



MDDT
Movement for
Democracy
Development and
Transparency

Movement for
Democracy,
Development and
Transparency

MDDT SPARKS

ISSUE NO.3

FEBRUARY 2013

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Letter From the National Coordinator

Friends and Readers of MDDT Sparks and MDDT Stakeholders accept New Year greetings from MDDT Cameroon. It is MDDT's obligation to report to you on its progress in filling the void that exists in the socio-economic and political framework of Cameroon, through enhancing democracy and human rights in a bid to achieve improved and sustainable livelihood.

Despite its limited resources, the MDDT team has in just three months, hit unprecedented targets moving faster than projected. MDDT Cameroon is now CENTRAL AFRICA'S Focal Point and Branch Expansion Office for the Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA). MDDT is thereby charged with the duty of enforcing YALDA's mission of connecting youths of the Central African sub-region with the goal of consolidating the integration of Africans as a vital step towards its development.

Following the ever increasing syndrome of voter apathy amongst the youth in the North West and South-West regions which was strongly manifested by their reluctance to participate in the upcoming elections, MDDT mobilized youths, sensitizing them on the stakes and consequences of non-participation, and

facilitated their registration via free transportation to the nearest registration points.

Again, MDDT consolidated its partnership with the Ministry of Health, celebrating the World AIDS Day (1st December) 2012 under the theme "Getting to Zero", carrying out an intense sensitization campaign in market squares and schools. MDDT further launches its research project "Youths Prone to Sexually Transmitted Diseases in the University Community, Buea". This is the first phase of an MDDT Project to instill a sense of sexual responsibility amongst youths to curb youth mortality rate and increase economic viability in the southwest region.

MDDT Cameroon in an attempt to reduce the continuous plight of youth unemployment and juvenile delinquency in Cameroon, partners with the SPLASH Professional Help Service Agency, (SPHSA) facilitating the employment of 350 full-time and part-time skilled and semi-skilled youths.

Fellow readers, MDDT's torch light phrase for 2013 is "Getting Youths Involved". MDDT aims at mobilizing youths to gain momentum, get involved and not only participate in bringing about change but to be the change. Cameroon remains Africa in miniature and together we must conserve and utilize our resources to foster economic growth, exhibiting a sense of political maturity for the preservation of peace in this cradle of our fore-fathers, Cameroon.

Clifford M. Abanteh
National Coordinator



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.

Editor-in-Chief
Walters Shashan B. Mbingo
Contributors
**MDDT Staff, Members &
Volunteers**

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

... an MDDT Publication ...

CONSOLIDATING PARTNERSHIPS

MDDT Becomes Focal Point For YALDA Central Africa

"Whatever the underlying causes of slow progress in Africa may be, youths have to take responsibility of their own progress." It is on this note that MDDT has kept its commitment in promoting youth leadership across the African continent. As a follow up to its vision of getting youths involved, MDDT has been mobilizing efforts to engage youths in Cameroon and Africa within the Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) framework and family.

MDDT was given the noble task of setting up a YALDA branch in Central Africa following the biennial conference in Lagos, Nigeria last year. This initiative has been embraced with a lot of energy, hope and promise by the youths of the Buea university community. **"I recognize the value and relevance of a cross cultural experience and YALDA happens to be a perfect reflection of a forum where diverse, creative and innovative ideas could be harnessed for a better Africa"**, remarked a university student. It is in this vein that MDDT dispatched letters to strategic institutions in a bid to satisfy the modalities for setting up a national and subsequently a regional branch. The universities include the Pan-African Institute for development (PAID-WA), University of Buea (UB) and the University Institute of Diocese of Buea (UIDB).

This initiative will usher in a new experience and opportunity for Cameroonian youths to unlock their potential and benefit from the resourcefulness of seasoned mentors, lucrative internship placements and job opportunities across the African continent. This will develop the youths into talented young people with exceptional leadership potential into visionary and transformational leaders.

MDDT is committed to mobilize Cameroonian youths to make their mark in the wave of African development through valuable contributions in the YALDA network and other relevant channels.

by Christian L. Fonye

GETTING TO ZERO: MDDT HIV-AIDS CAMPAIGN, 2012

It was quite a fulfilling achievement in the health domain for MDDT when it joined the South West Regional Delegation and the HIV/AIDS South West Regional Commission in sensitizing youths and the Civil Society on the theme of the 2012 World's AIDS day, "Getting to Zero". This took place on the 1st of December 2012 at the Youth Centre in Buea, the heart of Fako Division in the S.W Region of Cameroon.



HEALTH: MDDT Launches First Phase of Youth-focused Health Research Project

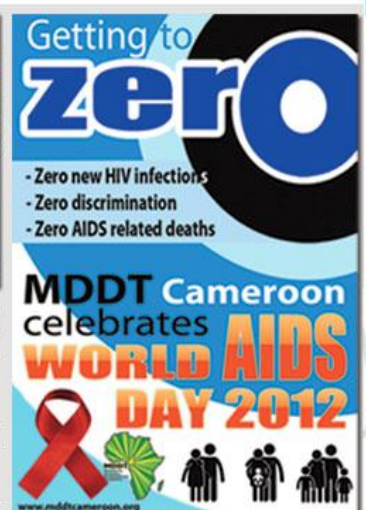
In line with MDDT's watch phrase for 2013 "Getting Youths Involved" MDDT saw an urgent need for improved understanding of factors affecting adolescent sexuality and the implementation of educational programmes designed to improve their knowledge, risk awareness and subsequent behavioural outcomes. MDDT Cameroon has launched the first phase of this educative project **"A Research Paper on Youths Prone to Sexually Transmitted Diseases in the University Community of Buea"**.

This phase is to serve as a major guidance to the intervention methods MDDT will utilize to curb the number of youths exposed to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the University Community. MDDT in partnership with the Delegation of Public Health, South West Region and the Higher Institute of Applied Medical Sciences (HIAMS) will administer questionnaires to at least 2,500 youths and 10 state-recognized Medical Hospitals, Clinics and Health Centers. A factsheet will be drawn on the number of youths infected with STDs in 2012 and the different types of STDs, the number of deaths, methods of infection and most importantly its impact on the economic and political viability and growth of the Buea sub-division.

by Christian L. Fonye



Using the radio, brochures and fliers, MDDT engaged in awareness programs to address HIV-AIDS related issues. Thus, following a 2 day radio sensitization campaign, the massive turnout by youths from all corners of the Sub-division guaranteed the successful accomplishment of the 2012 HIV-AIDS campaign. MDDT produced fliers and T-



Shirts that were distributed to youths and participants at the activity ground, the youth centre. After all official formalities had been carried out, the MDDT team members and health partners moved about, giving talks to students and youth groups in very interactive sessions. Thereafter, the MDDT team visited Market Squares, where they distributed fliers, condoms and held interactive discussions.

by Ngouekam Roseline & Walters Shashan



MDDT TRIGGERS YOUTH REGISTRATION IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Africa still suffers from archaic traditional and socio-political and economic practices that deprive women and youths especially of their rights. The minds of youths are clouded with “feel good society tendencies”, not sensitized enough to face their challenges and turn their demographic advantage into political prowess. Despite the democratic update of our inherited post-colonial socio-political systems, much remains to be desired practically, as the continuous occurrence of non-democratic and non-constitutional practices have contributed to discourage the youths and women from active citizenship. This carefree attitude is deceptive and represents a bubble that if neglected will grow bigger over time till the point where it bursts out and unleashes grave results.

Cameroon has a total population of over 20million, with over 60% being youths, yet statistics from the African Election Data show that in the 2011 presidential elections, 7.251.651 Cameroonians registered all over the world and only 4.887.249 went to the polling stations on election day. The previous presidential elections have never been different, in 1992, 1997 and 2004 elections, about 4million Cameroonians registered and about 3million voted on average. It is therefore evident that the election results are a reflection of the minds of a minority and proof of non-participation of youths.



It is in this guise that MDDT rallied and sensitized youths in the university community of Buea on the delicacy of non-registration for the upcoming municipal and parliamentary elections, encouraging them to take advantage of the biometric system to express their minds rather than mastermind riots, boycotts and strikes. MDDT further transported at least 1000 youths to election registration stations as a means to promote Cameroonian Democracy. This registration campaign was carried out in partnership with other civil society organizations - Foundation for Released Prisoners (FRP) and the Association for the Promotion of Women and Children (APWAC) and lasted two months.

MDDT has also initiated an interactive communication medium via social media, using its facebook pages (mddtngo and mddtcameroon) and Twitter to inspire youths to participate in elections and motivating them with captivating audio-visuals to send across a call for participation in democratic processes.

In summary, MDDT is advocating that youths can only guarantee and make better their welfare by active citizenship which means participating in all decision-making processes that affect them directly or indirectly. By making their voice heard, youths contribute towards political and economic stability thus creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.



PHESA: AN MDDT-SPLASH PROJECT ON EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTHS



The PHESA staff with members of the MDDT Team

As regards the livelihood of students in general, an intense examination of the university community of Buea in the South West Region of Cameroon paints a gruesome picture of what might obtain in most communities surrounding higher institutions in Cameroon. One will be surprised to know that some students are sent off to school at the beginning of an

academic year with just their school fees and basic needs and no subsequent follow-up thereafter (for months unending); some to live independently in areas they have never visited before; the lack of follow-up by their parents for their wellbeing has been allegedly attributed to poverty.

The long term effect has been an immature and unguided search by these young students for quick ways to satisfy their needs, especially the girls. Their financial insufficiency amidst peer pressure and the precarious social nature of these university environments, has forced some of them to adopt unhealthy life-styles for survival. The outcome has been sexual promiscuity/prostitution, internet scamming, high crime waves etc. with far-reaching consequences such as heavy school drop-outs, the high prevalence of sexually transmissible diseases, higher levels of HIV infections etc.

To address the situation, MDDT partnered with SPLASH Networks International, a Buea-based private association to create the Professional Help Service Agency (PHESA) Buea, in October 2012, the main objective being to provide part-time jobs for students and full-time employment opportunities to graduates and other youths. Interested students and youths are duly registered with the agency via solid identification procedures. For students, the agency does not only provide them with opportunities to generate an income to meet up with their basic needs but also follows up to ensure their education runs unperturbed. Opportunities exist both for skilled and unskilled persons which has further warranted training for some of these youths and students. To date, the agency has registered about 500 students and youths with 63% being females and 37% being males. Of these, 52% have had part-time jobs while 35% have gotten full time jobs with 13% still pending. These jobs constitute home/office care services, community-based social and security services, rendered to individuals, families and firms

by Walters S.B. Mbinglo

“Hardwork, Service & Humanity”



PHESA staff & job-seekers: An ordinary working day at the office.

ARTS & CULTURE: E-Arts & Culture Workshop

ADVOCATING INNOVATION AT THE FOREFRONT OF DEVELOPMENT

The 22nd of January, 2013 marked the beginning of a 3 day workshop on E-art and Culture organized by the National Book Council Cameroon (NBCC). This initiative was a call to Library administrators, art and cultural professionals to update and improve upon the services and functionality of their respective areas of expertise by adopting and integrating modern ICT tools and techniques into their operational mechanisms. The overlying objective was thus, to boost the library, art and Culture sectors by enabling actors to render efficient and user-friendly services to the public. Commenting on the relevance of this workshop, George Ngwane, the NBCC chairperson, had this to say :

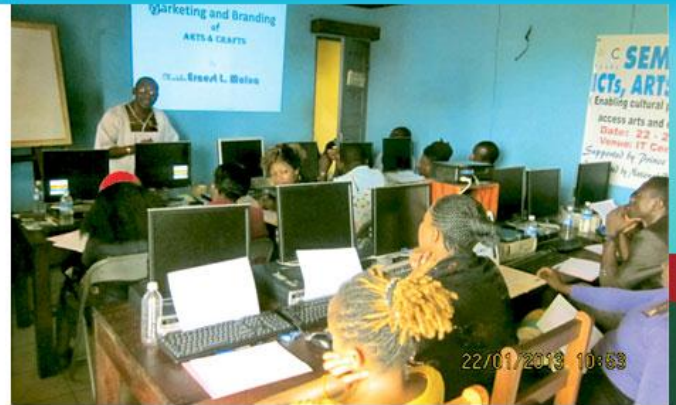


George Ngwane, Chair, National Book Development Council Cameroon

"At this point in time, the Library has become a focal point for the use of Information and communication technologies in society. The proliferation of ICTs has also made the Library redundant in certain cases because the user can now decide to use a cybercafé for his or her information needs but the reality is that libraries as we know them will continue to exist. It is for the Library stake holders to integrate ICTs into Library facilities and services. And this is not just an issue for libraries, but also for other public art and cultural facilities."

The seminar was largely attended by representatives from at least 4 regions of the Cameroon, the North West and South West Regions especially. For 3 days, topics such as "Arts, Culture and the digital culture age", "Making the Library User-Friendly", "Library and ICTs", "How to Set up E-art and Culture Sections in the Library", "Creating, Hosting and Managing an Art and Culture Website", "Using Cellphones, Twitter, Facebook and Blogs to market art and culture" were treated via very interactive sessions with great facilitators. Where and when required, translations were made to assure proper understanding by all present.

The feedback from participants was more than impressive as they manifested their interests with requests for more of such relevant initiatives. Over twenty ideal recommendations and resolutions were arrived at and were to serve as a Memorandum of Understanding between cultural professionals and Municipal Librarians. This Memo, it was agreed, was only going to be possible if the administrative hierarchy



of Libraries and cultural centres could create an enabling financial, human and infrastructural environment with potentials of accomplishing the memo through sourcing for funding from Councils, the Ministry of Arts and Culture and corporations. Finally, the Memo was to serve as an encouragement to Librarians, art and cultural professionals, Municipal and City Councils to develop a "New ARTitude" especially in this modern era of technology.

MDDT was represented by Walters Shashan B. Mbinglo, the Legal Adviser and Database controller who had this to say:

"Today, ICTs and IT in general, have come to concretize globalization, enabling developing countries to leapfrog and catch-up in this fast-paced and highly competitive global environment. Until developing nations and Africans in particular, can challenge themselves with innovation in ICTs for example, they shall always find themselves last in the quest for development; and I am happy to say that MDDT has already initiated plans to organize similar activities particularly in the music and movie sectors."

At the end of the seminar, Participants were awarded certificates and encouraged to continuously search for and adopt innovative ways to reinforce their capacities and make better their services to the public.

Above: & Below left: Cross-section of Participants at the E-Arts & Culture Seminar
Below: Seminar participants together with facilitators and organizers pose for a group picture after award of certificates marking the end of the seminar.



CONTACT US

HEAD OFFICE: UNIVERSITY STREET, CEREC BLOCK
Apartment 2, P.O Box 337, Molyko - Buea
Tel: (+237) 75 23 05 09, (+237) 93 94 54 59,
(+237) 33 84 14 01, Fax: (237) 33 32 30 14

Email: mddtnational@yahoo.com
Website: www.mddtcameroon.org

For any suggestions on MDDT Sparks, please contact us using:
mddtdatabase@yahoo.com, (or call (+237) 77 23 27 55)

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