

## Cameroon Visit – March 2023

My visit was useful and provided good opportunities to meet with our partners potential partners and others.

Its more than three years since I was last in Cameroon. The political situation in the North West and the South West regions has deteriorated since that time. I managed to visit Bamenda for a few days. For safety reasons that was the only place in the NW I visited.

If you have questions or comments please contact [info@waterforcameroon.com](mailto:info@waterforcameroon.com)

### **Rotary Filter project (Global Grant 2233863)**

Sero is managing this project very effectively. There will be a total of fifty filters constructed and installed. Fifteen filters constructed by Pa James for instillation in Bamunka. The fifteen filters for Bamunka are completed. Instillation will take place soon.

Instillation of the fifteen filters for Bambalang will take place over the next few weeks.

There will be twenty filters installed in Bamessing. Some of these filters are completed. It's intended to have the remainder completed before the end of May. It's intended to have the entire project fully completed before end of June.

I'm very happy with the progress on this project. The work was more difficult and challenging than normal because of the war conditions.

A report will be sent to Rotary Kumbo, Rotary Guelph and the board of WfC1.



**Filters at Pa James's compound**



## **Bankim**

Bankim is a small town / village situated in the division of Mayo – Banyo in the Adamawa region of Cameroon. It has a population of about 1.5 million.

The Bankim council estimate at least ten thousand Anglophone's are living there as Internally Displaced People (IDP's). Those people have migrated from the North West region to find a safer place to live. This puts more pressure on the limited resources available.

Water for Cameroon has been working there since 2019. Two wells have been constructed in the town. One at the Presbyterian Church and the other at the vocational school founded and administered by ACOHOF a Cameroonian association (ngo).

Another well was constructed at the CBC church a few kilometres outside the town. All three wells are providing water to many people.



**Pricilla and members of ACOHOF at their office in Bankim**

The town of Bankim and the general area does not have safe sources of drinking water. The well at ACOHOF and the Presbyterian Church less than a kilometre away is the only safe water available apart from a few privately owned wells. People come from far away to take water from the wells.

## **Ngambe – Tichar**

From Bankim town, Ngambe –Tichar is only accessible by motor bike. It takes an hour and a half each way over very difficult rocky tracks. A few years ago WfCI constructed a well there at pygmy camp A.

The number of pygmies at the camp varies from time to time some will return back into the forest and remain there for periods of time. The average number at any one time at the camp is probably one hundred including children.

Until the arrival of the well, all the people were suffering from the typical illnesses that come from water borne diseases such as diarrhoea, stomach problems, malaria etc.

Sero visited the camp in 2020 and provided medication to treat all the community with a serious skin rash. Cameroon Medical provided the funding.



These people are reluctant to seek treatment from a clinic or hospital. On our visit in March 2023 it was discovered that all the rash problems were cured.

### **Safe drinking Water**

We all know having continued access to safe drinking water is essential for good health. The water from the well has improved the health of the people enormously.

When Sero visited the community prior to the well being constructed the overall health of everyone there was extremely bad. Serious water borne disease was present in almost everyone

When a well is constructed in a community the health outcomes can be very difficult to verify. However in this instance we have been able to observe the improvements.

In a typical community people are spread out over a wide area. This makes it very challenging to observe the outcomes. It requires a lot of work recording the health conditions prior to the well being constructed and after the well has been used for some time.

Most of the big NGO's use methods that have been used for many years. These methods involve a lot of time on survey work by specially trained people with follow up work, analysing the data etc.

Water for Cameroon has never carried out such surveys and assessments. Designing such surveys and assessments and carrying out the actual work on the ground is time consuming and very costly.

Assuming accurate data is obtained with such surveys then the assessment of that data requires trained persons to evaluate.

Water for Cameroon takes a different approach. WfC works on the basis that safe drinking water will improve the general health of those using the water. It's not necessary to carry out such surveys and assessments.

Water for Cameroon places a lot of emphasis on having the users understand the real need for Household water treatment practices to apply in the home.

Of first importance is the new water source is protected to prevent contamination. Then ensuring the water removed from the well does not become contaminated in the home. This requires know how and constant effort from the users. WfCI provides training.

If that can be achieved then it's very likely that the overall health of those using the water will improve over time.

With the well at pygmy camp A it has been possible to observe very clearly the improvement in the overall health of the community.

This is because this is a tight knit community living in the same small area continually. Drinking water only from the well.

This well has had a very positive impact on the health of the pygmies. The health improvement is very noticeable. The community expressed sincere thanks for this precious gift.

The community was not able to provide the usual cash contribution. Sero did not receive her usual management fee for her work and expenses.

Her fee comes from the community cash contribution and the donation of 100,000cfa from the well constructor. She did receive the donation from the constructor.

These people are ministered to by Ps. George a CBC pastor who has been working in the area for some time. It's very challenging work. Hopefully WfC can continue working with him and the community.

## **Fighter**

FIGHTER is a whiskey brand and is a serious scourge among the poorer communities, particularly within the pygmy community.

It's sold in plastic sachets, is available all over and is very cheap to buy.

There are various priced sachets on sale, starting from 100 cfa, - 500cfa making it "affordable" to poor people. Numbers of people are addicted.

As in many poor communities people seek solace in products that allow them to "forget" their problems. These products very often lead to addiction and death.

## **Proposed Filter project at Bankim**

The Cameroonian registered association (ngo) ACOHOF is an impressive vocational training school based in Bankim.

It was founded by Mr.Afoni Justin Njobam.The school was originally located in the North West region and had to relocate because of the war.

They came to Bankim in 2020 and started again from scratch.

In the past three years they have done incredible work creating infrastructure including class rooms, dormitories for boys and girls and other useful buildings.

It's possible that WfC will partner with AHOF to create a Bio Sand Filter training facility at the school. This has potential to establish a Filter manufacturing facility in the Adamwa region owned and managed by the school. Sero and ACOHOF will explore this possibility in the next months. Funding will be required.

## **Proposed Water Catchment project at Bankim**

A request for assistance from WfCI for a catchment has come from Ps. Marcel (Bankim CBC pastor) and his team at Bankim.

If designed and constructed correctly. The catchment has the potential to provide water to a large area within the district.

WfCI has suggested that the church consider dividing the project into manageable phases. This will mean that relatively small amounts of funding will be required for each stage. That each stage can provide a useful outcome that can benefit the community.

Doing it this way allows the community to see incremental “value “ for the money used. Catchments tend to be undertaken in one large operation. Requiring a very large amount of money up front.

This catchment can be designed to allow for extra supply tanks to be added to the system in the future as more funds become available. It should be designed to supply water to small areas at each phase. Funding will be required.

### **Proposed project on Trauma healing**

Water for Cameroon Ngo- Ketunjia believes that the most pressing need at the moment is to conduct trauma healing workshops for those affected by the war in the North West region. Ps. Pius and Ps. Edward have received training in this area.

A request for financial assistance along with a basic proposal for a number of workshops will be submitted by WfCN soon. They would like to begin the work in April or May.



**Ps. Pius**



**Ps. Edward**

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*The war in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon continues to cause hardship for the communities.*

*Thousands of people have fled their homes and farms to find safety in neighbouring regions.*

*We look to the day when peace and justice will be applied in both regions.*

*When people can return to their homes and resume their lives.*

*When children can return to school and continue their education.*

## **Sero & Pricilla's work**

Sero continues to do much work with the communities. Four wells have been constructed within less than six months. That is incredible, especially considering the difficulties caused by the war.

Sero and Pricilla now have a small house / clinic at Bankim deep in the bush. Pricilla is there with Sharon all the time. In my view Pricilla is still traumatised from her five nights in captivity by the sepretatists a few years ago.

Sero is at Bamessing with three other girls. For various reasons these four girls found themselves without a home. The girls are attending school and are in good health and enjoying their lives.

Regards,

*Mick 7*

March 20<sup>th</sup>. 2023

*It is better to be of lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.*

**Proverbs16:19**

