

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP ADVOCACY

EDUCATION AND SENSITIZATION FOR EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY

When citizens in a democracy vote, they simply exercise their rights and responsibility to determine who shall rule in their name. In a dictatorship the contrary prevails. There is a coerced show of public support for the government. The task of education in a Democracy is not simply to avoid the indoctrination of authoritarian regimes, and provide instruction that is neutral concerning political values but entails active engagement motivated by informed and reasoned government.

The participation rate of Cameroonians in elections (about 4million out of 20 million) is way below the average of the total population. As such, the outcome only reflects a

fraction of the entire population. There is thus the need for education, sensitization and collective mobilisation to increase these numbers. MDDT therefore strongly advocates that all Cameroonians focus on the following factors to strengthen the current democracy and render it fully credible.

1. **Massive Registration especially by women and youths**
2. **Research and evaluation of each candidate's plan of action and political programs**
3. **Perseverance and commitment to follow up correction of names and identification of voting polls.**
4. **Massive voting especially by youths and women**
5. **Protection of votes using modern and transparent technologies**

following questions and did not hesitate to communicate their views and desires to MDDT Sparks.

How did you come in contact with the MDDT and when did you become an MDDT member?

What is your role within the organization?

What do you gain being an MDDT member?

Where do you see yourself in five years time within MDDT?

An MDDT Volunteer participating during a problem analysis working session on "Active Citizenship and Education For Effective Democracy"



MDDT legal Adviser on the after-effects of non-involvement and participation by youths and women in policy making.

VOX POPULI

MDDT Sparks for its second issue spoke to some MDDT members on their involvement within the Movement. They were all asked the



I came in contact with MDDT via a friend's profile on Facebook and for 2 months now, I have been an active MDDT member. I have participated in MDDT activities and training courses (seminars and workshops, charity visits) and I have recently been offered the position of Environment and Agriculture Coordinator. This is a great opportunity for me to work with a fun and dynamic team. Within my new role, I see MDDT working to enhance environmental friendly practices within local communities and increase youth involvement in agriculture.

I first learnt about MDDT from a friend who is an MDDT member and I have now been a registered MDDT member for two years. I have been an active participant within MDDT working groups. I am presently in charge of MDDT research and Projects. I can't really measure the benefits I have achieved. However, as an MDDT member, I benefit from a pool of diverse skills, experiences and educational backgrounds within the Movement. As an MDDT member and Research & project Coordinator, I see myself fostering MDDT projects and research nationally and internationally.



My husband told me about MDDT and since then, I have been with the Movement for one year. I contribute to the Movement's vision by participating in Committee and Executive meetings as MDDT Women's coordinator. It gives me great joy to give back to my community and share in the plight of others. I feel most obliged and willing to do all I can to get as many girls and women involved in MDDT activities. In the future, I see tremendous improvement in the socio-economic and political lives of women in local communities via MDDT activities.



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MDDT SPARKS

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EDITORIAL COLUMN

MDDT Sparks is a medium that MDDT uses in communicating information on the Movement's activities and circulates news concerning global development. It is published once in two months by MDDT and is distributed to members, stakeholders and everyone else who is interested.

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The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right to edit all text submitted.

MDDT Publications

Letter From the National Coordinator

Members of MDDT, and distinguish readers of MDDT SPARKS, I would like to use this opportunity to inform you on the development of MDDT since our last Sparks issue. The MDDT Team has during the past two months been working relentlessly on realizing MDDT's Vision and we have some achievements to share with you.

Firstly, as regards the strategic move of our Head Office from Bamenda to Buea, I am delighted to let you know that we have successfully settled down in our new office. Logistically, we can now accommodate our operations team and also receive visitors in our modern office space.

In a bit to foster youth solidarity, involvement and participation in Africa's Development, MDDT represented Cameroon at the 4th Biennial Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) Conference in Lagos, Nigeria. The theme of this year's conference was "Innovation and Creativity for a Better Africa: Implementing Your Dreams".

MDDT represented Cameroon with two innovative ideas, "The Use of Mobile Phone Technology and Internet to Enhance Food Security" and "Social Media, a Means to Youth

Involvement in Policy Making and Good governance".

A further exciting development that we are working on at MDDT head Office is the finalization of a commitment agreement with the Regional Delegation of Public Health, Buea. It is the government's honour to collaborate with the civil society to improve livelihood. MDDT had a working session with the South West regional delegation of Health on procedural parameters of partnership. In the areas of promotion and prevention, MDDT aims at enhancing health security in local communities. This leads us to the raison d'être of MDDT's ongoing strategic and innovative programme activities on active citizenship and enhancing food security as a means to sustainable livelihood. MDDT is moving forward despite inevitable setbacks. We are working hard to improve the communication and reach-out of MDDT so that we can better serve our members, communities and do more to promote social justice and sustainable development.

Clifford Niba Akonteh
MDDT Coordinator



MDDT HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON HEALTH PARTNERSHIP



Regional Delegation of Public Health visits MDDT Head Office

The South West Regional Delegation of Public Health (RDPH - SW) – at the invitation for partnership by MDDT paid a visit to MDDT Head Office on the 18th of October 2012.

As the first official visitor in the new MDDT Head office, the Delegation's mission that was led by Mr. Njie Ernest - representative of the South West Regional Delegate of Public Health, expressed great satisfaction for the warm reception by the MDDT Team.

(Con't on Page 2)

RDPH representative, Mr. Njie Ernest commends MDDT's commitment to comply with partnership terms.

GOING ACROSS BORDERS

MDDT Represents Cameroon at the YALDA Conference, Lagos - Nigeria

Right: YALDA International Chairperson, Bakumu Laone addressing the delegates during the conference.

Below: "Government & Policy Making" panel chaired by Mmasekgoa M. Mwamba, Deputy Secretary General of Commonwealth.



Right: Representing Cameroon, MDDT delegates to the YALDA conference, Clifford N. Akonteh and Christian L. Fonye pose for a photo.



Left: YALDA delegates from all over Africa together with YALDA volunteers and Executives (in black T-shirts) take a group picture at the end of the conference

In its drive to promote entrepreneurship and good governance, MDDT recently participated in the fourth biennial Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) conference, in Lagos, Nigeria. With the Theme 'Innovation and creativity for a better Africa: Implementing your Dreams', the conference attracted young people across the African continent to constructively interact by presenting their innovative ideas in a bid to trigger innovation in all sectors vital to African development.

"The youth constitute about 60 percent of the African population which remains a tremendous potential which could become a demographic dividend if well harnessed," remarked Mmasekgoa Masire Mwamba, Deputy Secretary General of Commonwealth.

MDDT was represented at the conference by its National Coordinator Mr. Clifford Niba and Secretary General Mr. Christian Fonye. Their participation was felt through their brilliant presentations on **"Social media: a means to youth involvement in policy making and Good Governance."** and **"The use of Mobile phone technology and internet to enhance food security."**

MDDT also displayed Cameroon's cultural prowess by translating for the few French speaking African countries present and participating in the cultural evenings organised by YALDA delegates.

"The conference was a true expression of the buoyancy of Africa's diversity. This in itself will reinforce African integration as a vital step towards achieving its development" affirmed MDDT Secretary General, Mr. Christian Fonye.

The YALDA conference ended on a positive note with an inspirational piece of poetry by one of the delegates suggesting that the youths have to be the change rather than wait for it to happen. MDDT looks forward to spreading YALDA's vision to Cameroonians and Central Africa and is equally working hard for Cameroon to host the next biennial YALDA conference.

Christian Fonye

Regional Delegation of Public Health visits MDDT Head Office (con't from page 1)

"The Ministry of Public health is always in need of many reliable collaborators in the health sector such as MDDT. The Delegation applauds MDDT's sense of commitment especially towards health" said Mr. Njie. Other RDPH dignitaries present included Mr. Ewang Terence, Chief of Bureau of Administrative Affairs and Mr. Ichu Kenneth, Administrative Assistant.

According to Mr. Njie, the RDPH visit is aimed at establishing contact following MDDT's formal request for Partnership. The visit included a meeting with MDDT Executives and Operations Team and a tour of the Organization's Office.

During the meeting, MDDT National Coordinator Mr. Clifford Niba, addressed the Delegation's mission and presented a brief overview of MDDT's vision for health.

"Health is vital to human life. MDDT therefore recognizes the important contribution health has on development and is committed in promoting healthy communities" stated Mr. Niba.

The Chief of Bureau of Administrative Affairs, Mr. Ewang presented the Ministry of Public Health's legal requirements for collaboration with any health advocate such as MDDT. These conditions are intended for MDDT to successfully obtain a Collaboration Agreement letter from the Regional Delegation of Public Health.

At the end of the meeting, the Public Health Delegation was given a tour of MDDT office.

Moka Ndolo Lisette

Below: MDDT Staff members take a group picture with the representatives from the South West Regional Delegation of Public Health



ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

The MDDT "Farmers' House" Project

The Movement for Democracy Development and Transparency (MDDT) has recently conceived an agricultural project, the "Farmers' House" in its effort to ensure food security in Cameroon.

This "Farmers' House" project is one in a series of projects and activities that the movement has conceived with the hope that its adoption and implementation shall meet the expected outcomes.

According to The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), food security is **"When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."**



MDDT staff surveying newly acquired land towards the implementation of the farmers' house project



Photography: Courtesy FAO

However, extreme poverty (i.e. less than one dollar per capita income) remains the central factor affecting household food security and the livelihoods of over 900 million undernourished people worldwide (FAO, 2006a).

Through the "Farmers' House" project, MDDT aims at growing and storing crops that are suitable for local resources and conditions as well as create and optimize market opportunities in a bid to increase food availability, food access and food adequacy for all.

"This strategy will enable small-scale farmers especially women to take advantage of new market opportunities and the changing worldwide demand for both staple and high value food products" stated Mr. Kikishi Kenneth, MDDT Programs Coordinator.

The Movement is currently developing partnerships with local Chiefs, environment & agricultural Common Initiative Groups and other Development institutions particularly in the North and South West Regions to acquire land and personnel. The project is expected to start in the next farming season.

Etame Nadege & Andoh Rex

MDDT PARTICIPATES IN EUROPEAN UNION-PASC CONFERENCE

MDDT was actively present in the Civil Society Strengthening Program [PASC] on the 18th of August 2012. MDDT strongly identifies with PASC's objective of building the institutional and technical capacity of civil society organizations so that they can function effectively. The conference was heavily represented by civil society organizations and other interest groups and stakeholders.

The head of the steering committee Mr Tabe Moses, commended the government's efforts in collaborating with the civil society. The regional delegate of MINEPAT equally expressed the government's commitment to forge a lasting partnership with the civil society. He urged the civil society to adopt a proactive and innovative approach to development.

The head of PASC Committee Mr Koffi Awity affirmed his commitment to the people of the south-west and he promised to employ the principle of positive discrimination so that the final document could represent the aspirations of the varied civil society groupings in the 10 regions of Cameroon.

Mr Koffi gave a breakdown of PASC's expectations from civil society organizations stating vital areas which the civil society has to work on.

He emphasised on the ways of sharing best practices. This will entail how to make information useful and available through different media. He equally defined the criteria for funding related activities.

Mr Koffi then went to the second important consideration for effective operation. He emphasised on capacity building laying emphasis on institutional, technical and operational set up as a means to ensure effective governance. He also enlightened participants on how to strengthen partnerships between private and corporate entities.

The conference ended with a word of encouragement by Mr Koffi urging organizations to engage in the production of materials that they would benefit from a rewarding relationship with PASC and the European Union if they complied with structural, technical and legal requirements.

Mabel Bakari & Walters Shashan Mbinglo