St. Michel (New Bell - Douala  
Ecole Publique de New Bell - Douala

Ecole Publique de Tsinga 4 - Yaoundé BP: 2563 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 20 20 54

St Joseph Bilingual Catholic Primary School, Mvog Ada - Yaoundé

Green Hills Academy, Damas - Yaoundé

Jumping Jacks School, Obili - Yaoundé

Government Bilingual Primary School, Bastos -Yaoundé

Primary education at governmental schools is 'free', except for a compulsory Parents Teachers Association Levy (PTA) varying from institution to institution. PTA levies range between 4.000 - 10.000 FCFA (6.15 to 15.38 EUR)

➤ Secondary / High School / College:

Lycée de New Bell - Douala

Collège Alfred Saker, Rond Point Deido - Douala  
Collège Bilingue Laureate, Carrefour Maetur - Douala

Complexe Scolaire International la Gaieté  
BP 6801 Bastos Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 01 45 74 / 77 04 44 19

Collège et Ecole de la Retraite  
BP: 159 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 22 21 24  
Email: [collegedelaretraite@yahoo.fr](mailto:collegedelaretraite@yahoo.fr)

Lycée General Leclerc,

Christian Comprehensive High School, Nkolbong - Yaoundé

Amasia Bilingual High School  
P.O. Box 13963, Ekounou - Yaoundé

Secondary State education is not free. Tuition fee ranges amounts to 7.500 FCFA (11.54 Euro) in addition to the PTA levy, which is different from one institution to the other. PTA levy may range between 10.000 and 30.000 FCFA (15.38 to 46.15 EUR)

Private colleges offer either Day or Boarding facilities. Day school tuition fee ranges between 45.000 and 150.000 FCFA (69.23 to 230.77 EUR) depending on the kind of education (Technical education is more expensive). Tuition fees in colleges offering boarding are much more expensive, ranging between 175.000 and 300.000 FCFA (269.230 to 461.54 EUR).

Regarding health care services for children, a Ngo Groupe d'Initiative Commune Socio-economique des Enfants Demunis, (GIC-ED), based in Douala, offers technical training to underprivileged children or handicapped children.

### 1.3.1.3 Special forms of support available for families with children

No special forms of support are available for this category, except for employees of the State and of some private firms, which provide family allowances, depending on the number of children in the family. Family allowances are granted when children are below 14 (18 if an apprentice, 21 if a full-time student or disabled). The parent's working commitment is to be minimum of 18 days or 120 hours per month. <sup>44</sup>

- Family allowances: 1,800 FCFA (2.77 EUR) per child per month, is paid every 3 months.
- Prenatal allowance: 1,800 FCFA (2.77 EUR) per month for 9 months. The allowance is paid in two instalments.
- Birth grant: 21,600 FCFA (32.31 EUR) for each birth
- Some child health care and welfare services are also provided to mothers and children.

Some succeed in accessing but rarely benefit from the allowances at the time of need, because of administrative bottleneck. Some are simply not aware of the various available benefits for their situation.

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<sup>44</sup> More details about Family allowance system - First law: 1956, current law: 1967, with 1995 amendment, <http://www.Social Security Programs throughout the World: Africa, 2005> accessed in September 2008.

### 1.3.2 Separated children

No specialised services exist for family tracing of separated children. However, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS), the Police, public and private media provide some tracing services.

Provincial Delegation of Social Affairs Littoral  
B. P. 202 Bonanjo-Douala  
Tel: (237) 33 42 52 60 / 33 42 44 57

Provincial Delegation of Social Affairs for the Centre  
Etoa-Meki Yaoundé

Generally, separated/lost children when found are taken to a social centre, police station or a gendarmerie office, where a report is prepared. The found child is then taken to hospital for medical check. The media cooperate with these services for disseminating announcements/notices. Before tracing parents/relatives the State is responsible for taking care of the children. If - within 48 hours - nobody claims for the child with tangible proofs to claim a child, he/she is transferred to Yaoundé for temporary accommodation within a family, orphanage, centres for abandoned children etc. (for example CEAL - Nkomo, for children in distress, CASER - Etoug Ebe, for street children) on the basis of a partnership with MINAS. After 2 years or more, children hosted in such centres are available for adoption.<sup>45</sup> This temporary administrative accommodation is organized under the supervision of the social worker responsible for the intervention.

Considering the difficulties with the ever increasing number of lonely/abandoned/separated children in Yaoundé, it is admissible that in case of extreme urgency, the administrative authority of the place where the child has been found confers the child to a family previously considered for adoption. On the judiciary plan, the placement helps in fighting against juvenile delinquency and intervenes in forfeiture of parental authority.<sup>46</sup>

Some orphanages/NGOs such as Main dans la Main, CHASOH and St Nicodeme, even if not so specialized, do carry out tracing services to achieve a successful reintegration.

### 1.3.3 Orphans

#### 1.3.3.1 State responsibility in orphan care, legal regulation

Decree N° 77/495 of 7 December 1977 sets the conditions for creating and running a private social public utility. Article 7 of this Decree specifies the procedure to be authorised to open such a structure. Authorisation is issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) in two phases:

- Issue of an agreement letter to start the build up of the premises if necessary
- Final authorisation to effectively open and operate through notification by a decree.

According to Articles 19 and 23 of the above Decree, an orphanage may benefit from State subvention on the basis of propositions by the competent authorities in the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS).

#### *Eligibility for subvention:*

- Be recognised as a public utility service
- Be duly authorised
- Have a good record for the last two previous years as examined by the competent

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<sup>45</sup> CRAT interview with Bakalack David, Social centre, Akwa-Douala

<sup>46</sup> United Nations, CRC, Convention relative to the rights of a child  
<http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/.pdf>

authorities at MINAS

-Present a plan of activities

-Deposit a file including the following at the provincial service of social affairs before November 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year:

- Annual report of activities
- Statement of revenues and expenditures for the two previous years
- Provisional budget

The process for obtaining a full authorisation status as an orphanage, usually takes a long time due to the difficulties to encounter governmental requirements/regulations. The state supports orphan care through subventions to orphanages and other institutions (subventions in different forms; infrastructure, accommodation, financial aid, etc.) however, the assistance is very inadequate according to the administrators of the most concerned orphanages/organizations/associations, and some even assert that they have never received any financial support from the State.<sup>47</sup> Structures not respecting the state imposed minimum requirements/standards can be penalised by the delegate of social affairs through the Divisional Officer through warnings, sanctions or closure.<sup>48</sup>

The State has delegated the coordination of activities for protection and care (both vulnerable and non vulnerable children) of children to the Ministry of Social Affairs. The orphans' pension is calculated on the basis of 15% of the old-age pension and 25% in the case of a full orphan ( who lost both parents).The state protects the rights of orphans, providing financial contribution, psychological, nutritional, sanitary/medical and educational support.

#### 1.3.3.2 Actual access to orphan care and orphanages for returnee children

Orphan care and orphanages in Cameroon are mostly private. Most of them are run by the religious. The private ones have limited capacities and offer limited or just the basic services. They mostly depend on the contributions of private donors, charity/national/international organisations, NGOs of goodwill.

- Orphelinat Sainte Famille (Private)  
B. P. 2842 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 77 66 83 39 / 94 38 66 51

#### *Facilities*

This orphanage has a capacity of 20 posts. Currently, it hosts 16 children ranging from 0-15 years old. It has 2 dormitories (1 for girls and 1 for boys), a study room and a playroom.

#### *Services*

The Orphanage admits children who have lost their parents (including AIDS orphans), and/or under precarious condition and without any relatives taking care of them. It is humanitarian and strictly charitable. Good will persons are encouraged to sponsor and follow-up a child's growth.

The centre:

- Educates the children (they attend school outside the orphanage).
- Provides for health care and other needs
- Provides professional training in electronics, carpentry, computer, in order to ensure the children's future socio-professional integration.

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<sup>47</sup> HAFI interview information from most Orphanages and Associations advocating for vulnerable persons status, between 22<sup>nd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2008

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Ngando Clara, 'Brigade du Contrôle des Institutions Publics et Privées' Salle des fêtes, Akwa Douala.

### *Difficulties/Problems*

Still at its early stages, the orphanage needs improvements under various aspects: space for expansion; need for more classrooms, dormitories, educational materials, recreational centre; donors. Also a financial support for the personnel' salaries is needed.

- Village d'Enfant SOS Mbalmayo (Private)<sup>49</sup>  
B. P. 86 Mbalmayo  
Tel: (237) 22 28 12 74  
Fax: (237) 22 28 12 71

This is one of the SOS children's village in Cameroon, situated at about 43 Km from the city of Yaoundé. The SOS children's village in Cameroon is a member of the Austrian Organisation - SOS KINDERDORF International, represented in 132 countries in the world. This children's village strictly respects the UN convention on the rights of children. The administrative headquarters of SOS villages in Cameroon is found in Yaoundé.

- SOS Villages D'Enfant Cameroun  
103, Rue N° 1862 Derriere Usine Bastos  
B. P. 12196 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 21 27 26  
Fax: (237) 22 21 27 24  
E-mail: [soskdi.cameroun@camnet.cm](mailto:soskdi.cameroun@camnet.cm)

### *Eligibility for Admission*

SOS village admits distressed children of 3 categories:

- Abandoned children
- Children, whose fathers are unknown and whose mothers are mentally ill/deranged
- Orphans whose relatives are virtually incapable of rendering care or cannot be traced

However, it also assists some orphans living with relatives providing them with clothes, food, school material, and medical care.

### *Facilities/Services*

These villages operate differently from typical orphanages. The guiding principle is that each child has the right to be part of a family. On the basis of this, about 5 to 6 children under the responsibility of one woman (SOS mother) and they are all together allocated an independent accommodation. Each SoS mother is given a budget to run her "family" independently. The director of the centre plays the role of the father.

The Mbalmayo village hosts about 109 children. It has a large campus with well-equipped infrastructures:

- A nursery and primary school
- A dispensary with a highly sophisticated laboratory
- Football, handball, and tennis courts
- 4 bedrooms apartments with a sitting room, kitchen, toilets and a garden for each family
- Sport facilities for table tennis, gymnastics, etc.

When children become psychologically, biologically and academically mature, they are transferred to young people's homes to complete their education and look for employment. They are followed-up until they become economically independent when they are then

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with the Director of SOS children village in Aug. 2008 at Mbalmayo

encouraged to take charge of their mentally sick mothers or participate in the development of their communities.

### *Difficulties/Problems*

Common problems linked to the life within a family and a community.  
Adolescent behavioural problems.

- Fondation Petit Dan et Sarah (Private)  
B.P.5297 Soa - Yaoundé

Accommodates orphans of one/both parents, or abandoned (as babies) outside the orphanage.

- Orphelinat Saint Jean<sup>50</sup>  
Deido-Douala

Accommodates orphans of one/both parents, or who were abandoned as babies at the entrance to the orphanage.

- Association Fraternite Douala (AFRAD)<sup>51</sup>  
Oeuvre Maria Colomba  
President: Mm Ngmune Therese  
BP: 17716 Douala - Cameroon  
Tel: (237)3342 24 30/7784 3986/9653 31 30  
Email: [afradoeuvrehum@yahoo.fr](mailto:afradoeuvrehum@yahoo.fr) / [afradomc@yahoo.fr](mailto:afradomc@yahoo.fr)

### *Objectives*

Providing orphans with shelter, food, healthcare, education, vocational training and family-like atmosphere so to ensure children's well being.

### *Access*

- Letter signed by the quarter head, police or security officials, certifying the death of parent/parents or a death certificate, qualifying the child as an orphan, presented by either any close relation or person of goodwill.
- Other official sources include cases from the ministry of social affairs, as well as different church institutions, which bring the children with the necessary official documents.

### *Services*

- Common accommodation and nutrition for all different age groups (rehabilitation)
- Education from nursery to high school and Professional training
- Health care
- Spiritual /moral/psychosocial care

### *Difficulties*

All the above services are met with very limited success due to the numerous inadequacies (Financial, adapted infrastructure, human resource, sponsors, transportation means; etc.). Presently AFRAD is facing a serious problem of uncomfortable accommodation and dangerous site.

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Coordinator, Saint Jean de Deido, Douala

<sup>51</sup> HAFI, interviewed Ngmune Therese, president of AFRAD, Sept. 2008, New Bell - Douala

- Main dans la Main<sup>52</sup>  
BP: 4826 Bonamoussadi-Douala  
Tel: (237) 33 47 51 88 / 99 54 62 66  
Email: [maindanslamain@yahoo.fr](mailto:maindanslamain@yahoo.fr)

### *Objective*

Reception and rehabilitation of children and youths in difficult situations aiming at their social reintegration, through education, professional training, health care, protection from violence and exploitation.

### *Access*

- Children in distress
- Individuals or family members of orphans holding certificates/documents to prove that the child is an orphan, as well as identification documents. Cases from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Police and other law enforcement authorities, and any other competent institution are considered preferentially
- A medical certificate stating the child's current health conditions

### *Services*

- Assessment of the state of health and other factors so to facilitate orientation
- Provision of family tracing services for all children in the centre
- Rehabilitation, accommodation, reintegration into family when considered secure.
- Education (Nursery - higher education) Formal, Moral, Spiritual (Roman Catholic), vocational training, psycho-social (also to detained minors), legal support etc.
- Medical care and protection from violence and exploitation.
- Assistance to other vulnerable groups like the elderly and detained minors.

### *Problems*

Financial difficulties also abound here and the legal procedure for accepting orphans is at times complicated.

- Orphelinat des Oeuvres sans Voix  
BP: 7646, Deido - Douala  
  
Tel: (237) 7503 49 82  
Directed by Father Polycarpe Mintamack of Deido Parish.

### *Objectives*

Provide different forms of care to vulnerable children.

### *Access*

- Child should be between 7 and 12 years old

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<sup>52</sup> HAFI interview with Mr. BELINGA, coordinator of Main dans La Main (Orphanage) - Bonamoussadi - Douala, September 26<sup>th</sup> 2008

- Medical documents and certificate
- A social investigation by MINAS on the child to prove either death of both parents, or the inability for parents to take care of child.

### *Services*

- Health, sanitary, nutrition and clothing.
- Formal and vocational education.
- Accommodation

The institution faces numerous problems: financial difficulties, poor infrastructure and difficulties for children to socialise with each other, easy transmission of infective diseases.

- Hephzibah Handicapped and Orphanage Training, Production and Ecstasy Centre (HOPTEC)<sup>53</sup>  
Lower Bokova, Buea Road  
P. O. Box 598 Buea  
Tel: (237) 77 20 16 21; e-mail: [hoptec2ad@yahoo.com](mailto:hoptec2ad@yahoo.com)

Situated at about 160 Km from Douala, HOPTEC's mission is to care and provide training/education, in both general and vocational studies for the purpose of academic, social, moral and economic rehabilitation, to underprivileged children (orphans, disabled and the abandoned). Vocational training includes: poultry farming, food crops farming, animal husbandry.

### *Services / Facilities*

- HOPTEC baby unit - takes care of abandoned babies introduced by MINAS or good Samaritans
- Agricultural unit - provides food for the HOPTEC family
- Nursery and primary school

### *Difficulties/Problems*

Lack of didactic materials, staff and classrooms. There are no volunteers able to teach alternative skills such as painting, dress-making .

- SWAA Cameroon  
It takes care of orphans of HIV/AIDS parents, offering medical, psychological nutritional, sanitary and educational supports are provided by some organizations such as the following:<sup>54</sup>
- Semeur de la Charite  
Tel: +237 74 37 03 13
- Programme National de Soutien Orphelins et Enfants Vulnérables (PNS-OEV)

It is a national programme by MINAS that has given the possibility to 52 ngos to support activities addressed to orphans and vulnerable children. In 2007 the PNS-OEV assisted 45,186 children under vulnerable conditions.

### **1.3.3.3 International/Charity Organisations or NGOs for vulnerable children**

- Chain des Foyers Saint Nicodeme<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> CRAT Correspondence with Coordinator, HOPTEC Buea Road

<sup>54</sup> Idem to 3

<sup>55</sup> Interview with the Program Coordinator Chain des Foyers Saint Nicodeme



B. P. 2233 Douala  
Tel: (237) 33 42 72 97 / 99 46 55 88 / 33 01 04 27  
E-mail: [stnicodeme@yahoo.fr](mailto:stnicodeme@yahoo.fr)

This is a chain of centres/homes situated in different quarters of Douala (Nylon, Akwa, PK24, New Bell, Bepanda). The chain accommodates, supports, educate and trains street children (90%) and children from very poor homes (10%) in different disciplines in view to their family or social, socio-professional and socio-economic reinsertion. Thus, family tracing is done where possible. It presently has 120 children between the ages of 7 to 20 years but can go above. The activities of these homes are recreational and educative (sports, drawing, music, computing, agriculture and animal breeding) as well as professional including handicraft. Spiritual and ethical training is also provided. State subventions range from 500,000 - 1,500,000 FCFA (769.23 - 2307.69 EUR).

### *Services / Facilities*

Five centres ensure the training/education and follow up of the entire process of the children's evolution and adaptation to the new environment:

- Foyer d'Ecoute pour les Filles - New Bell  
(Listening centre for girls). Gives indirect micro credits to help parents taking care of minor problems like food at school.
- Foyer d'Ecoute des Garçons  
(Listening centre for boys). Visit street boys/children in order to find out the reasons of their state, through interviews. After counselling, the best solution for children is found out if.
- Foyer de Stabilisation et d'Observation  
(Stabilisation and observation centre). Children are admitted for observation. They sleep in the centre and participate in the available activities. The aim here is to reintegrate the children in a family (society) context before enrolling them to school. The training can last up to 6 months.
- Foyer de scholarisation primaire (re-socialisation) - Nylon  
(Primary schooling centre). The supposedly "saved" children are enrolled for formal education.
- Foyer des Jeunes en Formation Professionnel en Secondaire  
Coordinates children's professional training .

They work in partnership with various schools:

#### Primary:

Ecole Public - Bonaloka,

Ecole Catholic St. Bruno (Fees from 75,000(115.38 EUR) to 90,000FCFA (138.46 EUR).

#### Secondary:

College St Michel

College St Benedict (Fees between 200,000(307.69EUR) to 250,000FCFA (384.62 EUR).

Other activities include:

- Direct reintegration to the family
- Organisation of circuses, a grandiose social activity which help children to easily fraternise with each other
- Education to religion

### *Difficulties/Problems*

The main problem of the centre is the lack of financial sources. Problems amongst children include: mutual mistrust, drug abuse and various health problems.

➤ Home Atelier<sup>56</sup>  
 Centre de Formation et de Redaction aux Petits Metiers  
 B. P. 3823 Bali-Douala  
 Tel/Fax: (237) 75 96 79 42 / 44 42 74 54  
 E-mail: fiston73@yahoo.com

### *Objectives*

- Socially re-educate girls who are financially unable to attend secondary education
- Reduce the phenomenon of street girls and prostitution and encourage reintegration into normal social life
- Economically support parents in their efforts of granting education/training to their female children

### *Admission*

- Handwritten application addressed to the Governor
- Engagement letter signed by parents
- Medical certificate
- 4 passport photographs
- A social assessment by a social assistant in collaboration with the pedagogic instructor of the institution is carried out to ascertain the:
  - The economical conditions of the girl
  - Family background and lodging conditions

### *Training*

Potteries, painting, computing, dress making, dyeing and catering.

They occasionally receive help from ROTARY CLUB (providing at least 35,000FCFA(53.84 EUR) to cover part of the fees for each girl); ACAFEJ (educates girls on their rights, follows legal procedures of defence in case of problems).

➤ Amour du Prochain<sup>57</sup>

Amour du Prochain reaches out to/support children through other affiliated organisations and NGOs providing amongst others the following services:

- Saving and assisting the sick, underprivileged and street children
- Promoting social integrity amongst the vulnerable
- Providing opportunity for underprivileged children to be trained for job placement

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<sup>56</sup>CRAT interview with Ndzengue Bertin Didier, social worker and chief educationist, Home Atelier, Douala

<sup>57</sup>CRAT Interview with Petit Ngwa, IT and Communications Officer, Amour du Prochain, Bonanjo-Douala, Sept. 2008

It occasionally supports individuals (especially youths) in critical situations e.g. accidents. Other activities include: Christmas presents to orphans, provision of school materials to needy children.

- Scout du Cameroun, Compagnons de la Solidarité<sup>58</sup>  
B. P. 17172 Douala  
Tel: (237) 33 40 81 70  
E-mail: [compasolidarite@yahoo.fr](mailto:compasolidarite@yahoo.fr)

This group consistd of young girls and boys between 18 and 23 years old. They aim to the growth of boys and girls through orientation both at the family and individual level. They target street children, children of the St Jean orphanage at Deido-Douala and those of the neighbouring quarters.

#### 1.4 Elderly people

Legally, the Preamble of the Cameroon Constitution of 18 January 1996 foresees the protection of the elderly as a national duty. Several legislative and regulatory texts reinforce the protection of these rights.

Institutionally, many ministerial departments (namely: public health, labour and social security public service and administrative reform, economy and finance social affairs, women empowerment and family) cooperate to promote the dignity and to the valorisation of the elderly.

Specifically, Decree N°2005/160 of May 25, 2005 concerning the organisation of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS) established a Directorate for the social protection of the handicapped and the elderly with Sub Directorate for the social protection of the elderly.

In spite of the socio-economic and political changes originating from social organisation, the elderly represents an asset/relief in most families and communities but some are abandoned.

##### 1.4.1 Pension system; can someone live with an average pension

The social insurance system in Cameroon is founded on 2 main schemes based on compulsory social contributions:

- State pension scheme - covers public service workers, state agents<sup>59</sup> and the assimilés<sup>60</sup>
- National social insurance fund (CNPS) Scheme - covers workers in the private/Para public sector who must be enroled to CNPS by their employers.<sup>61</sup>

National Social Insurance Fund  
Yaoundé

Social Insurance Branch (CNPS)  
P. O. Box 9073 Bonaberi-Douala  
Tel: (237) 33 39 47 47

Generally, in Cameroon salaries are low. Considering that at retirement the pension beneficiary receives 30% of his or her salary when in active service, coupled with the fact that the highest

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<sup>58</sup> Correspondence with the “Chef de Troupe” La Troupe St Gerard de Deido-Douala

<sup>59</sup> Interview with a personnel at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security

<sup>60</sup> the State employees in the past handled by the CNPS, since 1993, they are managed by The Ministry of Economics and Finance.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with a personnel at CNPS Branch Bonaberi-Douala, Sept. 2008

salary considered in the CNPS pension system is 300.000 FCFA (461.54 Euro). There is a general consensus that the average pension is insufficient to afford a moderate life style. Most pensioners engage in income generating activities (farming, domestic animal breeding, provision stores) to ameliorate their situation.<sup>62</sup>

#### 1.4.2 Eligibility for pension or other benefits

Generally, according to the CNPS scheme<sup>63</sup>, the insured has the right to receive a seniority pension if he/she encounters parameters:

- Be 60 years old
- Be retired
- At least 20 years of matriculation with CNPS
- 20 years of insurance coverage
- 180 months of contributions (2.8% of gross earnings), with 60 months in the last 10 years before retirement.

Other types of pensions include:

- Precocious pension
- Old age grants
- Disability pension
- Voluntary insurance (still in process)
- Survivor pension

For early pension: 50 years of age, 20 years of insurance coverage, 180 months of contributions (2.8% of gross earnings) with 60 months in the previous 10 years. However, if the number of service years is inferior to 15 years, the person wait until he is 60 before he is granted a lump sum (old age grant).

#### *Benefits*

The pension is equal to 30% of the average monthly salary of the last 3/5 years (whichever is higher), plus 1% for each 12-month period of contribution beyond 180 months.

The minimum pension is 50% of the legal minimum wage.

The maximum pension is 80% of the insured average of monthly salary.

Constant attendance supplement is 40% of old age pension

The Old age grant is a lump sum equal to the insured average of monthly salary covering a period of 12-months.

#### **NB**

The maximum monthly salary on which contribution and benefit are calculated by CNPS amounts to 300,000 FCFA (461.54 Euro), even if the salary is higher. This is why pensions are low.

State pensions are calculated on different basis.

In the past three decades the administrative procedures to establish all necessary documentation to finally allocate a pension were really difficult. To render payments easier and to avoid long waits, CNPS created many pay centres which operate only during pay periods.

Among the facilities available in the CNPS pay offices for the benefit of clients, there are:

- Comfortable seats and TV programmes.

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<sup>62</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Interview of Olama Agathe, CNPS, Yaoundé, September 2008

- Refrigerated water taps.
- Educational talks on nutrition and old age diseases.
- Amelioration of medical follow-up

Some pensioners have appreciated found the positive recent reforms , yet further reforms are expected.<sup>64</sup>

With reference to State pension regime<sup>65</sup>, modalities vary according to the status of the worker:

- Workers of the public service
- magistrates and judges
- public servants concerned with national security
- 

Age of retirement depends on the profession and category, ranging from 65 (for high rank University professors magistrates, high rank military officers), to 60 (for secondary and primary school teachers), 55 generally for categories A and B and 50 years for others.

#### Other Benefits

Military personnel - according to Decree N° 76/460 of October 12, 1976, those with disability pension benefit from free medical care. Also retired personnel of the Ministry of Defence continue having access to military establishments. The National Office of former War veterans, Military officers and War victims (ONACAME) provides medical and educational assistance for the psychosocial\reintegration of their families.

University teachers - benefit from a government health insurance until they are 71 years old.

Professors emeritus and top officials in the armed forces are usually retained for 3 years or more after they are due to retire, because of their valuable knowledge and expertise.

Documents required by the Ministry and/or institutions managing the pension system are:

#### *For Normal Retirement*

- Stamped application (1000FCFA/1.54EUR).
- Certified copy(ies) of marriage certificate(s), (1000 FCFA/1.54 EUR each).
- Certified copy of birth certificate for each minor (1200 FCFA/1.85 EUR).
- Collective life certificate for children between 6 and 21 years old.
- Certificate of individuality (eventually)
- Residence certificate issued and signed by the competent authorities.

#### *For Precocious Retirement*

- Stamped application (1000 FCFA/1.54 EUR).
- Last advancement decision.
- Opinion of the employing Ministry.
- Certified copy(ies) of Marriage certificate(s), (1000 FCFA/1.54 EUR each).
- Certified copy of birth certificates for each minor (1200 FCFA /1.85 EUR).
- Collective life certificate for children between 6 and 21 years old
- Medical certificate for mentally handicapped children
- Certificate of individuality (eventually)
- Residence certificate issued and signed by the competent authorities.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with pensioners during Aug. 2008 salary payout at the National Social Insurance Fund (CNPS) Centre, Obili-Yaounde

<sup>65</sup> Interviews with workers in the secretariat of the Sub Directorate of Pensions and 'Rente Viagères', Ministry of the Economy and Finance (MINEFI), Yaoundé

The procedure to obtain a pension is complex and slow. Efforts have been put in force to accelerate the process and the entity of payments. Among others, the following measures are being considered for change:

- Calculating the pension on the basis of the 1985 grid, favourable to workers;
- Granting an advance payment from 1 to 5 years, consenting the retired person to settle down decently at the end of their career;
- Systematic payment of all credit balance due to the retired within the month of retirement

Besides these two compulsory pension systems, there are possibilities to benefit from voluntary pension schemes available in numerous banks and insurance companies. These schemes are normally applied to employees of banks and insurance companies, members of associations and cultural/social groups, private enterprises, self-employed persons, independent entrepreneurs and handicrafts etc. It is necessary to specify that only employees of the public and private sectors are considered for pension schemes, an immense majority of elderly persons such as those working in the informal market and in agriculture and farming actually live through the social security system.

#### 4.4.3 Consideration of years spent abroad in calculating pension

This possibility is considered only in presence of a convention between the parties concerned. The foreign party must have adhered to the National Social Insurance Fund (CNPS) and met its conditions of eligibility of. Only France has reciprocity with Cameroon.

#### 4.4.4 Availability of accommodation and care for elderly persons

In the Cameroonian context, families are responsible for the care of the elderly. The preamble of the 1996 Constitution lists several "inalienable rights" granted to all Cameroonian citizens and the protection of the elderly persons is considered as a national duty. To this effect, Decree N° 2005/160 of May 25, 2005, organising the Ministry of Social Affairs, instituted the Directorate for the social protection of the handicapped and the elderly. The Sub Directorate for the social protection of the elderly became operational in 2007 and, at the moment, is undergoing organisation and planning, laying strategies to:<sup>66</sup>

- Sensitise and educate the public on the rights of the elderly, the impact of various pathologies, their prevention, nutritional needs, available services.
- Build health centres, recreational centres and specialised educational centres for the elderly.
- Build old peoples' homes to take care of the abandoned.
- Help families to play their traditional role of taking care of the elderly.
- Put in place an old age pension scheme for all
- Provide professional/vocational training, and employment to the eligible elderly.

The aim is to support physical and economic independence of the elderly within the family and the community.

The idea of old peoples' home is a fairly new concept, which is gradually gaining grounds with development. The State has no old peoples' homes. There are some privately owned:

- Foyer Sainte Louise (Private)<sup>67</sup>  
Paroisse Jean et Pierre

<sup>66</sup> Discussion with and brochure provided by the Secretary of the Sub Directorate for the Social Protection of Elderly Persons, Ministry of Social Affairs

<sup>67</sup>CRAT interview with Sr. Fuen Santa, Mother General, Foyer Sainte Louise, Nsimalen, Yaoundé

## Nsimalen Yaounde

### *Facilities/Services*

This home, owned by the Catholic Church, has a capacity of 14 places but currently hosts 11 persons. Its occupants are elderly abandoned people unable to cater for themselves. The structure is composed of 3 dormitories, a dining room, a relaxation room and other basic.

The needs of the home are met by the church, sometimes the home benefits from material and financial donations from the Ministry of Social Affairs. They are assisted by the sisters of charity and some volunteers of the church.

### *Difficulties/problems*

Communication barrier; an interpreter is sometimes required

No recreational centre

No subventions from the State

Kinaesitherapeutics are needed

- Centre de Sante Integre de la Leproseie de Ngallan (Public)<sup>68</sup>  
B. P. 17 Ngallan  
Tel: (237) 77 87 74 58

(Situated along the Yaoundé- Mbalmayo highway)

This is a home reserved to former isolated leprosy patients, become elderly. The centre admits/re-admits only these people.

### *Facilities/Services*

20 sleeping rooms, kitchen and pantry, health centre, courtyards, farmland and space for domestic animals breeding.

Occupants have access to free health care. The centre receives donations in cash, food, clothes and medication from NGOs like Aide aux Lépreux Emmaüs (ALES).

### *Difficulties/needs*

The Health centre lacks of beds and equipments

Absence of income generating activities (such as a rabbit house and a piggery)

Absence of support for the children of these persons.

Ruined structures

Irregularity in the payment of salaries

- Les Seour de Mere Teresa  
Missionaries of Charity  
14 Missionary Road - Simbok  
B. P. Yaoundé
- Centre Béthanie VIACAM  
Soa - Yaoundé

## 1.4.5 Charity and Care Organisations/NGOs assisting the elderly

- CARITAS  
Bureau for Social Charitable Activities  
Mvoyle Catholic Parish, Yaounde  
Tel: (237) 33 31 32 08 /33 31 15 92

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<sup>68</sup> Interview by CRAT with Yamfam Mama, Director, Integrated Health Centre for leprosy, Ngallan

E-mail: [basc@iccnet.com](mailto:basc@iccnet.com)

- CARITAS  
Nylon Catholic Parish, Douala
- RECEWAPEC (Regional Centre for the Welfare of the Ageing Persons in Cameroon)  
Head Office Nkwen - Bamenda  
P. O. Box 5198 Nkwen  
Tel: (237) 77 12 60 54  
E-mail: [RECEWAPECorg11@yahoo.com](mailto:RECEWAPECorg11@yahoo.com)

Branch Offices: Mokolo - Yaounde  
Mbangkolo - Yaounde

- Association des Personnes Agées du Cameroun (APACAM)<sup>69</sup>  
B. P. 1754 Logbaba-Douala  
Tel (237) 77 06 47 54 / 77 72 18 38  
E-mail: [apacamlt32007@yahoo.fr](mailto:apacamlt32007@yahoo.fr)

## Objective

Advocate for considering the elderly as a vulnerable category.

To be eligible for membership, the person is to be minimum 50 years old, and should submit:

- Registration fee amounting to 500 FCFA (0.77 EUR)
- Membership card 1500 FCFA (2.31 EUR)
- Two 4x4 passport photos
- Annual contribution of 4000 FCFA (6.15 EUR)

## Activities

- Minimal financial assistance in case of illness or other problems.
- Advocate for obtaining discounts for members in partner State health institutions (e.g. the Nylon District Hospital Douala and many others). Special discounts obtained since 4 October, 2007.

Service	Discounts
Mortuary	46%(within 15 days)
Laboratory	17%
X-Ray	17%
Hospitalisation	24%
Consultation	100%
Minor surgery	28%

Children of APACAM members are exempted from paying the fees for Education facilities with the exception of the payment of PTA levies, which vary according to the grade of school as well as according to single schools.

## Difficulties

- Lack of funds
- Lack of sanitary means
- Lack of infrastructure and maintenance

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Mbarga Engelbert Gaston, President, APACAM, Douala. Sept 2008



- No State subventions

FOCAGES (Fondation Camerounaise de Gérontologie Sociale)<sup>70</sup>  
B.P 7122 Douala- Bassa  
Tel +237 99 56 48 39

#### Access

Membership fees range from 2500 FCFA (3.85 Euro) to 5000 FCFA (7.69 Euro).

#### Services

- Advice on nutrition and hygiene
- Information on health-related problems of the elderly 3<sup>rd</sup> age such as prostate, Alzheimer's disease etc.
- Educational talks
- Massage
- Psycho-geriatric assistance
- Facilitate access to health institutions
- Clothing
- Sanitation

#### Difficulties

- Lack of funds for smooth functioning
- Lack of infrastructure (land available)
- Inadequate structure/services for psycho-geriatric care
- Lack of transportation means for group visits
- Absence of State subvention

#### Problems

- Ignorance on the rights of the elderly
- Absence of old peoples' home
- Lack of respect towards the elderly in certain public and private structures
- Poverty
- Most old people are not informed on how to take care of themselves

Other associations include:

- MUPAC (Mutuelle des Personnes Agées du Cameroun)
- APARC (Association des Personnes Agées Retraitées du Cameroun)

### 1.5 Persons with physical disabilities

#### 1.5.1 Specialised institutions and state responsibility

Law N° 83/013 of July 21, 1983 with regard to the protection of the handicapped, followed by Decree N° 90/1516 of November 26, 1990 for its application, lays down provisions and privileges of such persons. In summary, they are:

- Medical, material, financial and psychosocial assistance.
- Subventions to social structures which promote/support the economic empowerment of the handicapped.

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<sup>70</sup> HAFI interview of Dr. Ndzana Alima Hubert, gerontologist and director of FOGAGE, Sept. 2008

- Professional training according to their physical conditions and subsequent recruitment and remuneration.
- Exemption from paying school fees for their children and other forms of aid depending on the degree of the handicap.
- Access to specialised institutions.
- Access to sports facilities, training and participation in national and international competitions.

The State also promotes the education and participation of handicapped students and those born from indigenous handicapped parents in official exams as spelled out in the circular letter N° 34/06/LC/MINESEC/MINAS of August 2, 2006 related to the admission of these students in public secondary establishments. The circular letter is applied in addition to other regulations in force namely:

- The preamble of the constitution of the Republic of Cameroon (item 18) which proclaims that the State will ensure the child's right to education.
- The Regulations of the United Nations for equal opportunities for the handicapped.
- Law N° 98/004 April 14, 1998 orientating education in Cameroon, whose Article 7 emphasises that the State guarantees to all equal opportunities for accessing education without discrimination based on sex, political, philosophical and religious opinion, social cultural, linguistic or geographical origin.

However, very few specialised institutions exist in the country. Handicapped persons in Douala believe that they have been abandoned by the State and the world around them. Most handicapped persons refused to respond to the questionnaire, in the light of the fact that various fact-finding missions were carried out without any positive outcome related to the improvement of their conditions.

### 1.5.2 Actual access to specialised institutions and care for returnees

#### *Eligibility*

According to the Ministry of Social Affairs,<sup>71</sup> to be eligible, the individual must be an indigent (Certificate of Nationality) with a two-thirds (≈60%) disability as established by a medical doctor. The person is then issued a Certificate of Disability, which confers the right to benefit from the provisions established by the regulations in force on this issue. The blind, in addition, are entitled to receive a white cane. The State, through the Ministry of Social Affaires (MINAS), supports those applicants meeting the conditions/requirements specified in the November 26, 1990 Decree<sup>72</sup> (after a social investigation/inquiry) to channel their applications with the right procedure.

Some Institutions:

- National Rehabilitation Centre for Handicap persons (CNRH), Pubic Etoug Ebe - Yaoundé  
Tel: +237 22 31 05 79 / +237 22 31 15 87
- Ecole Spécialisée pour Enfant Déficient Auditifs (ESEDA), Parapublic Below Centre Pasteur  
B. P. 370 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 22 47 12

<sup>71</sup> CRAT interview with Mbogo Etienne, Social Assistant at the Sub Directorate for the social protection of handicap persons, Ministry of Social Affairs, Yaoundé

<sup>72</sup> Decree # 90/1516 - stating the modalities of application of law # 83/13 of 21 July 1983 relative to the protection of handicap persons, 26 November, 1990, chapter 2, article 5 (2)

This is a primary school for children with hearing disabilities between the ages of 3 - 20 years. Fees range between 300,000 to 350,000 FCFA (461.53 to 538.46 EUR) but families are expected to contribute only with 100,000 FCFA (153.85 EUR). Among the objectives:

- language rehabilitation;
- follow-up for education and social integration of the deaf.

The school has a capacity of 200 people and also runs a 3-years training course for specialised teachers. It has a visual art workshop.

- St. Joseph's Children and Adult Home (SAJOCAH)<sup>73</sup>, Private  
P. O. Box 2177, Mambu - Bafut  
North West Province, Cameroon  
Tel: (237) 77 68 43 65 / 77 45 10 57 / 75 15 38 15  
E-mail: [ceciliawiryen@yahoo.com](mailto:ceciliawiryen@yahoo.com)

This is a Catholic Church - owned centre that rehabilitates children and adults with physical disabilities and provides a temporary home. It also offers education/mobility training to visually impaired children.

It is specialised in lower limbs and runs a school for the blind (admission from 5 to 15 years old). In addition the centre also undertakes the following activities:

- Refers patients to Njinikom Hospital (North West Province) for operation
- Runs an orthopaedic workshop
- Runs an infirmary laboratory
- Physiotherapy
- Farming and vocational training (dress making, shoe-manufacturing and a cane workshop)

There is a resource room for the blind. Blind children, are assured education. A family member or guardian must accompany occupants. Patients are expected to contribute with a daily fee of 1000 FCFA (1.54 EUR) for the entire duration of stay. Pupils and patients pay for their bills; fees and medical bills are anyway affordable.

- Centre de Rééducation des Enfants Sourds (CRES)<sup>74</sup>  
B. P. 5867 New Bell-Douala  
Tel/Fax: (237) 33 42 89 61 / 33 01 38 26 / 77 77 64 60 / 77 77 63 10  
E-mail: [cres\\_korot@yahoo.fr](mailto:cres_korot@yahoo.fr)

Its primary objective is to fight social exclusion. CRES is especially concerned with regrouping, re-education, professional training and socio-professional integration of persons with auditory impairments. There is a paramedical service available, to detect problems.

Admission into the centre requires:

- Parents' request
- Assessment of the situation the interested child to eventually detect other problems
- Medical certificate
- Engagement form to be filled by parents
- Birth certificate
- 2 passport photos
- Fee

The main problems of the centre are: lack of technical and didactic equipments, lack of personnel, lack of halls, social prejudice vis a vis the deaf, lack of material and financial

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<sup>73</sup> CRAT interview with Sr. Cecilia Wiryen, Directress, SAJOCAH at Bafut

<sup>74</sup> CRAT interview with Korot Anne Marie, CRES Douala, Sept. 2008

contribution from parents, who often refuse their children. Finally, there is scarcity of funds and subventions.

- Rehabilitation Institute for the Blind (RIB)  
P. O. Box 27 Bulu-Buea  
Tel: (237) 33 32 22 90
- Buea School for the Deaf (BSD)<sup>75</sup>  
Kawa Street Bomaka  
P. O. Box 175 Buea

It has as a nursery, primary and a secondary school with general and technical sections with boarding facilities. 100 boarders have enrolled in 2008.

Fees are: 250.000 FCFA (384.62 EUR) for the nursery/primary sections  
350.000 FCFA (538.46 EUR) for the secondary school section

Programmes are based on the Anglophone school curriculum, including teaching of French.

Some associations are:

- Coopérative des personnes Handicapées du Cameroun (COOPHACAM)
- Association Nationale des anciens lépreux du Cameroun (ANALCAM)
- Coordination des Associations des Etudiants Handicapés des Universités du Cameroun (CAEHUCAM)  
BP 11886 Yaoundé - Cameroun  
Tel: (237) 75 22 40 18 E-mail: [caehucam@yahoo.fr](mailto:caehucam@yahoo.fr)
- Association des Handicapés Diplômés de l'Enseignement Supérieur (ADEHS)
- Handicap Sport et Culture (HADISPOC)  
BP 4207 Yaoundé
- Association nationale des aveugles du Cameroun (AVAC)
- Association nationale des Handicapés Moteurs et Amputés du Cameroun
- Associations nationales des Déficiants Auditives du Cameroun (ANDAC)
- Association nationale des Sourds muets du Cameroun (ASCAM)
- Centre Orthopaédique de Douala  
BP: 7495 Douala  
Tel: (237) 33 40 65 28

This centre is specialised in the sales of medical apparatus for the handicapped, manufacture of appliances (braille, artificial limbs), correction of scoliosis, medical laboratory analyses, re-education, and social integration.

- Le Réseau des Associations des Handicapés Victime de la poliomyélite<sup>76</sup>  
Tel: (237) 33 43 71 07 / (237) 99 49 17 58

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<sup>75</sup> Correspondence with Njok Bibum Aloysius, teacher and proprietor, Buea school of the deaf.

<sup>76</sup> Interview of a member of Réseau des Associations des Handicapés Victimes de la Poliomyélite, Sept. 2008

## *Objectives*

- Training of handicapped persons
- Self-employment
- Income generating activities

## *Access*

Voluntary membership fee

## *Services*

- Training in dressmaking/sewing, carpentry
- Educational talks

## *Difficulties*

- Lack of financial means for smooth functioning
- Precarious structures
- Lack of transportation means, appliances, sanitary materials

- Association des femmes Handicapées de Douala 1<sup>er</sup>  
Tel: + 237 9968 77 61
- Centre Des Handicapes Moteurs  
Koulouloun market, New Bell - Douala  
For the deaf/dumb
- Cercle Des Jeunes Aveugles Réhabilités du Cameroun (CJARC)  
For the blind  
B.P. 2315 Yaoundé (Cameroun)  
Tel. (237) 991 43 39 / 230 39 70  
Fax (237) 222 38 59  
E mail : [cjarc@voila.fr](mailto:cjarc@voila.fr) ; [coco\\_bertin@yahoo.fr](mailto:coco_bertin@yahoo.fr)

### 1.5.3 Charity and care organisations/NGOs

- Coopérative des Handicapes du Cameroun (COOPHACAM)<sup>77</sup>  
Face Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et Décentralisation  
BP 6717 Yaounde  
Tel: (237) 99 64 50 75

COOPHACAM teaches, trains and helps in the socio-economic and economic integration of handicapped persons and their children. Only members benefit from its services.

## *Membership*

Must be an indigent handicapped person holding a disability card  
Registration fee: 2,500 FCFA (3.85 EUR)  
Annual contribution: 1,000 FCFA (1.54 EUR).

## *Services*

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<sup>77</sup> Interview with Ebana Bienvenue Magloire, President, COOPHACAM - Yaoundé, Aug. 2008

Training in painting, sculpturing, computing, planning and management of micro projects. After training, job opportunities are offered to the best students, in co-operation with partners.

Surgeries of limbs are performed at the Njinikom Catholic Hospital (North West Province), COOPHACAM contributes with 100,000 FCFA (153.85 Euro) to cover food and transportation expenses, while catholic sisters provide for the payment of medical bills.

#### *Difficulties/Problems*

- Absence of State subventions
- Little or no financial support for staff (volunteers)
- Yaoundé office needs materials, equipments and expansion
- Most handicap persons are not self-sufficient

The COOPHACAM branch in Douala was closed down by the Littoral Provincial Delegation of Social Affairs due to mismanagement of funds. Members of this cooperative have applied for funds to the Social Affairs and are awaiting to know the outcome of their project proposal.<sup>78</sup>

- PROMHANDICAM Association Cameroon  
BP 4018 Mimboman - Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 23 61 19  
E-mail: [direction@promhandicam.org](mailto:direction@promhandicam.org) / [rbc@promhandicam.org](mailto:rbc@promhandicam.org)

This association promotes initiatives from and for the disabled to support them in their social, economical, cultural and also sportive re-integration.

#### *Services*

- Integrated Primary School for the partially sighted and the blind
- Teaches the Braille system and typing
- Supports blind students in integrating into secondary or higher education institutions around Yaoundé
- Vocational Training Centre for Disabled Persons
- Woodwork
- Sewing, embroidery and knitting
- Computing
- Orthopaedic appliances and shoe manufacture
- Community Based Rehabilitation

Using local man power in the community PROMHANDICAM's physiotherapist and specialised nurses teach families how to perform simple massage and help to understand symptoms of illnesses which may cause blindness (cataracts). It also provides cheap reading spectacles and ophthalmologic medicines. Referrals are made to Central Hospital Yaoundé.

- Braille system materials. Runs a library with many Braille volumes in English
- Tricycle Production, which provides affordable means of transportation to disabled persons and creates a permanent, income-generating activity to them.

- Espoir Sourds et Aveugle du Cameroun  
Rue 1581 Omnisport  
BP 25287 Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 77 58 78 09  
E-mail: [jowona2005@yahoo.com](mailto:jowona2005@yahoo.com)

#### *Services*

- Support deaf people and people with hearing impairments to read

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<sup>78</sup>Jonny Lopez, member of the defunct handicaps' cooperative COOPHACAM - Douala, Sept 2008

- Repair hearing aids
- Carry out hearing tests
- Manufacture of hearing aids
- Provide hearing aids at comparatively low prices
  - CARITAS - Yaounde and Douala (see section 4.4.5)
  - Amour du Prochain (see section 4.1.3)

## 1.6 Persons with mental disabilities or disorders

### 1.6.1 Specialised institutions and state responsibility

Government policy prescribes support to mentally disabled people. Private organisations also operate in this field. Public/private institutions offering psychiatric services and or trauma centres for people with psychiatric and traumatic problems are rare. <sup>79</sup>The State runs two hospitals to assist persons with psychiatric problems but not mental impairment.

### 4.6.2 Actual access to specialised institutions and care for returnees

- Jamot Hospital Yaoundé<sup>80</sup>, (public Psychiatric hospital)  
Tel: (237) 22 20 31 65 / 22 21 52 26

#### *Services*

Provides medical and nursing care to mentally ill persons Individual and group psychotherapy to traumatised people

Services are to be paid for:

Consultation: 15000 FCFA (23 EUR)

Medication, laboratory tests

Hospitalisation: between 200.000-500.000 FCFA (306-763 EUR), excluding food

#### *Difficulties*

Due to lack of funds, patient rarely complete treatment. Relapses are common due to socio-economic and cultural problems. Isolation and stigmatisation often leading to abandonment of patient.

- Laquintinie Hospital Douala, public  
(operates a psychiatric department)
- Centre de Santé Mentale, St Benoît Menni, religious  
Mvolye-Yaounde  
Tel: (237) 99 84 36 71
- **Centre de Santé Mentale, St Benoît Menni**  
BP. 15630 Ndog Passi III-Douala  
Tel: (237) 99 66 18 33 E-mail: [hscdouala@yahoo.fr](mailto:hscdouala@yahoo.fr)

<sup>79</sup> HAFI interview with a medical personnel, General hospital Douala, September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008.

<sup>80</sup> CRAT Interview of Mbotuh Daniel, psychiatric nurse and psychologist, Jamot Hospital Yaoundé

## *Objective*

Psychosocial and mental health care

## *Access*

- Individual (or through others) request to be admitted to the centre
- Nursing consultation 400 FCFA (0.62 EUR)
- Psychological consultation 600 FCFA (0.92 EUR)
- Psychiatric consultation 3 000 FCFA (4.61 EUR)
- Relaxation 600 FCFA (0.92 EUR)
- Extra money for medicines

## *Services*

- psychological consultation
- psychiatric consultation
- Relaxation
- Apprenticeship

## *Problems*

- Attendance irregularity of some patients who are abandoned by their family
- Need of wards for hospitalisation
- Difficulty to afford essential drugs
- Shortage personnel

Besides these hospital institutions, private pedagogic institutes exist:

- Externat Medico-Pedagogique "LA COLOMBE (EMP)"<sup>81</sup>  
BP 1298 Yaoundé-Cameroun,  
Tel: +237 99 85 27 05

La Colombe is a privately owned social centre for reception, training and re-education of children of both sexes between 5 and 20 years-old. These activities are put in place through its pedagogical, psychological, educational, social, medical and paramedical services. The children are classified in the handicap categories below:

- Cerebral infirmities
- Mental deficiencies
- Trisomia 21
- School integration and retardation
- Behavioural troubles

Colombe encourages autonomy and occupies children in the following:

- Gardening
- Home teaching
- Schooling
- Painting
- Sport

This programme faces different difficulties such as:

- Lack of personnel such as specialists in neurotherapy, kinaesitherapy, nursing
- Lack of transportation means for children
- Financial problems (a priority)

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<sup>81</sup> HAFI interview of ETETI EBANGA Richard, Director of the Externat Médico-pédagogique, Sept. 2008.



- Delay in the payment of fees
- Irregular participation of parents in parent/pupils' meetings

#### School fees/child

- 50,000 FCFA (76.92EUR) per year
- 4,000 FCFA (6.15EUR) per month for the canteen

- Centre Sumedin  
Tel: +237 91 66 61 64 (Founder)  
Tel: + 237 75 70 50 72 (Directress)

#### Access

- children aged between 4 and 9 years old
- medical certificate proving that the child is under medical follow up
- A photocopy of birth certificate
- A disability or identity card of both the parent and the child
- Passport photo of the child

#### Guardian fee:

Every 3 months, it is foreseen the payment of 30,000 FCFA (46.15 EUR). Food is not included.

#### Materials to furnish:

- nappies (if necessary)
- a dress change

#### Access

- being from 4 to 9 years old
- Present a medical certificate stating that the child is under medical follow up
- A photocopy of birth certificate
- A disability or identity card of both parent and child
- Passport photo of the child

#### Guardian fee:

Every 3 months, a child pays 30,000 FCFA (46.15 EUR). Food is not provided.

#### Materials to be provided by families:

- nappies if necessary
- a dress change if possible

- CESAM-CRERA (school for special children)  
Tel: +237 22 20 54 95 / 99 59 65 52 / 75 47 75 87
- FEDEME/CAMELEON<sup>82</sup> (Foundation for the Education of Mental and auditory Deficient Children) German - Cameroon Initiative  
Tel: (237) 33 37 28 18 / 33 00 00 83  
Mobile Tel: (237) 77 19 96 02 / 96 52 02 62 / 77 85 16 09  
Email: [fedemecameleon@yahoo.fr](mailto:fedemecameleon@yahoo.fr)

#### Objectives

- To educate, re-educate and socially reintegrate children with auditory and mental deficiencies. The institution takes care of children from Nursery to secondary school level.
- Enhance autonomy developing children's manual and artistic skills.

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<sup>82</sup> HAFI interview with FEDEME's administrators (Foundation for the Education of Mental and auditory Deficient Children), Sept. 26, 2008.

It is a modern complex composed of two sections:

➤ **Mental deficiency section**

*Access*

- medical prescription for re-education
- Children and adolescents between 4 to 16 years old
- Children who are severely retarded to have ordinary education
- Children with behavioural problems
- Children with cerebral infirmities
- Children affected from Downs Syndrome

*Documents*

- Medical prescription for re-education
  - Recent medical certificate certifying the absence of infective diseases
- A medical file and vaccination card
- Photocopy of birth certificate
- Re-education fee is 450,000 FCFA (692.31 EUR) payable in three instalments (200,000 - 150,000 - 100,000) - (307.69 - 230.77 - 153.85 EUR)
- Registration fee amounts to 10 000FCFA (15.38 Euro)
- Uniform and sports wear 40 000 FCFA (61.54 Euro)

*Services*

General assessment of the handicap; facilitate acquisition developing a maximal autonomy, manual and artistic development of the children's skills. Impartition of values for social reintegration.

➤ **Auditory Deficiency Section**

*Access*

- Hearing deficiencies
- Learning difficulties
- Children with speech and language problems

*Documents*

- Audiogram
- Recent medical certificate certifying the absence of infective diseases
- A medical file and vaccination card
- Photocopy of birth certificate
- vaccination card
- two 4x4 passport photos
- Re-education fee is 200,000 FCFA (307.69 Euro) payable in three instalments (90,000 - 60,000 - 50,000) - (138.46 - 92.31 - 76.92 Euro)
- Registration fee amounts to 10 000 FCFA (15.38 Euro)
- Uniform and sports wear 40 000 FCFA (61.54 Euro)

*Services*

Provides normal education and prepares students for public exams, orthophonic re-education, auditory and prosthetic education, pedagogic support, socio-professional orientation, takes care of children with learning difficulties, speech and language problems.

#### Ordinary school

- Nursery, primary, then integration in an ordinary milieu with pedagogic support
  - Re-education
    - Speech learning/practice
  - Orthophonia
  - Auditory and prosthetic re-education
  - Audiogram

#### Communication

- Labio-lecture/reading
- LSF (Langue des signes françaises/french sign language)
- CT (Communication totale/total communication)

#### Parental guidance

- Schooling and socio-professional orientation

Boarding facilities are available, but much more expensive. Re-education fee is 960.000 FCFA (1476.92 EUR). The Institution is high standards equipped. Most of the children very often live in a non welcoming environment, considering that the Cameroonians are not properly sensitised to accept persons with disabilities.

Some NGOs that address trauma:

- Centre for Rehabilitation and Abolition of Trauma (CRAT)  
P.O. Box 30198 Bastos- Yaoundé  
Tel/Fax: (237) 22 20 24 99  
E-mail : [cratcmr@yahoo.com](mailto:cratcmr@yahoo.com),

CRAT is an NGO addressing the needs of torture survivors and trauma victims (refugees, asylum seekers, prisoners, inter-tribal war victims). For nationals and prisoners, only the Bamenda Branch office offers services to individuals in the community and this is limited to psychosocial counselling.

- Trauma Centre Cameroon (TCC)<sup>83</sup>  
BP 30346 Biyem Assi -Yaoundé  
Tel: (237) 22 31 35 27 / 22 31 10 04  
E-mail: [tc\\_rehabilitation@yahoo.com](mailto:tc_rehabilitation@yahoo.com)

This centre offers medical, psychological/psychotherapeutic, psychiatric, juridical and social support to traumatised persons.

### 1.6.3 Charity and care organisations

- CARITAS  
Bureau for Social Charitable Activities  
Mvoyle Catholic Parish, Yaounde  
Tel: (237) 33 31 32 08 /33 31 15 92  
E-mail: [basc@iccnnet.com](mailto:basc@iccnnet.com)

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<sup>83</sup> <http://130.227.3.66/usr/irct/home.nsf/unid/JREW-6TFGF4>

## Annex A

### List of contacted people

#### People

Adji Abbo, National Secretary, AS-VEOCAM, Akwa-Douala  
A soldier at the Military Hospital (Garrison), Yaoundé  
Bakalack David, Centre Social Akwa-Douala  
Bengha Ngocha Martin, President General, Regional Centre for the Welfare of the Ageing Persons in Cameroon (RECEWAPEC), Bamenda  
Chantal Ngouassa, President, AVD. Akwa-Douala  
Coordinator, St Jean Orphanage, Deido-Douala  
Director, Village d'Enfant SOS, Mbalmayo  
Dr Sanga Ngassa Margaret, President, SWAA Littoral, Douala  
Dr. Ndzana Alima Hubert, gerontologist and director of FOGAGE, Yaoundé  
Ebana Bienvenue Magloire, President, Coopérative des Handicapes du Cameroun (COOPHACAM), Yaoundé  
Ellandi Mballa Crescence, Orphelinat Sainte Famille, Ojah - Yaoundé  
ETETI EBANGA Richard, Director of the Externat Médico-pédagogique, La Colombe-Yaounde  
Jacob Owona, Professeur spécialisé, Ecole Spécialisée pour Enfant Déficient Auditifs (ESEDA), Yaoundé  
President, Espoir Sourds et aveugles du Cameroun, Yaoundé  
Jonny Lopez, Member, COOPHACAM, Douala  
Kwachu Justin, Executive Director, Women in Alternative Action (WAA), Yaoundé  
Korot Anne Marie, Centre de Rééducation des Enfants Sourds (CRES), Douala  
Les Seours de Mere Teresa, Simbok - Yaoundé  
Manga Marie Mathilde, President, African Women Association (AWA), Yaounde  
Mbarga Engelbert Gaston, President, APACAM, Douala  
Mbogbe Abenoun Angele Marie, Director, CPFF Douala  
Mbotuh Daniel, Psychiatric Nurse, Jamot Hospital, Yaounde  
Mr. Agamba, Provincial Delegation of Social Affairs for the Littoral, Douala  
Mr. BELINGA, coordinator of Main dans La Main (Orphanage) - Bonamousadi - Douala  
Mr. David, Program coordinator, Chain des Foyers Saint Nicodeme, Douala  
Mr. Kiven, Ministry of Finance, Yaounde  
Ndzengue Bertin Didier, social worker and chief educationist, Home Atelier, Douala  
Ngalle Mbongo Ether, ACAFEJ, Akwa-Douala  
Ngando Clara, 'Brigade du Contrôle des Institutions Publics et Privées', Akwa Douala  
Njok Bibum Aloysius, Buea School for the Deaf, Bomaka - Buea  
Ndzana Alima Hubert, Gerontologist and director of FOGAGE, Douala  
Olama Agathe, 'Agent de Maîtrise', National Social Insurance Fund, Yaounde  
Personnel at CNPS Branch Bonaberi-Douala  
Petit Ngwa, IT and Communications Officer, Amour du Prochain, Bonanjo-Douala  
Pascaline Fonyuy Tar, Executive Secretary CAWOLED, Douala  
Provincial Chief of Statistics at the Delegation of Women Empowerment and Family for the Littoral, Douala  
Social Assistant, Divisional Delegation of Social Affairs for Wouri, Douala  
Sr. Fuen Santa, Mother General, Foyer Sainte Louise, Nsimalen, Yaounde  
Sr. Cecilia Wiryen, Director, St. Joseph's Children and Adult Home (SAJOCAH), Mambu Bafut  
Tagne Tapia, Founder, Association pour la charité, la scolarité et l'Humanité, Douala  
Yamfam Mama, Chief of Centre, Centre de Santé Intègre de la Léproserie, Ngallan

#### Institutions

Centre de Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille, Akwa-Douala  
Divisional Delegation of Social Affairs for Wouri Division, Brigade de Controle, Salle de fête Douala  
Fondation pour l' Education des Déficients Mentaux et Auditifs 'le Caméléon' Douala

Jamot Hospital, Yaoundé  
Laquitinie Hospital, Douala  
Military Hospital Yaoundé (Garrison)  
Ministry of Labour and Social Security  
Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS), Sub Directorate for the Social Protection of Elderly Persons, Yaoundé  
Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS), Sub Directorate for the Social Protection of Handicap Persons, Yaoundé  
Ministry of the Economy and Finance (MINEFI), Sub Directorate of Pensions and 'Rente Viagères', Yaoundé  
Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Family (MINPROFF), Yaoundé  
PROMHANDICAM Association Cameroon, Yaoundé  
Provincial Delegation of Social Affairs for the Littoral, Douala  
Provincial Delegation of Women's Empowerment and Family for the Littoral, Douala  
Provincial Delegation of Women's Empowerment and Family for the Centre, Sub Directorate for Family Welfare, Yaoundé

## Annex B

<b>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</b>
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ALVF	Association de Lute contre les Violences faites au Femmes
ACAFEJ	Association Camerounaise des Femmes Juristes / Cameroonian Association of Women in the Legal Professions
ADPF	Association de Promotion et de Défense des Droits de la Femme
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APACAM	Association des Personnes Agées du Cameroun
AVD	Association Veuves en Detresse
AS-VEOCAM	Association Veuves et Orphelins du Cameroun
BSD	Buea School for the Deaf
CAWE	Cameroon Association for Women Entrepreneurship
CAMNAFAW	Cameroon National Association for all Women
CAWOLED	Cameroon Women in Leadership and Development
C.R.E.S.	Centre de Rééducation des Enfants Sourds
CAFENEC	Committee of Assistance to Needy Women of Cameroon
CJARC	Cercle Des Jeunes Aveugles Réhabilités du Cameroun
COOPHACAM	Coopérative des Handicapes du Cameroun
CRAT	Centre for Rehabilitation and Abolition of Trauma
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FOCAGES	Fondation Camerounaise de Gérontologie Sociale
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit)
HAFI	Hope for African Family Initiative
HOPTEC	Hephzibah Handicapped and Orphanage Training, Production and Ecstasy Centre
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MINPROFF	Ministry of Women Empowerment and Family
MINEFI	Ministry of the Economy and Finance
MINAS	Ministry of Social Affairs
MCM	Mouvement Camerounais des Mères
NACC	National AIDS Control Committee
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PNS-OEV	Programme National de Soutien Orphelins et Enfants Vulnérables
RENATA	National Network of the Association of Aunties (Réseau National des Associations de Tantines)
RECEWAPEC	Regional Centre for the Welfare of the Ageing Persons in Cameroon
RIB	Rehabilitation Institute for the Blind
SWAA	Society for Women and AIDS in Africa
UNICEF	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session (on HIV/AIDS)
WEC/CPFF	Women Empowerment Centres/Centre de Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille
WHO	World Health Organisation
HIPIC/PPTE	Highly Indebted Poor Countries / “Pays Pauvres tres Endettes”