

# Community Awareness and Development Association Cameroon (CADAC)



## COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEMOCRACY INCUBATOR PROJECT



*Student and staff representative and project staff and volunteers during the regional DI Project training in the Center Region*

The implementation of the Democracy Incubator (DI) Project was greatly affected by the protracted fund disbursement delay from the Embassy. That notwithstanding, significant efforts were made, especially in the Centre Region to effectively pursue the project in the 2013/2014

Academic year. With schools already closed for the 2013/2014 Academic year to make way for Certificate Examinations, the DI project team has worked on a comprehensive report on what has been done so far in the implementation of the project, what is left to be done and recommendations for the way forward. Here is a succinct status report on the implementation of the DI Project in the four selected regions (Center, South West, North West and Littoral Regions).

## 1. CENTRE REGION

Much has been done to implement the project in the Center Region. The following project activities were carried out during the 2013/2014 academic year:



*Members of the Democracy and Good governance club of Government Bilingual Practicing School Yaounde*

- i. **Selection of schools:** The selection of schools in the Center Region was done by a selection team comprising the DI Project Coordinator Mr. Nguh Nwei Asanga Fon and project volunteers: Immanuel Bumakor (Regional Coordinator for the Center Region), Jochebed Ambe, and Monie Exibinash. The selection was based on criteria such as democratic culture, linguistic representation (Anglophone and Francophone), public and private sector representation (government schools and private schools) and the enrollment of the institutions (a mixture of vastly populated and sparsely populated schools). Based on these considerations, the following

institutions were selected in the Center region: Government Bilingual High School Etoug Ebe, Yaounde; Government Bilingual Practicing School Yaounde; MEVICK Yaounde and Queensway International College.

- ii. **Planning meeting with selected schools:** A planning meeting with representatives of selected schools took place at the CADAC head office in Yaounde on October 10, 2013. During this meeting, the CADAC Executive Director and DI Project Coordinator Mr. Fon, made a detailed presentation of the project and explanation on the participation of the selected institutions in the implementation of the project. The meeting was also punctuated by a question and answer session which served as a forum to clear up ambiguities, clarify doubts and handle issues raised by school representatives.



Meeting with representatives of selected schools in the Center Region presided by DI Project National Coordinator Nguh Nwei Asanga Fon at the CADAC head office in Yaounde

- iii. **Establishment of structures:** After the planning phase, the project fully took off with the establishment of the main structure of the project—Democracy and Good governance clubs in all the selected schools in Yaounde (Centre region). Under the coordination and supervision of the Center Regional Coordinator of the DI Project, Mr. Bumakor, these clubs were established and have been running effectively in all the selected institutions.

- iv. **Training of stakeholders:** A regional training for all the stakeholders of the project (project volunteers, staff and student coordinators of the various selected institutions) in the Center Region was organized by CADAC at its head office in Yaounde. Based on a training curriculum

on the implementation of the DI project developed by the Project team (staff and volunteers), participants were trained on the notions and concepts of democracy and good governance and on how to put in place the structures and run the activities of the project.



*Regional training on the DI Project for selected schools in the Center Region*

v. **Elections:** During the 2013/2014 academic year, elections of student government bodies took place in two of the four schools with the full support and supervision of the DI Project. These elections held in Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Etoug Ebe, Yaounde at the beginning of the Academic year (Nov 2013) and at MEVICK Yaounde at the close of the academic year (May 2014). At GBHS Etoug Ebe, the elections took the form of the list system with students vying for positions constituting themselves into four parties under which they carried out campaigns in the school and held a debate to present their ideologies and programs to their mates and respond to their preoccupation.



*Elections at Government Bilingual High School Etoug Ebe Yaounde*

The DI Project team provided material and technical assistance (transparent ballots boxes and ballot papers, electoral list, badges for the electoral commission and other stakeholder and technical advisers and supervisors). At the end of the elections, a coalition government was formed with the party that won taking the key positions and those that lost being represented.

At MEVICK Bilingual Grammar School, Etoug Ebe, Yaounde, the elections took a two-round system with a primary phase to select candidates to compete for the various positions and the final elections to get the winner in each elective office. Contrary to GBHS Etoug Ebe that used the Party list system, MEVICK's election was based on a two round system focused on individuals who had to win their nomination from the base before standing for the elections.



*A voter (at MEVICK) signs the election register after casting his vote under the watchful gaze of Electoral Commission officials and DI Project Representative*

Three candidates were nominated for each position in the student government. The student with the most votes won the position and the runner up was retained as assistant while the third person was the loser. As usual, DI project staff provided logistics and technical assistance to the school authorities.



*Vote counting goes on in MEVICK with members of the Electoral Commission under the supervision of DI Project representative*

- vi. **Project monitoring and supervision:**The DI project regional coordinator for the Center Region, Mr. Bumakor, was entrusted the monitoring, evaluation and supervision of the project. He and other project staffs criss-crossed the selected schools to build the capacity of the “Democracy and Good governance Clubs”, monitor the progress in the implementation of the project and supervise the activities carried out by selected schools.



*CADAC Volunteer Patrick Gaughan presenting “American Democracy” to members of the Democracy and Good Governance club in Government Bilingual Practicing School Yaounde*

## **2. LITTORAL**

The implementation of the project in the Littoral region could not fully go operational in the 2013/2014 academic year because of a number of challenges (our inability to hire a regional coordinator, the lack of collaboration from school authorities especially those of public schools, among other challenges). However, some significant ground work has been done. The National Coordinator, Mr. Nguh Nwei Asanga Fon, made trip to Douala and together with some volunteers visited and presented the project to more than 12 schools. These schools were required to fill and send to the DI Project office, a Declaration of Interest form to indicate their interest in the project. The selection of schools was limited exclusively to schools that had shown interest by signing and sending their Declaration of Interest forms. At the end of the selection process, four schools were selected as pilot institutions for the implementation of the DI project in the Littoral Region: Presbyterian Secondary School (PSS) Bonaberi,

So far the “Democracy and Good-governance Club has been set up in PSS Bonaberi. However, all the schools have been notified that the full implementation of the project would take place in the next academic year (2014/2015).



### **3. SOUTH WEST**

The implementation of the project in the South West Region presented a similar scenario to that of the Littoral with school authorities not giving us full cooperation and we not being able to hire a regional coordinator based in the area to coordinate and supervise the work. Notwithstanding, a DI Project team visited 8 schools and presented the project to the school authorities and encourage them to declare their interest for them to be stand for the selection. At the end of the sensitization and selection process the following schools were selected for the implementation of the DI Project in the South West: Baptist High School (BHS) Buea, St Theresa International Bilingual College Buea; Presbyterian Comprehensive Secondary School (PCSS) Buea. A fourth school is still being sought.

Given the challenges faced and the non-availability of financial resources, we also had to postpone the full implementation of the project to the 2014/2015 Academic year.

### **4. NORTH WEST**

The North West Region was the most challenging in our endeavors to implement the project. Most schools visited either had a crowded academic calendar or were simply not willing to change the status quo in terms of elections within their institutions. Some schools like GBHS Down Town Bamenda, PSS Mankon, Progressive Comprehensive College Bamenda and Sacred Heart College Mankon showed initial interest but later on made a volte-face on their involvement. So far we succeeded to get one school involved in the project: Government High School (GHS) Mambu-Bafut. A Democracy and Good-governance club was created at the School and is running effectively under the coordination and supervision of Mr. Ambe Johnson (one of the Vice Principals of the School).

In the face of the aforementioned challenges, we have also had to postpone the full implementation of the project in the North West Region for the next academic year (2014/2015).

## **OTHER HIGHLIGHTS**

It is worth mentioning that we also approached some organizations involved in issues concerning democracy and good governance to solicit their technical or material assistance to help us to effectively implement the project. We are glad to mention that we received material assistance (books, magazines, reports, charts and posters) from the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, and Elections Cameroon (ELECAM). We also had promises of material support (publications and posters) from the following: The United Nations Regional Center for Democracy and Human Rights for Central Africa, Yaounde; Transparency International and the United Nations Information Center.

## **LESSONS AND PERSPECTIVES**

As we draw the curtains on the present academic, our hearts are filled with gratitude to the US Embassy, partner organizations, school authorities and all the stakeholders who assisted us in one way or the other in the implementation of the DI Project so far.

As we look forward to the next academic year the DI Project team has revised the activity timeline to suit the present context (postponement of full implementation in three regions) and added two more activities to enhance the effectiveness of the project:

- i. Visits to key government institutions and organizations or entities with strong democratic values: The National Assembly and the Senate, the Supreme Court, Elections Cameroon, the United Nation Regional Center for Democracy and Human Rights and the US Embassy Yaounde. These visits shall enable students from participating schools to draw inspiration from real environments and feel the realities of the practice of democracy and good governance.
- ii. Creation and running of social network sites for interactions on the DI project. We are currently working on setting up a Facebook group, YouTube Page and Twitter account for the DI projects. This social network sites shall provide a platform for Democracy and Good governance clubs of the various selected schools and regional coordinators to share updates on their activities (post events, pictures, videos and tweets). This would

be a great plus to the project given the attachment of the target group of the project to internet and new information and communication technologies.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the foregone updates, it is evident that some strides have been made in the implementation of the Democracy Incubator Project (especially in the Center Region) in spite of the challenges faced. With the late disbursement of funds and the initial reluctance of some schools, the full implementation of the project has been pushed to the 2014/2015 Academic year. The ground work has already been laid by the Project team to ensure that project structures and activities actually see the light of day in all the selected regions by the end of the academic year. We count on the assiduity and zeal of the Project team (staff and volunteers) and the collaboration and support of the Democracy and Human Rights Project Fund Department of the US Embassy for a resounding success in the implementation of the DI Project.



**NGUH NWEI ASANGA FON**

**Project Coordinator**