

ICENECDEV Prison Project

Project Background Information

There is insufficient knowledge about the African prison community, both in and out of correctional facilities. What is known is alarming and underscores the importance of acting rapidly to fill information gaps in order to better assess national situations, identify good practices and support more effective national policies, programs and service delivery. Occupancy rates reflect high levels of overcrowding. In Cameroon occupancy rates range around 300 per cent–345 per cent above planned levels. Overcrowding also translates into the mixing of prisoners across categories of those incarcerated (pre-trial detainees, convicts, juveniles, men and women). Available data shows very high numbers of pre-trial detainees, those awaiting sentencing or the outcome of appeals (percentage within the prison population) for most African countries, ranging between 50 and 70 per cent. Cameroon along with Mozambique and Madagascar are the countries with the highest number of such detainees at the level of 65%. The appalling physical conditions of African prisons, along with inadequate food and nutrition and almost non-existent health services, seriously exacerbate the prevalence of HIV and TB inside prisons. Poor food and nutrition, including low quality and scarcity of food for those incarcerated is also disquieting and becomes life-threatening.

An international agreement addressing prison conditions in Africa (Article 319 of the 1996 Kampala Declaration) allows prisons to form partnerships with organizations and NGOs like International Centre for Environmental Education and Community Development(ICENECDEV) to provide rehabilitation services. These services encourage the successful reintegration of prisoners into society upon their release. ICENECDEV and FAAFNET have started a pilot project in Buea Central Prison to better the lives of detainees, in and out of prison, through gradual implementation of all two motives of the project and develop the human resource capacity within the prison service. Aimed at reducing recidivism and restoring agency to detainees the project covers human rights-based basic education, problem solving, hygiene, health, literacy, and management skills, and income-generating activities.

Detainees are stripped of their sense of agency and dignity in their own lives by poverty and want, then further marginalized and often rejected by their families and communities because of their confinement. After release, they often see no alternatives than to commit offenses that lead them back to prison.

Rehabilitation is intended to produce positive changes in offenders so they will stop committing crimes. Vocational programs train and certify offenders in trades to pursue upon their release. Academic programs provide formal adult, basic and secondary education courses. This project is addressing aspects of sustainability through fostering environmental stewardship and other workshops opportunities for offenders that may lead to a change in quality of life and a reduction in recidivism.

Development Problem

The prison project focuses on 3 interconnected institutions: Buea Central Prison, National School of Penitentiary Administration and Borstal Institute (the juvenile correctional centre). Buea Central Prison consists of over 550 male inmates and a small number of women and juveniles. The prison faces substantial overcrowding, very poor sanitation and nearly an empty infirmary, lacking almost everything from separate room (very dangerous during TB outbreaks) to basic antibiotics. The inmates have only sport activities to keep them occupied, but even those are quite rare due to the insufficient means. Many of them have different skills like tailoring, painting which they're willing to teach and even have ideas how to start income-generating activities but they're lacking basic materials to start off. Both organisations strongly believe that by enhancing their potential they will have a more of a brighter outlook on life after release and available alternatives to rejoin the society as professionals. Also members of the public will be gradually changing their attitudes as they observe vibrant productivity coming along.

The National School of Penitentiary Administration is the only institution in the country training on average 450 different ranks of wardens and prison administrators every year. As however, the international law is changing they don't have a chance to experience it and share the knowledge as they are being taught only from few outdated books. That is the reason for focus on the library facilities to enable them to learn and apply new directives in the area of discipline, criminal psychology, record keeping etc.

Borstal Institute for very long time has been the most abandoned centre in Buea as local population felt threatened by close proximity to underage "criminals". The crimes committed by these young boys (age 12-17) are usually petit theft, insults or living on the streets. The current batch of over 30 students is predominantly neglected or even abandoned by their families due to their wrong doings. Many of them attending primary or secondary school are lacking basic text books, even a uniform. As the governmental funding for the institute dropped by 70% the management explains that even the basic nutrition is hugely compromised.

Project Activities

Regional Capacity Building Workshop of Penitentiary Staff and Stakeholders of Criminal Justice System

The main challenges of prisons in Cameroon lie in the respect of the three missions assigned by government to the Penitentiary Administration, coordination among the various arms of this administration, setting up adequate infrastructure and personnel with the ever increasing inmate population and the putting in place of a policy on social reinsertion and upkeep of inmates.

Solutions could be found through the implementation of profound reforms of the penitentiary sector begun around the early 2000s and which enabled the modernisation of prisons in Cameroon. Furthermore, the application of the new criminal procedure code, the capacity building of penitentiary personnel and a close collaboration among the justice system, the penitentiary administration and civil society organisations working with prisons are all areas to be exploited in order to improve upon the penitentiary landscape in Cameroon.

Detention conditions in Cameroon prisons have been undergoing a process of constant improvement which have resulted in the attachment of the penitentiary administration to the Ministry of Justice, the creation of a Directorate of Human Rights and International Cooperation within the said ministry with the mission of training and sensitising judiciary and penitentiary personnel, the adoption of a new criminal procedure code in 2005, and the forth-coming ratification of the Protocol agreement on the United Nations Convention against Torture¹ (signed by Cameroon on 15 December 2009).

The prison population in Cameroon is estimated at 23.000 for a capacity of 15.000 people. More than 60% of these inmates are on pre-trial detention and detained in the same wards as condemned inmates. Over-population in prisons which is also as a result of a criminal-justice system bearing essentially on imprisonment, a poor state of prison infrastructure, food and medical insufficiency, cohabitation of young offenders with adult inmates, the practice of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment as well as many other acts contrary to international standards are among existing challenges.

The weak staff strength (magistrates, court registrars, judicial police officers and penitentiary personnel), their general training requirements particularly on issues of Human Rights and judicial bottlenecks further compounds the plight of prisons and prisoners. Meanwhile, the respect of the rights of persons placed in detention constitutes an important factor in the evaluation of detention conditions. The need for respect of the rights of inmates is justified by the need to safeguard human dignity under all circumstances and the effective implementation of international treaties on Human Rights ratified by Cameroon including their integration into the constitution as well as into other internal legal instruments.

Penitentiary personnel who are the main actors in the application of inmates' rights should know these rights and master their areas and mechanisms of application. These personnel should act at all times in respect of Human Rights in general and inmates' rights in particular.

For some years now, Cameroon has undertaken a systematic reform of its penitentiary system through the implementation of a policy targeting on one hand the humanisation of detention conditions materialised through a progressive modernisation of infrastructure and various equipment, and on the other hand providing adequate initial training and capacity building of penitentiary personnel on Human Rights.

It is worthy to note that the National School of Penitentiary Administration (ENAP) Buea plays an important role in the training of actors involved in the application of prison sentences, given that it trains an average of 600 penitentiary personnel every year, both new recruits as well as personnel on refresher courses.

As for refresher courses, Decree of 2005 on the organisation of the Ministry of Justice which created regional delegations of penitentiary administration states amongst others that the latter shall be charged with organising training seminars for penitentiary personnel in their areas of jurisdiction.

It is therefore expedient for personnel of prisons within the South West region, including those of ENAP to acquire and master norms emanating from international, regional and national

instruments on Human Rights which will enable them to permanently ensure the upkeep of inmates on one hand and the training of personnel charged with this upkeep on the other hand. The organisation of a training seminar on Human Rights for penitentiary personnel working in prisons within the South West region including those working in ENAP, falls within the framework of the respect of the rights of inmates. In order to realise this project, the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms was solicited and gave its approval for the training of the above-mentioned personnel in order to evaluate the implementation of the fallouts of the seminar in their respective posts of duty.

ICENECDEV & FAAFNET organized a regional workshop building the capacity of penitentiary staff on human rights and improvement of prison conditions in Cameroon (3rd-4th April 2013). This workshop was supported by Australian Agency For International Development (AusAID). The workshop brought together penitentiary administrators and staff from the National School of penitentiary administration, Buea central prison, Upper Farm productive prison, Bavenga prison, Kumba prison, and Mamfe prison to discuss on the various problems faced by the Cameroon prison which include abuse of human rights, inadequate food supply, lack of leisure and sporting activities and improper medical attentions to the inmates. The penitentiary staff were drilled on the o of the pan Africa conference that led to Kampala Declaration. Article 319 of this declaration allow organizations to form innovative partnership with prisons.

Dr Nde Fru Valentine urged the penitentiary staff to respect the international norms and laws protecting prisoners in conformity with the international human rights instruments. The penitentiary administrators and staff recommended organizations to form partnership with prisons like ICENECDEV & FAAFNET in order to complement the Cameroon Government effort. The regional delegate of Penitentiary Administration also recommended ICENECDEV, FAAFNET and (AusAID) to extend their activities to the other prisons in the south west region. More than 70 penitentiary staff in the prisons in the south west region participated in the regional workshop.

The Outcomes of training workshop were;

Penitentiary staff and stakeholder of the criminal justice system master instruments and norms relating to detention conditions and rights of inmates;
Penitentiary staff and stakeholder of the criminal justice system elaborated and used manuals on Human Rights within the Penitentiary Administration;
Penitentiary staff and stakeholder of the criminal justice system identified and assimilated good practices in view of improving on national detention conditions;
Penitentiary staff and stakeholder of the criminal justice system acquired the practice of human rights.

Computer and Literacy Classes.

ICENECDEV and FAAFNET initiated literacy and computer lessons for Inmates in the Buea Central Prison. With this project ICENECDEV has trained the inmates to speak, write and read the English language. This literacy classes has enable more than 70 inmates to read, write and interact freely in the Buea central prison. The inmates are provided with didactic materials such

as exercise books, computers pens, chalk and text books to build their capacities in literacy. Presently 2 inmates are training the other inmates in the literacy classes and computers classes as outcome from the literacy project.

Tailoring and Carpentry Training Workshop

ICENECDEV and FAAFNET are empowering the inmates in the Buea Central Prison on tailoring and carpentry, providing materials and equipments such as planks, hammers, nails, loin, threads, measuring tape, and needles.

More than 30 inmates have benefited from the carpentry and tailoring training workshop in the Buea Central Prison

Barbing Training Workshop

ICENECDEV and FAAFNET are implementing a barbing training workshop in the Buea central prison. The aim of this project is to train the inmates how to shave and provide proper hygienic conditions. This will enable them generate income for themselves and consequently limiting their chances of getting back to criminal activities and thus breaking the cycle of crime wave in the society. While in prison 5 inmates are presently generating income from the established barbing training workshop

Australian Football Tournament Competition

The Australian football competition was organized by ICENECDEV and FAAFNET and was sponsored by an Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) which ran for two weeks from the 11th –the 26th of January 2013. the Australian day. The competition brought about some joy and unity within the inmates as they felt loved by the community. The competition ended on the 26th of January with the award of trophies and prizes to the players. Other sporting activities which took place are table tennis, bag race and cultural dances. More than 300 inmates in the Buea central prison participated in the sport and leisure activities organized by ICENECDEV & FAAFNET. Presently there are different sporting competitions in the Buea central Prison as a result of the outcome of the Australian Football Competition.

Capacity Building on Juvenile Justice

ICENECDEV and FAAFNET under the sponsorship of an Australian Agency For International Development (AusAID) organized a workshop on the challenges of juvenile correction centre (Borstal Institute) and juvenile justice on 29th to 30th April 2013. The workshop was attended by 30 participants from the Bostal institute, ministry of social affairs, and social workers in the Buea central prison as stakeholders in charge of Juvenile justice.

The participant recommended that organizations like ICENECDEV & FAAFNET should organize more training workshops to build their capacities to properly manage delinquents and juveniles in order to facilitate the reeducation and reintegration process of the juvenile as productive citizens into the society.

Buea Central Prison Farm Project

ICENECDEV and FAAFNET are also currently implementing prison farm project in the Buea Central Prison. This prison farm project is aimed at providing the prisoners with adequate food

supply to complement the Cameroon government effort. With this project the inmates have learnt various farming methods. This project has provided 30 inmates with skills and knowledge on crop production.

Borstal farm Project

ICENECDEV has established an innovative farm program in the Juvenile correction centre (Borstal Institute) in collaboration with a returning Peace corps Volunteer from Trees For The Future USA. The juvenile correction centre suffered from inadequate food supply due to limited resources on the part of the Cameroon Government. This program intends to establish a tree nursery of Acacia and Lucerne to provide a natural system of increase soil fertility through the leaves of the trees. The trees will be planted in rows alongside food crops such as maize, tomatoes, beans, pepper and potatoes (Alley cropping). This program will provide regular food to the juvenile correction centre. The juveniles will acquire skills on agro forestry that will be used to generate income for themselves after completion of course. This program will also break the cycle of crime waves and poverty among youths in the local communities and juvenile correction centre.

Book Donation at Buea Central Prison

ICENECDEV donated mosquitoes' tents and 50 text books of English Language, Mathematics and French language from ANUCAM foundations Cameroon to the Buea central prison library in February 2014

100 inmates, juveniles and warders are presently trained on how to use the books in the Buea central prison library.

More than 100 inmates, warders and juveniles are aware of the various environmental resources and problems in Buea central prison.

ICENECDEV had to educate and sensitise the warders, inmates and juveniles on the book donations in order to create access to the books in the library.

Proper checks and security measures to protect the books by introducing a record book, librarian, and library card borrowing cards, as some of the inmates and juveniles are careless with the books and some inmates/juveniles sell the books in their cells. Some warders take the text books to be used at home by the children.

Donation of Materials to BORSTAL Institute, Buea: On the 2nd October 2012 at 10:45 a.m. and coverage was done by the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) on the occasion of donations of vocational training materials, 3,000 litres water tank, books and modern musical set: AusAID was publicised as the sponsor of the donations to the BORSTAL Institute at 4:45 p.m. the Project Manager, Mr. Lyonga William and other stakeholders had interviews with the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV), the Spectrum Television (STV) and The Farmer Voice Bonankanda FM Radio.

Donation of materials to Buea Central Prisons: On the 10th December 2012 (International Human rights Day 2012) at 10:45 a.m. are on the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) on the occasion of donations of computers, vocational training materials, 3,000 litres water tank; drugs, mattresses, bedspreads, pillows, drip stands for the infirmary; books for National Prison Warders

Training School (ENAP), Benches and Tables for the IT Laboratory; farm tools (machetes, hoes, wheelbarrows, spraying cans). Australian AID (AusAID) was publicised as the sponsor of the donations to the Buea Central Prison during the celebration of the International Human Rights Day 2012 at 1:45 p.m. The Project Manager Mr. Lyonga William and the Project Coordinator Fongoh Eric had an interview with the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV), the Spectrum Television (STV) and The Farmer Voice Newspaper and Bonakanda FM Radio (covered the ceremony live).

Celebrating Australian Day: On 26th January 2013, at 1.00 p.m. Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) broadcast live on the Football Finals at the Buea Central Prison to commemorate the Australian Day. Prizes were given at the end of the finals. The following media were used: Visual: Spectrum Television (STV); Print: Cameroon Tribune and The Post; Audio: CRTV Mount Cameroon FM.

Training of Penitentiary Administration Staff: From 3rd to 4th April, 2013, at 9.00 a.m. on 3rd April, 2013 during the Opening Ceremony and on 4th April, 2013 during the Closing Ceremony at 1.00 p.m., CRTV Mount Cameroon F.M. carried our Radio reports on the Training. Meanwhile, The Post Newspaper and Cameroon Tribune covered the training and Spectrum Television (STV) covered the ceremony.

Training of BORSTAL Institute Staff: From 29th to 30th April, 2013, at 9.00 a.m. on 29th April, 2013 during the Opening Ceremony and on 30th April, 2013 during the Closing Ceremony at 2.00 p.m., CRTV Mount Cameroon FM carried out Radio reports. Spectrum Television (STV) covered the occasion while Cameroon Tribune was invited to cover the training.

Prison Project progress.

Communication education and public awareness materials: Awareness is a crucial factor to mobilize local and government support for prison rehabilitation and reforms. Most people in Buea and in Cameroon in general did not know that the inmates and juveniles are protected under Cameroon Law and International Law. They were also not also aware of their responsibilities to support the inmates and juvenile in order to break the cycle of crime waves in the local communities. The project is succeeding in doing so, but this has to be followed up. There is need for an intensive information campaign about rehabilitation and reformation of the prisons and juvenile correction centres and the role and responsibilities of ordinary citizens in the awareness and implementation process.

Need for a long term approach and continuity: Time is necessary in order for the rehabilitation efforts to succeed. This require supported of the local community around the prison, inmates/prison staff, the Government of Cameroon and the International community.

Impact of Project

ICENECDEV focuses on participatory cooperation, with broad-based stakeholder involvement and consultations in information gathering, project planning , implementation and evaluation. This has led to long last impact in Juvenile Correction centre(Borstal Institute) prison and local communities in Cameroon.

Our programmes have had the following impact in Buea Central prison, National School of Penitentiary administration, and Juvenile correction Centre (Borstal Institute)

Established 2, 3,000 litres water tank in Buea Central Prison and Juvenile Correction Centre (Borstal Institute) regulating inadequate water supply

The computers have improved on the computer literacy level of inmates in the Buea Central Prison.

Inmates have acquired basic skills in reading and writing in English language lessons and able to count and solve basic numerical.

The Text books in the Library are displayed at the disposal of the Trainees and Trainers of the National School of Penitentiary Administration.

The text books are displayed at the disposal of all pupils (Anglophone and Francophone) and staff as they are put in the Class Library in the Borstal Institute.

The Musical Set at BORSTAL Institution has improved on the social status of institution.

The Piano has enhanced musical activities in the Buea Central Prison, especially during social activities/church services.

Established a community tree nursery of Leucaena at Juvenile Correction Centre, Buea.

Increase food supply of 768 inmates, juveniles through regular seed donation of food crops to Buea central Prison and Juvenile correction centre.

Increase the literacy level of 60 inmates/juveniles/students through community library programmes

Trained more than 100 inmates in the Buea central prison on Tailoring, carpentry and barbing Identification and traced 20 files of inmates who have been in prison for 5 years without sentenced. The legal process has progressed tremendously by the Fako Lawyers Association. Acquisition of skills and knowledge of employment among 100 inmates on tailoring training workshop, carpentry training workshop, barbing training workshop and prison farm establishment.

Refurbishment and rehabilitation of the toilet has led to the construction of 1 new cell that has reduced overcrowding by 5%

The literacy classes, prison farm establishment, tailoring, carpentry training workshop and football competition has enhanced more than 420 inmates to work in groups, clubs and learnt among themselves.

Memorandum of understanding between ICENECDEV, FAAFNET, National School of Penitentiary Administration, BORSTAL Institute and Buea Central Prison for 5 years from 2012 to 2017.

The Regional Delegate of Penitentiary Administration issued an Authorisation that permits ICENECDEV and FAAFNET to carry out activities in all the Prisons in South West Region.

Improvement of the academic performance of Juveniles at the First School Leaving Certificate (National Examination)

The 30 Staff of acquired skills on how to handle cases of re-education, challenges and opportunities with juveniles of the Centre.

The moral aspects of the juveniles and prison inmates were enhanced by the regular moral lessons and church activities in both establishments through pastoral services.

Greater collaboration among the stakeholders of FAAFNET, ICENECDEV, Buea Central Prison, National School of Penitentiary Administration and BORSTAL Institute

Penitentiary staff and stakeholder of the criminal justice system identified and assimilated good practices in view of improving on national detention conditions.

PARTNERSHIP

ICENECDEV is building a collaborative partnership involving relevant partners and collaborators, focused on based line information, consensus on key issues leading to collaborative framework agreement.

ICENECDEV uses a participatory approach bringing together diverse groups of stakeholders, consultative groups, task groups and community consultation to facilitate and maintain the sharing of views and information, dialogue and exchange, negotiation on strategies and actions.

Our partners for the prison project include;

Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID)

Forestry, Agriculture Animal and Fisheries Network (FAAFNET)

1% Club Netherlands

Tecno Cameroon

Bahai Faith Cameroon.

Books and Things Inc.

Anucam Foundation Cameroon

International Internship & Volunteer Opportunities.

Volunteering/being and intern in our organization is a great way to get involved and have fun outside. You can be a part of our dedicated team of volunteers/interns who work every while having fun to dedicated projects within local communities in the South West Region of Cameroon. Volunteers and interns can among other projects, participate to plant tree in local communities, building of community tree nursery and help us clean up national parks, plant trees in schools, transplant mature plants, and assist with the care and maintenance of thousands of native plants, field research of endangered plants and wildlife species, educate young populations on basic literacy in prisons and climate change education.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about our various projects, make valuable contribution to the project activities and programmes while gaining in knowledge and experience.

Requirements

Capacity to work independently within a group/team and to carry on projects with minimal supervision

Ability and motivation to contribute effectively to both the organization's field work and office responsibilities.

Desire to learn about the socio-cultural environment where projects are executed

Willingness to familiarize oneself with all documents relating to the past work of the intern's particular project

Fluency in spoken and written English

Computer literacy

Internship/ Volunteering Fees

ICENECDEV is committed to provide interns/volunteers modest accommodation facilities, utilities and some basic needs for volunteers/interns. For this reason, we charge a small fee to meet up with the financial needs. We work within a very tight budget therefore cannot afford to bear the entire cost of the interns/volunteers stay in Cameroon. Below is the costing of the internship depending on length of stay.

To apply please send your resume and letter of motivation to info@icenevdev.org

For more information visit the link <http://www.icenevdev.org/volunteer.php>.

SUPPORT US

ICENECDEV is a registered non-profit organization. We rely mainly on the donations of kind-hearted organizations and persons like you. To help support our course, please make a donation.

Bank Information

Name of Bank: Ecobank Cameroon

Bank Address: P.O Box 418, Ecobank Cameroon, Buea Branch, Molyko, South West Region.

Account Name: ICENECDEV

Account Number: CM2110029260220132201840107

IBAN: CM2110029260220132201840107

Bank Swift Code: ECOCCMCX

Contact US

Our Address

For any inquiries please contact our office at:

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