



2019 ACTIVITY REPORT

OF

CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS

By

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(Coordinator)

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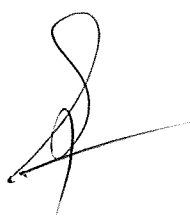
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report focuses on *Change Communications'* activities for the year ending 2019. The year was marked in Cameroon by an unprecedented escalation in an on-going armed conflict between the state security forces and separatist militia fighting to carve out an independent state from the two English-speaking NW and SW regions. This escalation led to mass displacements of affected populations from the war zone to neighbouring Francophone regions of the West and Adamawa regions among others. Consequently, our activities were directed as a priority towards small-scale humanitarian initiatives for affected populations, especially the internally displaced persons, (IDPs). In all, activities carried out covered 450 IDPs in nine (09) towns and cities of the West and Adamawa regions. In addition, two fundraising operations consisting of online appeals for donations from friends, corporate bodies and charities based in and out of Cameroon, and a token-fee-paying workshop for heads of civil society organizations (CSOs) were organized.

The overall performance for the year 2019 was fairly satisfactory even though some challenges were encountered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop at the top and a horizontal line extending to the right.

1. ACTIVITY BY ACTIVITY REVIEW

1.1: Fundraising

The escalation of the armed conflict in the English-speaking regions between October 2018 and February 2019 led to more mass influx of people into the West and Adamawa regions. The new challenge pushed us to alter our initial plan of activities to focus on two aggressive fundraising operations for humanitarian assistance purposes.

1.1.1: Online fundraising:

An online fund-raising was conducted through written appeals for donations from friends, corporate bodies and charities in and out of Cameroon. Eighteen were sent online to friends resident in Cameroon, Britain, US, Germany, Britain, South Africa and the Arab Emirates (Dubai and Qatar), nine (09) charities “googled” online, 11 corporate bodies and six (06) humanitarian organizations within the country. The appeal in the letters insisted on the humanitarian objectives of the funds raised for victims of an armed conflict identified as the “most neglected violent conflict in the world. Of the 44 appeals made, feedback from 10 was positive. The operation fetched a total of 70,590,000CFA Francs.

1.1.2: Capacity building for heads of CSOs.

Cameroon is today experiencing two major security crises – Boko Haram Jihadist attacks in Far North region in since 2013, and the Anglophone war since 2016. These security crises have in turn provoked a huge humanitarian crisis. The situation has led to the creation of CSOs across the country. Many people created them without any managerial skills. Change Communications stepped in to fill up the skills gap by organizing capacity building workshop in Douala for 50 heads of CSOs on *Project Budgeting and Reporting to enhance Transparency and Accountability*. Each participant paid a token fee ofeach.

1.2.0: Community peace-building workshops

Between October 2018 and February, an estimated 83.000 IDPs from the war zone of the NW and SW regions sought refuge in the West and Adamawa regions to add to the over 200.000 arrived earlier. Over 70% of the displaced persons – men, women and children – were forcefully moving out of their native villages for the first time. They faced serious challenges of adaptation in their new and strange environments. They needed guidance and counseling. A series of nine (09) workshops on *Peaceful Living Together in Host Communities* were organized for 200 IDPs newly arrived in Mbouda, Dschang, Foumbot and Bafousam, (West Region), and 250 in Ngaoundere, Tibati, Banyo, Mayo-Darle and Bankim, (Adamawa Region).

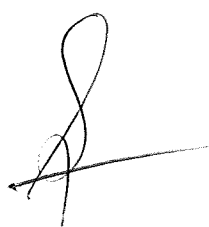


Table 1: Activity by Activity Review

Activity carried out	Place of Activity	Results	Beneficiary(ies)
Activity1: Organized fundraising	Online	70,590,000 CFA Francs	DPs
Activity2: Organized capacity building for heads of CSOs.	Douala	Heads of CSOs trained	50 CSOs heads
		12,000,000 CFA Francs	IDPs
Activity3: Organized 9 community peace-building workshops:	Adamawa and West Regions	IDPs trained	450 IDPs

2.0 CHALLENGES ECOUNTERED

Several challenges came up on the field during the execution of the various activities.

2.1: Lack of collaboration from local administrative and state security forces

Local authorities and security forces, (police, gendarmes) were quite sensitive to civil society activities that relate to the separatist war in the NW and SW regions. Direct contact with IDPs was viewed with suspicion and sometimes *Change Communications* team was interrogated for long hours. This caused frustration and delays in hours and even days in the execution of some activities.

2.2: Breakdown in confidence and trust between IDPs and CSOs

Mobilizing IDPs for the community peace-building workshops was not an easy task. Many of them were quite hesitant and others out rightly resistant to work with *Change Communications* as a CSO. They complained that, quite often they were abused by some so-called humanitarian organizations including state actors who used them “to make money”. The team on the field had to work closely with Christian Church Pastors, Muslim leaders, and community influencers to convince and mobilize the IDPs.

3. Lesson(s) learned

One important lesson was learned concerning fundraising operations. The online approach to raising funds within Cameroon was not quite convenient and convincing for home donors, even with well-known charities and humanitarian organizations. Home donors prefer face-to-face dialogue sessions with officials of the applicant organization. This is quite a useful lesson for future operations.

3. The way forward

In 2020, *Change Communications* will continue to consolidate its efforts in working with and for those affected by the war in the NW and SW regions, with special attention to the fate of internally displaced media professionals. To achieve these objectives, we will more than ever before continue to source for funding in 2020. Additional efforts will be made to widen sourcing from partners within the country.



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