

## **Report on Global Youth Service Day in Cameroon 21 April, 2001**

The commemoration of GYSD on April 21, 2001 in Cameroon lasted for a week and was celebrated under the theme 'Youth, information Technology Service and the fight against poverty'. Youth oriented groups, the media and other sectors notably Fecaclubs-UNESCO, Association of UNESCO volunteers, Youth Development Foundation, Association Mieux Vivre, IAVE-Cameroon National Volunteer Centre, National Youth Council and the IYV 2001 sub-committee for GYSD organised fundraising activities to support local volunteers and raise awareness about youth volunteering. These events were published in local English and French newspapers in the country.

The National Volunteer Centre for Progress in collaboration with the Association of UNESCO Volunteers & the IYV 2001 national sub-committee for GYSD collaborated with the more than fifty working organizations of various youth and youth oriented groups from around the country including UNV-UNDP, Fecaclubs-UNESCO, UNICEF, Defence for Children International, IAVE, IFRC to be involved in a national Youth Action Week for GYSD 2001.

Celebrations included the placing of promotion posters on GYSD, educative talks and youths and volunteering, an open door day with display of GYSD, publications and various youth voluntary engagements from around the country that included:

- Human investment projections in volunteer centres, hospitals, streets, nursing homes, churches, schools, community centres, parks etc.
- Youth discussion forum (Educative talks) on the topic 'Youth and Voluntary Work', and - Youth and information technology service and the fight against poverty
- Volunteering in centres of handicap persons and homes of the elderly
- Tree planting and distribution of seedlings
- Distribution of condoms
- Sharing at an orphanage
- Various youth voluntary initiatives to mark GYSD
- Programming for GYSDS 2002 follow up activities

The towns of Yaounde, Douala and Limbe hosted discussion forums on the theme of volunteerism. On a similar note, some 50 youths from thirty youth oriented schools and local NGO's convened at their various localities for a discussion forum on the topics 'Youth and voluntary work' and 'Youth, Information Technology Services and the fight against poverty'.

At the end of the educative talks, the youths were treated to the power of the internet in recognising the opportunities for more inclusive youth and volunteer efforts in the fight against poverty through the internet. The idealists were further treated to the power of the internet through Netaid.org launched by a partnership between UNDP and Sisco Systems to promote new forms of volunteer online action to fight poverty. The discussion forum opened with the reading of the Universal Declaration on Volunteering and the messages of the Executive Coordinator of the UNV program on GYSD 2001.

Following the open door day, youths demonstrated several skills in such areas as painting, deaf awareness and education, drawing, welding, carpentry, computing, graphics, writing and traditional medicine. Youth oriented groups and the national volunteer centre conducted brief workshop sessions of good work and mechanized repairs, utilization of non timber products, conservation of indigenous trees, science and English language education.

Celebrations also included an exhibition with pictures, reports, articles on youth volunteering and volunteering in general. This was highlighted with photo exhibitions from the UNV, IAVE, UNESCO Youth Clubs, some international volunteer organizations and the national youth council. Meanwhile, an inauguration ceremony for the national youth council was slated for the month of May 2001.

In the weeks before and after 21st April 2001 activities focused on informing the general public about GYSD objectives through public meetings and the local media, encouraging

other youth oriented groups to highlight their work and the role youth volunteers play in their organisation as well as creating GYSD local committees for the organisation of this year and future GYSD activities.

The message of UNV Executive Coordinator, Sharon Capeling Alakija on the occasion of GYSD 2001 and the GYSD press release of Sunday 1st April 2001 were also forwarded to all local United Nations Agencies and media organs. Three articles and two short stories drafted by GYSD Coordinator, Victor Atanga on GYSD, Youth volunteering and volunteering in general was earmarked for publications. Youth empowerment through voluntary work and volunteering in the eradication of the worst forms of child labour.

Other reports marking GYSD 2001 celebrations gathered from around the country include:

- GYSD immunisation campaign and meningitis organized by the local chapters of IAVE and GYSD with the support of an indigenous NGO Seroptimist International, The GYSD youth volunteers were assigned in the registration of immunize children in controlling crowds
- clean up drives at hospitals, streets, schools, parks, community centres, churches, nursing homes, volunteer centres etc
- repairing a local health post and launching a clean up campaign to commemorate GYSD
- offering packages of staple food to the needy
- help in cleaning/wiping, ploughing farms for cultivation and provision of silk money which can be used as a revolving fund to purchase basic food stuff
- a visit to the coastal village of Bonadikombo-S.W. Province to meet and express support to local volunteers who worked very hard to contain the fire conflagration that consumed a quarter of the village houses
- Commemorative efforts in sympathizing with victims of the land slight incident that took away the lives of some of the village inhabitants of the NW Province leaving others homeless. It was an occasion to learn more about the problems facing the victims
- Assisting the African humanitarian Aid and Development Organisation (AHADO) of the centre province in report compilation for a data base on a developmental project that seeks to help meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups in low income settlements in the village communities of Pinyin and Bucchi
- youths drilled on computer technology
- infant care
- assisting in building, roofing and construction
- leading the blind in their daily interactions
- medication provision to the sick and the hospitalised
- tree domestication as a solution to deforestation in the northern province of Cameroon
- offering a free call to a telephone subscriber
- settling a telephone bill of a clientele
- offering free tickets for internet surfer
- creating internet addresses for potential internet users
- door to door sensitisation campaign on the importance and usage of computer technology

Local authorities and several national community-based youth groups took part in the activities that were reported in the local press, radio and television.

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