

A Local Youth Corner Cameroon Publication



YOUTH POSITIVE PRACTICE MEMOIRE ON REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

Transforming Violent Offenders into Champions of Peace in Cameroon



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Reintegration in Cameroon: *Transforming Violent Offenders into
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TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	4
PART I: STATING THE CONTEXT: VIOLENCE, VIOLENT EXTREMISM, AND REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN CAMEROON	7
CHAPTER ONE:CONCEPTUALIZING VIOLENCE, VIOLENT OFFENDERS, VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND BOKO HARAM VIOLENT INSURGENCY IN CAMEROON	8
CHAPTER TWO:WHY YOUTHS ENGAGE IN VIOLENCE/VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN CAMEROON	20
CHAPTER THREE:REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION IN CAMEROON	30
1. Poor infrastructure and programming	33
2. Lack of trained staff	34
3. Outdated programmes	35
4. Lack of inclusivity in the design, access and delivery of Rehabilitation and Reintegration program	36
PART 2:ENGAGING REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION: POSITIVE PRACTICES IN CAMEROON, SUMMONING THE ROME MEMORANDUM ON REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION, AND AN ACTION AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE.....	38
CHAPTER ONE:GOOD PRACTICE FOR REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN CAMEROON.....	39

CHAPTER TWO:TOWARDS BETTER REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN CAMEROON, SUMMONING THE ROME MEMORANDUM	67
Section A: on Defining Goals and Objectives cover Good Practice Number 1	67
Section B on the Prison Context covers Good Practice Number 2 to Number 6	68
Section C on The Role of Different Actors in Prisons covering Good Practice Number 7 to Number 14	70
Section D on Reintegration Components covers Good Practice Number 15 to 24	71
Section E on Looking to Other Relevant Fields covers Good Practice Number 25	73
CHAPTER THREE:ACTION AGENDA ON ENGAGING YOUTH CIVIL SOCIETY IN REINTEGRATION AND REHABILITATION OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN CAMEROON	75
SECTION 1: GOVERNMENT.....	77
1. Infrastructure and policy.....	77
2. Capacity Building for actors and Frontline practitioners...	78
3. Conduct and promote Research	79
4. Collaboration with affected communities and families....	80
SECTION 2: INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND CSOs	80
SECTION 3: BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS	81
1. Support rehabilitation and reintegration as corporate social responsibility	81
2. Create Job Opportunities.....	82

SECTION 4: YOUTH CIVIL SOCIETY82

- 1. Incorporate Rehabilitation and Reintegration programs in existing peace-building and CVE initiatives 82
- 2. Collaborate with other actors and strengthen networks of youth actors working on Rehabilitation and Reintegration ... 82

SELECTED REFERENCES84

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About Youth Positive Practice Memoire

During one of our activities at the Borstal juvenile correctional facility in Buea, Cameroon, one of the children in his acknowledgement, confessed; “this is the happiest day in our lives”. This juvenile further said that youth civil society intervention will prepare them to join the process of making Cameroon an emerging nation by 2035 as well as prevent them from being used by Boko Haram and other extremist groups to destroy their country.

Inspired by this testimony, the Youth Positive Practice Memoire on Rehabilitation and Reintegration was born. It is a youth led research developed by Local Youth Corner Cameroon which focuses on highlighting some of the positive initiatives undertaken by young people from across the ten regions of Cameroon which have contributed in the rehabilitation and reintegration process of violence and violent extremist offenders in Cameroon.

Similarly, this work is inspired by the clarion call made by the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth Peace and Security which highlighted reintegration and disengagement as a major action which governments must support young people in the process.

This Memoire therefore serves to bring to light the issue of transformation of young people with a history of crime and violence. It examines why young people engage in crime, violence, and violent extremism and through the lens of civil society, showcases actions currently being undertaken by diverse organisations in response to transformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of young people with a history of crime and violence into champions of peace in Cameroon.

While this memoire is expected to serve as a tool for celebration of successes recorded this far through selfless engagements of civil society, it also aims to advocate for inclusive conversations to be started by all stakeholders including the Cameroon government on the issues it raises. It is expected that more organisations would be inspired and encouraged by the best practices this memoire highlights to believe in the change they are making in the lives of individuals and communities, and to do more.

INTRODUCTION

Constitutionally, The Republic of Cameroon is a 'Unitary Decentralized State' with a current population of over 23 million people distributed across 10 Regions. About 60% of this population comprises of young people less than 35 years old¹. Cameroon has experienced several years of socio-economic and political challenges with drastic effects on the youth. For instance, since 2013, Cameroon has been confronted by Boko Haram terrorist activities across several communities in the Extreme North region of the country with devastating impact. As a result, violent radicalization, violent extremism and acts of terrorism have been perpetuated widely. Similarly, since November 2016, the country's peace and stability has been threatened by the 'Anglophone Crisis' which has equally led to serious radicalization and violent extremism of young people.

The effects of these threats to peace and stability of Cameroon only come to magnify prevailing challenges such as high unemployment rates², high crime wave, the phenomenon of street children, promiscuity, drug abuse, gambling,

¹.Following the definition of 'youth' from the African Youth Charter, 2006.

² The World Bank, "Youth and Employment in Africa: The Potential, the Problem, the Promise" Washington, D.C. 2009.

alcoholism (juvenile delinquency) in Cameroon ³ . These unproductive and unhealthy lifestyles leave youths increasingly vulnerable. Vulnerability, which further exposes them to radicalization, violence and violent extremism, and whose consequences are counterproductive to peace, stability and the sustainable development of the country. The question then arises as to how these vulnerabilities can be broken and enabling environments created such that youths become transformed from liabilities to more productive assets and drivers of socio-economic and even political change in Cameroon? While the above question opens a large field of reflection, it is even more relevant when we consider the situation of young people caught in the cycle of violence and crime, arrested by security operatives, and are currently awaiting sentencing or serving jail terms.

This Youth Positive Practice Memoire on Rehabilitation and Reintegration which is a fruit of years of concrete change engagements and research focuses on the situation of young people who are at conflict with the law as a result of crime and have been involved in acts of violence and/or violent extremism.

³ See situation analysis of challenges faced by Cameroonian youth in Ministry of Youth Affairs, Cameroon National Youth Policy, 2006.

This Memoire is divided in two parts. Part one presents the perception of young people regarding; violence, violent offenders, violent extremism, violence in Cameroon and youth radicalization within the era of the Boko Haram Insurgence. In addition, it explores questions related to the vulnerabilities of young people and why they engage in violence and even join violent extremist groups. Part two of this best practice memoire highlights 20 best practices of civil society on engaging young offenders on rehabilitation and reintegration. It draws on the Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of violent offenders to point critical areas for consideration by stakeholders, and ends with the presentation of an Action Agenda on engaging Youth Civil Society on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Offenders in Cameroon.

Overall, this memoire is expected to serve as a tool for celebration of successes recorded thus far through selfless engagements of civil societies in engaging rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders. Besides this celebration, it aims to advocate for inclusive conversations to be started by all stakeholders including the Cameroon government on the issues it raises especially if the Action Agenda on engaging Youth Civil Society on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of

Violent Offenders in Cameroon is considered. It is expected that more organisations would be inspired and encouraged by the best practices this memoire highlights to believe in the change they are making in the lives of individuals and communities, and to do more.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was developed as part of the project: Empowering youth civil society actors as Agents of Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R-R) of people with a history of, or propensity for Violence in Cameroon. It began during the first phase of this project with a two-day residential consultation and training on rehabilitation and reintegration, peace building and preventing/countering violent extremism of 40 participants (comprising of 30 youth civil society activists, 5 prison superintendents and 5 directors of correction centers) from the ten regions of Cameroon. During the two days of residential consultation and training, the participants shared diverse perspectives based on regional and community experiences regarding violence and violent extremism, and initiatives being undertaken on rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders.

Further to this and as part of the project, a research team was constituted which conducted semi-structured interviews with youth participants from highly hit conflict-affected regions including; the Extreme North, North, East, South West, North West, and Littoral regions of Cameroon. Over 100 youths responded to research questions that enabled the research team to form an opinion on the issue of transforming young offenders into champions of peace through actions that supports their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. A further call for best positive practices on rehabilitation and reintegration in Cameroon was launched with over 100 respondents sharing best practices through online and offline media. Twenty of these practices are featured in this Youth Positive Practice Memoire on Rehabilitation and Reintegration: Transforming Violent Offenders into Champions of Peace in Cameroon.

To compliment field work, review of strategic documentation on the subject of rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders was also consulted. An Action Agenda on engaging youth civil societies in reintegration and rehabilitation of violent offenders in Cameroon was developed after consultation with diverse stakeholders, constitutes part of

this Youth Positive Practice Memoire on Rehabilitation and Reintegration:

Transforming Violent Offenders into Champions of Peace in Cameroon.

This publication should be appreciated as a fruit of collaborative research work undertaken by the research team of Local Youth Corner Cameroon with diverse partners including other civil societies, prison officials and representatives from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, The Ministry of External Relations and the Ministry of Justice and Keeper of the Seals, Cameroon. Data collected for this research also included information shared by government representatives from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, Ministry of External Relations and Ministry of Justice.

The Youth Positive Practice Memoire on Rehabilitation and Reintegration: Transforming Violent Offenders into Champions of Peace in Cameroon adopts a thematic and narrative approach in analyzing and presenting data collected. It should be appreciated as an attempt to share youth perspectives on the subject and best practices engaged by diverse actors rather than a specialist perspective on the subject of rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders.

**PART I:
STATING THE CONTEXT: VIOLENCE, VIOLENT EXTREMISM, AND
REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN
CAMEROON**

**CHAPTER ONE:
CONCEPTUALIZING VIOLENCE, VIOLENT OFFENDERS, VIOLENT
EXTREMISM AND BOKO HARAM VIOLENT INSURGENCY IN
CAMEROON**

Violence

In the history of Cameroon, the eruption of violence has always been a threat to national peace and security. The kinds of violence witnessed in Cameroon vary from household violence, to gender-based violence, personal violence, community violence, as well as the most recent extremist violence which has been characterized by acts of terror. Providing a one size fit all definition of violence remains a major issue during our findings. While some of our respondents considered some acts of violence as necessary in view of last resort when all other options have failed, others find that no matter its justification, violence is something that should never be condoned or nurtured.

In an attempt to define violence, we perceive violence as a physical or psychological action, which is perpetrated by an individual or group of people, which leads to; physical or psychological damage (or harm), destruction of property and/or loss of human life. In global conversations around

violence, violence is seen to be divided into two major strands; personal (direct) violence which includes aspect such as assault, rape, riot, terrorism, and war, and structural violence⁴⁵ or indirect violence which includes aspects such as; social injustice, discrimination, poverty, and hunger.

Violent Offender

The term “violent offenders” remain a much contested term in both government policy and academic research. Nevertheless, in the context of Cameroon based on our findings, we define a violent offender as an individual acting on a personal basis or on behalf of a group and who results to using weapons and measures characterized as violent with intent to cause both physical and psychological harm on an individual or a group of persons.

In Cameroon, as in other societies across the world, there is an unavoidable increase of violent offenders, which to an extent cuts across all ages. Our findings highlight that, there is an increasing rate of youths aged between 10-20 years who

⁴ Galtung, J. (1969) brought to light the concept of structural violence within conflict analysis.

⁵ In O' Gorman, E (2011). In Conflict and Development. Development Matters. Zed Books. New York; the author builds on Galtung's (1969) work to demonstrate how different forms of exploitation, inequality, oppression or discrimination and also poverty, disease and sexism, among others constitutes structural violence against individuals or groups of persons.

are most vulnerable in perpetrating crimes ranging from minor ones (assault, burglaries with knives and at times firearms) and to major violent extremist acts such as terrorism. Over 65% of all inmates in prisons across Cameroon are young people, with at least 50% serving jail terms as a result of activities that underline violence.

Violent Extremism

The term violent extremism became a famous mantra in conversation in the aftermath of the September 11, 2011 twin attacks in the United States after which the US Government launched its war against global terror. Many international organizations and scholars view violent extremism (not necessarily as a new phenomenon) as the most extreme form of violence, which characterizes acts of terror. In simple terms, we view violent extremism as violence which is perpetrated in the extreme. This includes the use of suicide bombs, heavy weaponry, mass killings, automated explosives, kidnapping, and assaults. Across the world, it is very common to associate violent extremism with terrorism.

In the context of Cameroon, the term violent extremism only became widely used after the Boko Haram insurgency attacks in communities across the Extreme North region. In addition to Boko Haram violent extremism activities in

Cameroon, the recent rise of violence in the South West and North West Regions of the country saw the evocation of the term violent extremist to describe the fomenters of violence in these two regions. The use of the term violent extremism to refer to the violence perpetrated in these regions has been received with a lot of mixed feelings by both the international community and inhabitants of these regions. Interrogated within this research, many respondents hold that the phrase has been used inappropriately in some cases of violence in Cameroon and many fear misusing the term might provoke a bigger problem especially as not every violent extremist is a terrorist, whereas, all terrorists are violent extremist.

Cameroon: violence in an island of peace

Since the independence of Cameroon, Cameroon has been described as one of the most peaceful nations across Africa despite internal conflicts that have hit its neighbours including, Chad, Central African Republic, Nigeria and Congo. Notwithstanding, incidents of sporadic violence have been recorded ranging from the 1984 failed coup d'état to oust President Paul Biya from power; the 1990-1992 protests and riots which rocked several cities as populations demanded the institution of multiparty politics; the Cameroon-Nigeria Border

crisis between 1994 and 2002, which was resolved by the United Nations with the signing of the Green Tree Accord.

Though the wind of peace and tranquility blew across the country all these years, it had been perceived, following practices of perceived election rigging, bad governance, wanton corruption and embezzlement of public funds, a decline in justice, high rates of youth unemployment and persistent gerontocracy, that all was not right. Cameroonians however did not live an outburst of conflict until Boko Haram extreme violent terrorist insurgencies started in the year 2013 in certain localities in Cameroon's Extreme North region sharing land borders with the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the protest of Anglophone activists across the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon that started in November 2016.

Boko Haram and extremism violence

So far, in Cameroon's history, the violence perpetrated by the Boko Haram violent extremist group is considered as one of the most severe. Boko Haram was established in 2009 in Nigeria, with the intention of overthrowing the Nigerian state and establishing a caliphate to be governed by the sharia law. According to the Council on Foreign Relations (2016), the

estimated civilian casualty as a result of all Boko Haram violent insurgencies since the beginning of 2010 was twenty three thousand people. The terrorist group's violence rose in 2014 to approximately seven thousand five hundred and twelve deaths in that year alone, making it the world's deadliest violent extremist organization. The activities of Boko Haram are principally concentrated in the north-eastern states of Nigeria – Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Unfortunately, porous borders in the Lake Chad area facilitated their proliferation, presence, and devastation in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger resulting to a massive population displacement (approximately two million three hundred thousand people), unrest, destruction of entire communities, civilian and military deaths, and in recent years, suicide bombing with heavy casualties.

Boko Haram violent extremist activities have grown into a sub-regional threat, threatening to out-scale the likes of Al-Shabaab. In a bid to pull forces together to deal decisively with the growing regional menace, Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Benin, under the auspices of the African Union, formed a combined security force, christened "the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)." This force launched its first West African Offensive in January 2015. This very act, more than anything else, seemed to have unleashed a feverish increase in the

frequency of the Boko Haram attacks in Cameroon as well as in Chad and Niger, thereby bringing several communities across Cameroon's Extreme North region into the full heat of violent extremist activities of the militant group. The attacks occasioned the targeting and killing of many Cameroonians in Mayo-Sava, Mayo-Tsanaga, Mayo-Danay, and the Logone and Chari Divisions of the Extreme North Region of Cameroon with towns like Kolofata, Fotokol, Waza, Amchide, Mora and other towns bordering Nigeria being heavily hit.

According to the United States Department of State Publications' *Country Reports on Terrorism 2014*, as released in June 2015, the following were recorded as the main violent terrorist incidents in 2014:

- The June 30th killing of the village chief of Magdeme, in Mayo Sava Division of the Extreme North Region. Boko Haram militants suspected him of collaborating with security forces.
- The kidnapping of 10 Chinese engineers working on a road construction project in the region. This took place on the 16 of May in Waza.
- July 6th marked the storming of the Lamido of Limani in the Mayo-sava division by 10 gunmen on motorcycles. The

result was the kidnapping of two teenage students at the local high school.

- The cross-border attack on Kolofata on July 27. The result was the kidnapping of a dozen people amongst which were the Lamido of Kolofata and the wife of the Vice-Prime Minister of Cameroon, Amadou Ali.

Things seemed to have gotten worse when in 2015, according to the United States Department of State *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015*, the following happened:

- In mid-January 2015, Boko Haram kidnapped 80 people in Mayo Tsanaga and killed four villagers.
- On April 9, Boko Haram fighters wearing Nigerian Army uniforms infiltrated the village of Guoues, located nine kilometers from the Dabanga border post. The attackers killed eight people including Issa Sale, the village chief.
- On April 16, a large Boko Haram force attacked the villages of Blabline and Bia, in the Kolofata district. They killed 24 civilians, set fire on houses, and stole a large number of cattle.
- In early May, Boko Haram killed 19 people in Tchebe-Tchebe and Ldaoutsaf, burned 76 market stands, and killed two members of the security forces in Zelevelt.

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

- On July 12, two suicide bombers wearing niqabs blew themselves up in Fotokol, on the border with Nigeria, killing 10 civilians and a soldier from neighboring Chad.
- On July 22, two bombers detonated themselves near the central market in Maroua and its adjoining Hausa quarter, killing 21 persons and wounding 85 others, according to official figures. These were the first two suicide attacks in Cameroon.
- On July 19, Boko Haram killed 24 civilians, including multiple children in Kamouna, Extreme North Region. More than 80 assailants stormed and set fire to the village, located near Lake Chad in the northern strip of Cameroon.
- On July 26, in Afade, in the Logone and Chari division of the Extreme North Region, Boko Haram set the gendarmerie post on fire, killing four people who were in the station's detention cells, including a suspected Boko Haram member who was being held by the gendarmes.
- On July 25, in Maroua, a suicide attack killed 23 civilians and wounded more than 80.
- On September 3, a double suicide attack hit the locality of Kerawa, some 10 kilometers from Kolofata district in the Extreme North Region, killing at least 40 people and injuring more than 150 others.

- On December 28, in Bodo, Extreme North Region, two female attackers self-detonated, but did not cause any civilian casualties.

In as much as violence has become a common phenomenon in Cameroon, the transformation of violence to extremist violence remains a major concern for most Cameroonians. This is so, in as much as the people themselves and the Government, civil society, and international organizations engage to look for solutions. Findings made from our research hold that the use of hard force by military or security forces to curb this violence in most cases have not been very successful and has led to an escalation of more violence because military actions have mostly served to address the symptoms of violence rather than its cause.

Counter Violent Extremism

Counter violent extremism, which only became popular after the famous Counter-Terrorism program developed by the US government, has come to provide more holistic and soft approaches to countering violence and violent extremism. In the wake of the Boko Haram insurgency in Cameroon, the Cameroonian government was quick to consult counterterrorism programs in view of identifying measures that

could be implemented to provide lasting peace in its troubled regions. These efforts saw the adoption of the 2014 Anti-terrorism Law by the government. Notwithstanding, the evolution of the counterterrorism programs to counter violent extremism saw the adoption of a more inclusive strategy by the Cameroonian government to end violent extremism. Even though the government of Cameroon has not taken a total shift from the use of military “hard force”, they have opened their doors for more collaborative and community based efforts to bring lasting peace. Prominent among this strategy was the inclusion of civil societies, youths, women, religious and community leaders in consultations, intelligence gathering, vigilantism, as well as tackling some of the root causes of violent extremism.

It is believed that enough has not been done considering that the Cameroonian government has not yet developed a National Counter-terrorism or Violent Extremism Plan, as recommended by the UN Secretary General in his Action Plan to Counter Violent extremism, nor developed strategic institutions apart from the defense forces to support this process. While bolstering the security forces' operational capacity is crucial to dealing with violent extremists, our research reveals that such actions should be complimented with actions to resolve broad-based factors that push young people into

embracing radicalization, violence and violent extremism.

The next chapter of this work attempts a critical examination of some of the factors that encourages young people's engagement in violence and violent extremism across communities in Cameroon.

**CHAPTER TWO:
WHY YOUTHS ENGAGE IN VIOLENCE/VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN
CAMEROON**

Youth, Violence and Violent Extremism

The appropriate definition of the word “youth” remains a major point of debate in the socio-economic and political life of Cameroon. While many perceive youth to be a state of mind and not necessarily age, the Cameroon National Youth Policy defines a youth as a person in the 15-35 age groups. According to the World Bank, this age group makes up over 65% of Cameroon’s population.

A review of reports on violence and violent extremism in Cameroon may lead to the erroneous conclusion that violence is mostly perpetrated by youths, but largely ignoring critical components, which influences violence and violent extremism in the country. From our findings and based on evidence gotten from the Extreme North region of Cameroon, the Boko Haram terrorists have been able to capitalize on these ignored factors to recruit new members from among the youthful population. Most of these young people are recruited against their will, while others are pushed to engage in violence as it is perceived to be the only alternative for survival or out of the socio-economic and political challenges which they face.

The above picture does not however counter the fact that, there is a growing number of young people in Cameroon who are resilient to violence and violent extremism, most of whom stand defiant in spite of their dire socio-economic and political conditions. It is refreshing to know that the number of youths recruited or joining the ranks of Boko Haram pales significantly when compared to those who, despite the challenges and temptations faced, stay resilient, steadfast and peace loving.

Youths and Radicalism

Youth radicalization and youth recruitment for the perpetration of acts of violence remain an escalating threat to societies. As in most societies, youths' involvement in violence and violent extremism in Cameroon is not new. Historically, the transitions from colonization to independence/post-independence and democratization saw the rise of youth groups with leaders under forty. This period saw youths as both victims and perpetrators of violence. In addition, youths' involvement in violent extremism in Cameroon has not only been limited to the Boko Haram insurgency. The most recent Anglophone Crisis has gone a long way to corroborate the fact that socio-economic and political grievances have the capacity to radicalize young people.

Africa is said to be experiencing a youth bulge and stakeholders are calling for increased investments towards helping countries make the best of the youth demographic dividend.⁶ In Cameroon just like elsewhere in Africa, the rise of the youthful population calls for a close examination of what makes them vulnerable and exposes them to radicalization and recruitment by violent extremist groups. Basically, when there is a complex overlap of concurring negative occurrences in society such as extreme poverty, lack of access to quality education, bad governance, injustice, marginalization and hate speech amongst others, young people are bound to be discontented.

This could translate to youths turning to violence as a means of getting their messages across. This environment within which youths across Cameroon find themselves influences the decisions they make, which in turn, results in either positive or negative outcomes. That is why it is very important to discuss why young people engage in violence and violent extremism in our communities and how we can ensure that they have the opportunity to choose alternatives to violence.

⁶ See 2016 African Union Summit, Declaration of AU Heads of States.

Why do youths engage in violence/violent extremism in Cameroon?

Cameroonian leaders and leaders around the world are looking for solutions to curb the increasing youths' involvement in violence and violent extremism. However, it is perceived that Governments focus on the effects of violence rather than on the prevailing pull and push factors or drivers identified by respondents in affected areas. Some of the drivers that push youths to engage in violence and violent extremism in Cameroon are discussed below:

- **Injustice, Youth Exclusion from Decision-Making Processes, Bad Governance, the Excesses of Security Forces and the Abuse of Human Rights⁷**

Too often, during critical stages in the lives of young people, social and political exclusion can lead to a point of anguish or hopelessness. According to a recent ranking of members of parliament aged under 40 in 128 countries by the Inter Parliament Union (2016), Cameroon ranked 119 with only 3.9%. For parliamentarians under 30, Cameroon was ranked 88th

⁷ Chayes, S. (2016). Corruption and Terrorism: the casual link. In, *Against Corruption, A book of Essays*. HM Government. In this Chapter, the author draws from stories from across countries with high prevalence of terrorist movements to highlights on the casual link between corruption and terrorism. She further points to the financial and moral corruption propagated by state and non-state actors and how this negatively impact young people, pushing them to the edge and making them more vulnerable to radicalisation.

with 0.0%. These figures speak for themselves and demonstrate that youth voices in decision-making processes both at community and national levels are largely inexistent. To show their discontent, especially when lobbying the government has proven futile, young people increasingly search for alternatives and violence becomes the choice alternative as its outcomes cannot be ignored. In addition, government's response to the current Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon which has been characterised by brutal police crackdown, civilian deaths, and massive arrests⁸ has further radicalised young people to be defiant of security forces and engage in acts of violence whose results are, destruction of property, arson attacks on schools, killings among other forms of intimidation on populations.

Over the years, Cameroon has emerged top on the chart for most corrupt countries. With an elite few getting richer and the majority wallowing in poverty, young people turn to arm robbery, gang violence and become recruits for violent extremist groups. Our respondents have confidently reaffirmed that, if resources are equitably shared and a good governance system put in place backed by a well-organized justice system,

⁸ Reuters [World News](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-protests-idUSKBN15S1UH) | Mon Feb 13, 2017 | 11:30am EST
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-protests-idUSKBN15S1UH> accessed 21/06/2017

young people will have access to better alternatives to survival than violence and crime.

- **High rates of unemployment and poverty are some of the most prevailing reasons why youths in Cameroon engage in violence and extremism.**

The inability of young Cameroonians to acquire decent jobs, which match their educational levels, has left many disgruntled. As a result of this, poverty has become an integral part of everyday life with many youths unable to provide for themselves and their families. Our research has shown that poverty brings to the fore front identity crises among youths as they feel neglected by government, with such neglect helping to destroy their pride of belonging to the nation. This leaves them susceptible to voluntary or forceful engagement in violence. According to the Commonwealth Youth Program's Youth Development Index (2015), Cameroon is ranked 130 out of 170 countries surveyed with an overall score of 0.44% and an employment and opportunity percentage of only 0.53%. This is shockingly low for a country with over 65% of young people.

Nevertheless, we also discovered that there is no direct causal link between unemployment, poverty and youth involvement in violent extremism. This is because we equally uncovered evidence of wealthy and educated young people

who have voluntarily offered their services to violent extremist groups or perpetrated violence in one way or the other. Notwithstanding, many of our respondents hold unemployment and poverty as the major source of grievance to many young people who commit the violence directly or are used as foot soldiers.

- **Negative Propaganda and False Religious Ideologies.**

Negative preaching and propaganda were highlighted during our research as some of the reasons why young people get involved in violence. Void of positive exposure, willpower and analytical skills, many Cameroonian youths have fallen prey to false propaganda and preaching, which has contributed to their radicalization and involvement in violence. The recent case of the Anglophone Crisis where false propaganda on social media was used to coerce some young people to perpetrate acts of violence in retaliation is a clear example. Our social media monitoring, tracking and mapping of trends on radicalization found instances where fake videos of police brutality were shared on Facebook to spur outrage causing many youth to go on the streets. This negative propaganda served its purpose as many young people resorted to hate speech, promises to use violence and actual violence in retaliation.

In addition, extremist preachers who often distort religious injunctions and religious teachings prey on the ignorance and vulnerability of Cameroonian youths who become susceptible to recruitment. This usually develops into a psychological process where ordinary youths become so aggrieved that they are willing to sacrifice their lives and the lives of innocent civilians to prove that they are worthy of whatever religious reward they have been promised. This is one of the reasons why many young people in certain communities in Cameroon's Extreme North region willingly join the ranks of the terrorist group Boko Haram. According to CNN, Cameroonian communities bordering Nigeria have been emptied of men between the ages of 10 and 45; however the exact number of youth who have been recruited is unknown. In addition, youth with troubled childhoods who experienced alienation from home or society in general are easy prey to extremist ideologies and are easily exploited in the process of recruitment and radicalization.

- **The role the internet in youth radicalization.**

With all the positive advantages and opportunities the internet provides, it is also one of the platform used by violent extremists to propagate hatred and violence and to identify and groom potential recruits, creating global online

communities that promote radicalization. In the case of Boko Haram in Cameroon, our research has shown that the internet has not been instrumental in the recruitment process of new militants. Nevertheless, with the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, we have seen so-called 'generals' and 'leaders of the struggle' call on youth to act violently in one way or another. These people have huge followings online and disenfranchised youth do carry out their commands with dire consequences. It is easy for these young people to fall prey to these doctrines because they have been denied the opportunity to participate fully in society. Therefore online instructions like those we have seen in the Cameroonian Facebook community give them a sense of purpose and importance. Several schools and markets have been destroyed in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon inspired by hate speeches shared via Facebook and Whats app groups.

The above reasons are inexhaustible and of course the trends and dynamics change over time. The Cameroon security forces have been very quick and responsive in apprehending the fomenters of this violence and incarcerating them in prison and juvenile facilities across the national territory. Nevertheless, with the high rate of recidivism, the question of

how effective is the rehabilitation and reintegration process in Cameroon?

CHAPTER THREE: REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION IN CAMEROON

Rehabilitation refers to a process of restoring someone to health or normal life through training and therapy after imprisonment, addiction, or illness⁹. Reintegration entails the action or process of integrating someone back into the society¹⁰. Observations and findings from the field reveal that many prisoners/detainees or juvenile delinquents in Cameroon often leave the prison or government rehabilitation centers worse off than when they came in due to ineffective enforcement of rehabilitation and reintegration services¹¹. This justifies why many of those who leave these centers often immediately return to the 'same cells/rooms' for similar or new crimes since they were not transformed to be reintegrated into society afterward. The question then remains on how to ensure a more effective process of rehabilitation that would permit juvenile delinquents in Cameroon to become assets for nation building rather than liabilities upon release from various rehabilitation structures.

Rehabilitation, Reintegration and the Law in Cameroon

⁹ For more clarifications about 'Rehabilitation', visit <https://www.google.cm/#q=what+is+rehabilitation+?>

¹⁰ Visit the following to know more about 'Reintegration'
<https://www.google.cm/#q=what+is+reintegration+?>

¹¹ For details, read Fontebo, N.M. 2013, on: Prison Conditions In Cameroon: The Narratives Of Female Inmates. http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/13069/thesis_fontebo_hn.pdf?sequence=1

The process of rehabilitation and reintegration is enshrined in major legal documents of the country including the Constitution¹², The Penal Code (section 29¹³ Section 80¹⁴ Section 48¹⁵), The Criminal Procedure Code (Law N°2005 of 27 July 2005), Law N° 98/7 of 14 April 1998 modifying some disposition of ordinance 72/5 of 26 August 1972 on the organization of military justice and certain laws on social assistance.

Other Ministerial decree and decisions regarding rehabilitation and reintegration include;

- Penitentiary Administration Five year plan (2007-2012) for increasing assistance to female and juvenile offenders
- Circular N° 002/9062/DAPG of 15/10/2002 relating to the procedures concerning minors involved in offenses committed with the use of firearms
- Ministerial Order No. 89/A/MINASCOF of 2 April 1990 on the creation of Social Action Services. These programs provides social support for courts and prison facilities, juvenile center, police post and gendarmeries

¹². It protects everyone no matter the crime “under no circumstances shall any person be subjected to torture, to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment”

¹³) states that “an offender under 18 shall serve his sentence in a special establishment, or, failing such establishment, shall be separated from offenders over that age”

¹⁴: It sets the age at which a person attains full criminal responsibility, that is at eighteen years.

¹⁵: It provides for parents, guardians or a person responsible under customary law for a person under eighteen who has committed an act defined as an offense to enter into recognizance to forfeit his right of guardianship over the said person if he or she shall commit a similar act within a space of one year,

- Presidential Decree No 92/052 of 27 March 1992 on the penitentiary regime in Cameroon¹⁶.
- Decree N° 90-5794 of 23 March 1990, creating a National Commission for the protection of delinquent juveniles, abandoned juveniles, and those in moral danger.
- Decree N° 73 / 461 of 2 September 1973 on the organization and operation of the Betamba and Bepanda juvenile institutions.
- Decree N°73/155 of 22 March 1973 on the organization of the Buea Borstal Institute
- Circular N° 6466/5435/PG of 7 June 1969 relating to juvenile delinquency and placements of minors in the Centre at Betamba

Challenges of rehabilitation and reintegration of youth in Cameroon

The shortcoming of prisons and correctional facilities to effectively rehabilitate and reintegrate young people remains a major issue in ensuring sustainable peace. There is a high rate of recidivism as many of these young people after their term in jail are not well equipped and given an alternative to violence. As earlier noted, youth in Cameroon constitute a majority of the

¹⁶It provides for the creation of five categories of prisons which are: orientation prisons, relegation centers, production prisons, school prisons and special prisons

population plagued by violent extremism, radicalization, and multiple forms of juvenile delinquencies. Such behaviors often lead them to prisons/detention services (gendarmerie and police cells), social welfare/rehabilitation centers (like the Borstal Institute in Buea for Minors) tasked with rehabilitation and reintegration¹⁷ according to the penal code of Cameroon amended in 2016, as well as other international laws governing prisons to which Cameroon is a party. However, findings have revealed major hindrances to effective rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders in Cameroon. Below we highlight some of them.

1. Poor infrastructure and programming

Most prison infrastructures in Cameroon were inherited from colonial masters and of course do not have the capacity to host the increasing number of young people who are jailed. According to a GCI report, there are currently 72 prisons in Cameroon, categorized into three: central prisons, located in the capital city of each region; principal prisons, which are linked to magistrates courts accommodating all categories including pre-trial prisoners; and secondary prisons that only

¹⁷.See the 2009 Report by the 'Global Conscience Initiative Special Report On The Kumba Principal Prison': <http://gci-cameroon.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/2009-Kumba-Prison-Report.pdf>

accommodate sentenced prisoners and are scattered throughout the country.' Unfortunately, this number of prisons just like other social welfare structures remain insufficient, to accommodate the increasing number of youth involved in abnormal social behavior. These existing rehabilitation structures also suffer from inexistence or limited programmes and services for rehabilitation and reintegration¹⁸ including; lack of educational facilities, quality health services, economic empowerment programmes, leisure facilities, limited basic amenities (overcrowded rooms/cells, poor food quality, insufficient clean water, etc.); long and complicated process of litigation, as well as violation of human rights regardless of age or gender¹⁹.

2. Lack of trained staff

In cases where some of the stated services above are available, there remains a serious problem of effectiveness and efficiency following various laws governing the penitentiary system in Cameroon and the 'United Nations Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners' as well as 'The United Nations Body of Principles for the Protection of all Persons Under Any Form of

¹⁸ (See Yenkong, <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/18563/ASC-075287668-3175-01.pdf?sequence=2>)

¹⁹ See the 2016 Report by Human Rights Watch on Conditions of Prisoners in Cameroon: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/cameroon0313_ForUpload.pdf

Detention or Imprisonment'²⁰. Most of these facilities despite the presence of infrastructure face a major challenge of recruiting staff who are well trained to effectively implement the programmes. Talking to a head of a correctional facility, he shares that working on R-R is more of a dedication and love for the dissented. According to him, most of his staff faces this challenge of effectively bonding with the offenders due to the lack of skills.

3. Outdated programmes

Rehabilitation and reintegration facilities and programmes in Cameroon have not been updated to meet the recent trend of violence as well and strategies to meet the need of 21st-century challenges. For example, programmes to reintegrate violent offenders charged with terrorism or violent extremism has not been effectively developed. This creates a major vacuum thus making it difficult for effective R-R in these facilities. Speaking to one of our respondents from the Extreme North of Cameroon, he highlighted that some of the youths who were recruited by Boko Haram stand the risk of either returning into the bush or not being properly received in their former communities. He argues that this is because there is an

²⁰ For details, see Nde-Fru, Esq. 2012, on: 'International Law and the Upgrading of the State Penitentiary System: the Case of Cameroon'. <http://www.icenecdev.org/Nde-Fru-Penitentiary-Human-Rights.pdf>

ineffective counter violent extremism program or plan which focuses on R-R.

4. Lack of inclusivity in the design, access and delivery of Rehabilitation and Reintegration program

Interestingly, during our work with other civil societies working on R-R in Cameroon, we found that most of them have challenges of accessing prisons and correctional facilities to deliver support program. The role of the civil society talk less of youths in R-R has not been effectively included in National R-R strategy. Considering the fact that peer-to-peer education has been very successful, the absence of policy, which provides a safe space for youth and civil societies to empower violent offenders, remains a major constraint in the R-R process. Though the above hindrances abound, many different actors from civil society have engaged prison authorities across different regions of Cameroon to make positive contributions towards rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.

In concluding this chapter, we can see from the above issues highlighted that Cameroon has a long road to achieving effective rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. The extent of this work, also speaks of the need for collective action. The responsibility is not one which government can achieve

without its partners. It is for this reason that this memoire summons families, communities, faith based movements, civil society organisations, and government's international partners to deep collective reflections and actions that would facilitate the emergence of environments conducive for adequate actions towards rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders.

As a direct response, the next part of this work will highlight actions that have been undertaken by some civil society organisations towards rehabilitation and reintegration in Cameroon. Twenty (20) of such positive practices have been summarized in the second part of this work, capturing different modes of engagements by the different actors and strategies they have employed to succeed in the transformation mission for violent offenders. As highlighted in earlier sections of this work, in showcasing these best practices, the expectation is that it would inspire more innovation, creativity and collaboration in the area of transforming, rehabilitating and reintegrating violent young people caught in the cycle of crime and violence to becoming champions of peace and development across the Cameroon society and beyond.

PART 2:

**ENGAGING REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION: POSITIVE
PRACTICES IN CAMEROON, SUMMONING THE ROME
MEMORANDUM ON REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION, AND
AN ACTION AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE**

CHAPTER ONE: GOOD PRACTICE FOR REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN CAMEROON

Overview

Sharing of Good practice remains a very successful and effective means of strengthening and ensuring the success of program. This chapter captures 20 innovative initiatives which young people across Cameroon have engaged in through civil society or social movements in promoting rehabilitation and reintegration in Cameroon. Since youth involvement in rehabilitation and reintegration in Cameroon is still very timid, this chapter is intended to briefly showcase some of these youth-led initiatives as a way to influence policy as well as inspire more young Cameroonians to engage in rehabilitation and reintegration.

Twenty Best Practices of Youth Civil Society in Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Offenders in Cameroon

Organisation:	Kira Children's Rights Africa
Local Organiser:	ALDEPA (Action Locale pour un Développement Participatif et Autogéré)
Project:	Strengthening the juvenile justice system and protecting children from trafficking, Exploitation and recruitment into armed forces.
Location of Project:	Far North
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project helps to strengthen the juvenile justice system and to render child protection more effective and sustainable.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of state representatives to create a child-friendly juvenile justice system • Developing guidelines and best practices for dealing with children in police, judicial and penal systems • Conducting and publishing a study on child trafficking and the economic exploitation of children in the project area • Training civil society agents to improve the protection of children on a local level • Conducting an awareness-raising campaign on parental responsibility • Identifying children and families at risk of economic exploitation and child trafficking • Legal advice, care and support of children who are accused or suspected of crimes • offering educational, sanitation and health measures to small children who spend the first years of their life behind bars
Number of	2,000 children at risk or children who have become

Beneficiaries:	victims of exploitation or trafficking , 1,600 children suspected of, accused of or convicted for crimes, 80 children with their detained mothers in prison , 394 governmental representatives of the police and judiciary , 120 prison officers , 40 social workers , 20 probation officers , 9 doctors , 20 registrars , 3,600 parents , 2,000 members of local committees for the protection of children , 35 members of civil society organisations , 120 adolescent leaders , 25 journalists and radio speakers.
Major Challenge	Project On-going
Major Success:	Project On-going
Partners	ALDEPA (Action Locale pour un Développement Participatif et Autogéré), German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Sternstunden e. V., Hungermarsch Schwetzingen, Kinderrechte Afrika.
Contact of Organisation:	Email: Info@kindarechte-afrika.org Website: kindarechte-afrika.org, Contact numbers: +49782138855

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

Local Organiser:	CEFAP/Ladies' Circle
Project:	PRISON-VIE (PRISON-LIFE)
Location of Project:	Kondengui Prison, Yaoundé
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEFAP Ladies Circle takes specific action for the general improvement of the conditions of detention in Cameroon. • CEFAP Ladies Circle also intends to provide room to welcome, listen, assist, train and help ex-convicts and others, to reintegrate society. Such will include a location with room provided and equipped with hosting and training devices.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A six months' period allocated (at Yaounde Central Prison-Kondengui) for the provision of a mobile pilot space to shelter during visiting days, the loved ones of those detained. This space is near the entrance to the prison. A team of CEFAP volunteers shall serve tea, coffee, water and basic products. Some toys Will be made available to the children. • After the evaluation of the first experience, CEFAP and partners shall also hunt for funding that will enable them plan for further provision of such hosting places in other prisons in places like Douala, Bafoussam, Kribi, Bamenda, Ngaoundere, Maroua, and many other rural prisons.
Number of Beneficiaries:	All visitors of the Kondengui Central Prison
Major Challenge	Project On-going
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have brought an innovation in Cameroon as far as the welcome of the loved ones of prisoners during visiting days is concerned. We have also

	<p>created a platform for associations as well as for authorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have also encouraged visitors who visit their loved ones because the normal reception conditions (countless hours spent standing under sun and rain) discourage many from visiting and they finally abandon their loved ones. • For the other penitentiary sites in general, it provides a model for the reception of loved ones (host spaces will be provided in other prisons).
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Justice through the service of the penitentiary administration. • Ministry of Social Affairs • Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family • Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education • Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training accompanied with National Employment Fund • Prison Justice 44 Association
Contact of Organisation:	<p>Email address: Cefap97@yahoo.fr</p> <p>Telephone numbers: +237 22048183, +237 97069872, 00 (237) 22 00 32 53</p> <p>Location : Fanta Citron Street Mvog-Ada, Yaounde</p>

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Organisation:	ICENECDEV
Project:	Prison Project
Location of Project:	Borstal Institute Buea, Buea Central Prisonational school of Penitentiary Administration
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strenthen Capacity of penitentiary administrators and other stakeholders on criminal and juvenile justice. • Provide alternative skills to juveniles and inmates as a way to build social cohesion and provide alternative to violence.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Capacity Building workshop of Penitentiary staff. • Organise Computer and Literacy classes. • Organising Tailoring and Carpentry Workshop. • Organise a Barbing Workshop for the inmates.
Number of Beneficiaries:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 550 Inmates of the Buea Central Prison. • Over 30 Students of Borstal Institute Buea. • Leaders from the National School of Penitentiary Administration
Major Challenge	
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penitentiary staff and stakeholders of the criminal justice system acquired the practice of human rights, assimilated good practices in view of improving on National detention conditions and used manuals on Human Rights within the penitentiary administration • The computers have increased the computer literacy levels of the inmates. • The text books in the Library are displayed at the disposal of the trainees and the trainers of the

	<p>National School of Penitentiary Administration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained more than 100 inmates in the Buea central Prison on tailoring, Carpentry and Barbing.
Partners	Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID), Forestry, Agriculture Animal and Fisheries Network (FAAFNET), Bahai Faith Cameroon, Techno Cameroon, Books and Things Inc, Anucam Foundation Cameroon
Contact of Organisation:	<p>Email address: info@iceneccdec.org / admin@iceneccdec.org</p> <p>Contact Numbers: +237674033583 / +237633609311</p>

Organisation:	Alpha Beta Records
Project:	Mr Leo Prison Outreach Initiative
Location of Project:	Buea Central Prison, South West Region
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative had as main objective to promote societal inclusion and solidarity between the young musicians and young people in detention centres particularly the Buea Central Prison. Mr Leo who is son of a prison warder was born and grew up around this environ and therefore, he considers the prison area home to him. In his words he organized this outreach initiative to give commune with his comrades held behind bars and also to bring the message of hope and love to them. • It also seeks to demonstrate to them that they are a part of the society even though behind bars and are equal to every other young person.

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A live solidarity concert and musical performance wherein Alphabeta records artists like Mr Leo, Salatiel, Blaise B performed hit songs,• A football match between the musicians and the inmates,• Distribution of food and other needs.
Number of Beneficiaries:	1300 inmates
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to Prison and engagement of other inmates
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The project raised the hope of the young prisoners and gave them a sense of belonging as citizens of Cameroon.• This project also created a bond between those behind bars and the artist; something that never existed or was limited and made them to believe that they too can be artist.
Partners	
Contact of Organisation:	Email address: mrleotheartist2@gmail.com/ovadoze2000@gmail.com Contact Numbers: 677957471/698056985

Organisation:	The Louis Fame Foundation which is under the Cameroonian Clothing Brand Louis Fame.
Project:	DESIGNING BEYOND BORDERS
Location of Project:	Buea Central Prison, South West Region
Objectives of Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clothes to inmates and socially challenged youths • Builds social cohesions and bond between young people in jail and inspiring young people in the entertainment industry. • Create first contact in promoting African design and clothing among young people who are inspired to join the industry but lack an opportunity.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donation of designer clothes to inmates • Motivational and capacity building talks with inmates
Number of Beneficiaries:	Approximately 30 women and 100 minors
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of access to some prison inmates
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After our visit, we have a minor who currently works with us after his term as a result of our visit • The level of appreciation and joy we had from most of the Beneficiaries and shows how much they are ready to change and use their talent positively
Partners	Mr Leo, Salatiel, Askia, Blaize B and Rythms Group Noela Lyonga from NoelaLyonga Foundation and Elyn Fesse
Contact of Organisation:	Email address: Louisfame1@gmail.com Contact Numbers: 670000329, 698249826

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

Local Organiser:	MIROIR D'AFRIQUE
Project:	Social reintegration of prisoners
Location of Project:	Yaoundé Central Prison Mfou Main Prison
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reintegrate prisoners
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math classes four times a week in Form 4s and Lower sixths. • Six months' professional training in computing and secretarial office.
Number of Beneficiaries:	100 inmates
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find institutions this employs prisoners upon discharge. • Difficulties in convincing the population to host the discharged prisoners
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have reintegrated three cases: a 14-year old child, and two young men who got employed.
Partners	Brain-Trust UBUNTU
Contact of Organisation:	Email : miroirafrique59@gmail.com Telephone number Location: Odza, Yaoundé.

Organisation:	Mother of Hope Cameroon
Project:	Community Sensitization on the Importance of Rehabilitation and Reintegration
Location of Project:	Northwest Region
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize Inhabitants on the Importance of Reintegrating and Rehabilitating People from Detention and Correction facilities. • Engage the communities to take effective action and concrete steps towards reintegration and rehabilitation.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drilling of the participants in a full day seminar on the need for R-R within the context of C/PVE in Cameroon: the role of education and entrepreneurship in R-R and the role of psycho-social support in R-R • Sharing of the Youth action agenda with participants for further reflection on the context of the action agenda with the realities in their communities.
Number of Beneficiaries:	40 participants
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a small portion of community inhabitants could be reached making it impossible to have a serious multiplier effect in the advancement of Reintegration and Rehabilitation.
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event went a long way to legitimize the Youth Action Agenda at community level • Participants resolved to use their skills as social workers to accelerate rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, a commitment made by the

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

	Director and students of the Clinic
Partners	CBC Counseling Services
Contact of Organisation:	Email: Motherofhopecameroon@gmail.com Contact Number: 677831004

Organisation:	Cameroon International Model United Nations(CAMIMUM), Justice Impartielle
Project Title:	Cameroonian youths in a context of violence: The methods and challenges of Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Cameroon
Location of Project:	Campus of ESSEC Douala, Littoral Region.
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitizing and mobilize community voice to support rehabilitation and reintegration and strengthening justice system to prevent and counter violent extremism.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to ESSEC Campus and sensitization of student on rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders and justice system in Cameroon • Shared the youth action agenda with participants to reflect on the context of the action agenda with the realities in their communities
Number of Beneficiaries:	40 beneficiaries
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to get many participants given that most young people rather prefer to focus on hustling to meet their daily life demands than come for such seminars.

Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The event went a long way to legitimize the Youth Action Agenda at community level
Contact of Organisation:	Email: <u>melaniemoussango@gmail.com</u> , Mvogo2012@yahoo.fr Contact Numbers: 697290714 . 694610669

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

Organisation:	Human is Right
Project Title:	Sensitization of Local communities on the need for effective Rehabilitation and Reintegration
Location of Project:	Mile 16 and Tole Communities of the Buea Municipality, Southwest Region
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize inhabitants of local communities on the Importance of Effective Rehabilitation and Reintegration. • Educate them on how Reintegration and Rehabilitation helps counter and prevent violent extremism in the region.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor Sensitization on youth involvement in nation-building; radicalization: effects on the youth of Mile 16 and Tole and provision of Strategies aimed at promoting rehabilitation and reintegration of youth violent offenders • The organizer shared the youth action agenda with participants to reflect on the context of the action agenda with the realities in their communities
Number of Beneficiaries:	The number of beneficiary for the project was a 100
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties reaching out to more young people given that the community Mile 16 and Tole have witnessed lots of violent activities recently. • Inadequate resources to reach out to more communities as requested by the young participants.
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event went a long way to legitimize the Youth Action Agenda at community level
Contact of Organisation:	Email: Chamango.blaise@gmail.com Contact Number : 675019143

Organisation:	Associations Des Jeunes du Septentrion, Cercle des Amis pour le Développement du Cameroon (CERADEC)
Project Title:	Preparing communities for reintegration of Former Boko Haram Recruits and violent offenders.
Location of Project:	Garoua, North Region
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitizing and engaging community on the importance of promoting the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders as a tool in countering/preventing violent extremism in the Region.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitization workshop organized on Rehabilitation and Reintegration on the responsibility of youth leaders in rehabilitation and rehabilitation of victims of war or social disorder • Sharing of the youth action agenda with participants to reflect on the context of the action agenda with the realities in their communities
Number of Beneficiaries:	50 beneficiaries
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pass it on workshops could not be extended to other areas because of lack of resources and travelling difficulties.
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youths took a commitment to foster rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives in the region • Participants acquired better understanding on the importance of Rehabilitation and Reintegration in preventing violence
Contact of Organisation:	Email: idaouda1986@gmail.com , Abdelalfa2035@yahoo.com Contact Number: 696369900 , 696582844

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

Organisation:	Association des Jeunes Dynamiques pour L'émergence
Project Title:	Community Sensitization on rehabilitation and reintegration of Boko Haram Recruits.
Location of Project:	Mora and Tokombere, Far North Region
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitizing and engaging the community to support the rehabilitation process of Boko Haram recruits and victims as well as create a safe space for their reinsertion to the community.
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two workshops in Mora and Tokombere on the role of youth in C/PVE, inter-religious and community collaboration to promote R-R, the SDGs and UNSC Resolution 2250 • sharing of the youth action agenda with participants who reflected on the context of the action agenda with the realities in their communities
Number of Beneficiaries:	201 beneficiaries
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in reaching out to more communities because of the terrorism activities around the localities of the far North.
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It addressed the concept of intergenerational and inter-religious dialogue as a means to promote R-R efforts in the presence of religious and community leaders alongside the youth leaders
Contact of Organisation:	Email: ibrahimdjagra@gmail.com Contact Number: 652929192

Organisation:	Association des Acteurs de Développement (ADEV)
Project Title:	Business Plan Writing Competition
Location of Project:	Yaoundé Central Prison
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To train young detainees to be released in about 6 months on entrepreneurship activities, mainly the writing of a good business plan
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business plan writing competition organised in the Prisons • Fact finding meeting organised with the meeting of justice • Research on Youth delinquency in Cameroonian prisons ;between exclusion and social reinsertion • Musical concert organised at the Prisons
Number of Beneficiaries:	50 youths
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overpopulated prison • Inadequate financial resources to provide start-up capital to trained detainees; • Upon release ex-prisoners cannot start up their own businesses due to legal exigencies (requirement of a certificate of non-conviction)
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained over 50 inmates on business plan writing and the best business plans were rewarded; • Carried out research on “Youth delinquency in the prison milieu in Cameroon: between social exclusion and social reinsertion”
Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gospel Jam
Contact of Organisation:	Email: adevcmr@gmail.com Contact Numbers: +237 242892942/675787046 /674372195

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

Organisation:	VOSYS Cameroon
Project Title:	Prisons outreach for peace building
Location of Project:	Fundong Principal Prison
Objectives of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of inmates through educative talks on drug consumption and civic education • Amelioration of cardio-vascular capacities of prisoners through sports • Build the resilience of inmates to replace the cycle of crime and violence by the cycle of renewal and peace
Project Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health screening • mini football tournament • Donation of gifts • Educative talk on drug consumption and civic education
Number of Beneficiaries:	151 youths
Major Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspicious attitude of prison authorities who believe "outsiders" are coming to the prison to monitor the living condition of prisoners and relay to the world. They become very conservative. • Lack of finances to adequately fund our activities • Total absence of equipment for rehabilitation at the prison e.g. vocational training material
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planned activities realized • Increased confidence building with prison authorities • Donations gathered and shared to inmates
Partners:	Social Welfare Commission
Contact of Organisation:	Email: info@vosyscameroon.org Contact Number: +237 243851637 Website : www.vosyscameroon.org

Organisation	Local Youth Corner (LoYoC) Cameroon
Project	Open Door Dialogue on the Radicalisation and Instrumentalisation of Street Children by Extremist Groups
Location	Rue Foch, Yaoundé
Objective of project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create an opportunity for street children and youth leaders to engage in a dialogue on the current rise in youth participation in violent extremism and insecurity in Cameroon, identify the role of young people, share experience on the push and pull factors of youth involvement in violent extremism and develop a network of youths against the instrumentalisation, recruitment of young people as soldiers by violent extremist groups and promotion of sustainable peace in Cameroon
Activities of Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue on the Radicalisation of street children by violent extremist groups and potential opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration of street children • There was a Theatre performance and musical break presented by the street children • material donations such as a first aid box, cloths ,tooth brushes and tooth paste, food stuff, detergents and a lot more • Sharing of a common meal with the participants
Number of Beneficiaries	200 street children
Major challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate collaboration from some relevant government institutions; • inadequate financial and technical resources to institute a much more permanent dialogue mechanism
Major successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event for the first of its kind to create a common ground between street children and youth civil society actors to discuss on rehabilitation and reintegration as well as on preventing and countering

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

	<p>violent extremism. 200 street children had the opportunity to participate in discussions on youth extremism, radicalization, violence, terrorism, recruitment as soldier and peace building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The street children pledge to join fellow young people and the state to counter violent extremism and ensure sustainable peace• The street children had the opportunity to openly expressed some of their grievances and called for the intervention of young people and the state to facilitate their reinsertion into the community• Youth civil society activist were able to identify other points of support for the street children; that is formal and non-formal education, ranging from peace education to entrepreneurship development, environmental protection, education and many others.• A new network between street children, youth leaders and the state was established.• Some leaders, young talents and entrepreneurial ideas were identified as focal point among the street children
Partners:	Reseau des Jeunes Leaders des Nations Unies, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Cameroon National Youth Council, Office of the Youth Ambassadors to the Commonwealth, Association Jeunes de Progress, The Global Action 2015 Network
Contact of Organization:	Email: info@loyocameroon.org Contact Number: +237 651299874/+237 222313920 Website : www.loyocameroon.org

Organisation:	Noela Lyonga Foundation/Molyko, Buea, South West Region
Project:	Inspire an Inmate
Location:	Buea Central Prison
Objective of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-integrate minors upon release • Sustain the minors economically while in prison and upon release Promote young talents inside the prison • Positively inspire and transform the minds of young offenders towards community development. • Encourage inmates to use volunteerism as a means of survival
Activities of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivational talks aimed at building the minds of the juvenile minors • Building the entrepreneurial skills of the minors through practical entrepreneurial activities • Carrying out clean up campaigns within the prison yards
Number of Beneficiaries	About 17 to 25
Major challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistency of the young offenders during executive actions • Lack of accountability by the young offenders involved. <p>Major successes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective execution with success results from 5 minors • Continuation of project by 5 minors so far upon release
Partners	Skylabase, Njorku, Bonga Juice Bar, Buea Central Prison
Contacts of Organization	<p>Contact Number:+237 676386548</p> <p>Website:www.Noelalyongafoundation.org</p>

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

Organization:	Operation Total Impact
PROJECT:	Transforming Prison Yards into dormitory Schools for professional Skill Acquisition
Location:	Buea Central Prison, Cameroon
Objective of project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare inmates to sit and pass the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Examinations (GCE) Ordinary and Advanced Levels, CAP, and Baccalaureate; Enabling them to integrate themselves in the educational environment especially universities, after serving their prison terms; • Assist inmates acquire basic skills on farm management; training includes effective growing of various tubers and vegetables, as well as entrepreneurship techniques, and Information Technology Communication (ITC); • Contributing towards the inmate's ability to earn honest wages and do decent jobs that are free of banditry, extortion, and fraud after leaving the prison
Activities of Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out teaching sessions aimed at preparing prison inmates for Secondary and High school National examinations • Training on basic skills such as information Technology and Communication(ITC), Farm management and growth of various vegetables and tubers and entrepreneurship techniques
Number of Beneficiaries	1000 yearly
Major challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Facilities (funding, Office infrastructure, direct project expenses and running costs) • Lack of adequate human and physical resources to enhance education and learning; Means of

	transporting the inmates to the Examination centre
Major Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 inmates registered for the GCE Advanced level and 9 passed, highest with 4 subjects 12 points, and the least 2 subjects 5 points. 25 inmates have been trained in Microsoft skills, 15 in tailoring, and others continue to acquire entrepreneurship training.
Partners:	Global Entrepreneurship Corps, Small Business Support Center, NoelaLyonga Foundation ,Royalty World, Caritas, Youth Advocates for peace and community empowerment Cameroon, , Youth Empowerment Actors, Ministry of Social Affairs ,
Contact of organisation	Email: Ndaghu@Yahoo.com

Organisation:	JCI Buea
Project:	All round clean-up of Buea Central Prison
Location:	Buea Central Prison
Objective of the project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Educate Prisoners about their health and how to live healthily and to motivate them spelling out the many opportunities they have after prison. • Bring into play the story of Nelson Mandela as a key inspiration to the Inmates.
Activities of Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivational talks to give hope to the prisoners • Educative campaigns on healthy practices • Sanitation and clean up of prison facility
Number of Beneficiaries	1400 Prisoners
Major challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to finance to buy goods for them, • No access to take pictures was given to anybody, Hence we found it difficult archiving our activities .It

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

	also left our partners a little agitated as the pictures were needed for report presentation
Major successes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1300 Prisoners were educated on health,(Some were tested on high blood pressure, Sugar levels and their wounds were treated), • We carried out a successful clean up campaign in the prison cells • Food and Cothes were donated to them, • Sketch was done for all the invitees who joined us for the Project
Partners:	Yapcec, Total Impact, JCI Buea Summit, Reach Out, American Corner, Yalda Africa, Media Afric, Health is Wealth, Clint, Justice and Equity Cameroon,
Contact of Organisation Website	Contact Number: +237 96 16 61 53 / 676342030 http://www.jci.cc/ub

Organization	Human Is Right Cameroon
PROJECT	Juvenile Justice Project
Location:	Buea
Objective of the project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide access to justice to youth in conflict with the justice system. • To provide free legal aid to young offenders. • To educate young offenders on alternative dispute resolution avenues, non-violence, peace building and rehabilitation and reintegration.
Activities of Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate young offenders on alternative dispute resolution methods and inculcating peace building initiatives in the youth • The provision of legal aid to young offenders
Number of	500 youths

Beneficiaries:	
Major challenge:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of lawyers to provide legal support to project. • Limited funding to facilitate material and human resource mobilization. • Current unrest in the English speaking regions of Cameroon.
Major success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilized over 500 youth to educate them on alternative avenues for dispute resolution, rehabilitation, and reintegration, peaceful means for expressing their grievance, abstain from violence and radicalization. • Organized capacity building in 5 towns in the Fako and Meme divisions to sensitize and educate youths on deradicalization and peace building.
Partners:	National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms; Borstal Institute; Buea central prison; Operation Total Impact.
Contact Organization of	Email: Chamango.blaise@gmail.com Contact Number : 675019143 Postal Adress: P.O.BOX:206, Buea, S.W.R. Cameroon

Organization:	La Liberte Arts Group
Location:	Bamenda
Project Title :	juvenile Right Promotion
The objective of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the rights of Juvenile. Instead of Juvenile Justice, we advocate for Juvenile Deviation (Putting them in reformation Centres, engaging with authorities for them to be

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

	corrected positively by engaging with Community work as a form of reformation rather than punitive measures that rather crush them. By so doing we build their Self-esteem, Confidence and them to be reintegrated back into
Activities of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage juvenile youth in community development projects as a means of correction
Number of Beneficiaries:	50 people.
Major Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of adequate skills to provide effective psychosocial support for offenders.
Major Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborating with Counsellors, Psychologist, and navigating through these persons to understand the problem of Children at risk with the law was highly successful. We carried out 9 Forum theatre sessions with all participants and produce a film (that saw the participation of Children at risk of Law acting. The writing of the story was done with the inputs of these children from story to script and Screenplay. The film was distributed to 4 Tv stations. Three of these children at risk of the Law who took part in the film are fully reintegrated in their families and their confidence that has been restored.
Partners	Centre For Human Rights and Peace Advocacy (CHRAPA), European Union, Action For Christian Against Torture (ACAT)
Contact	Email: infolaliberte@yahoo.com Contact Number: +237 6 78 39 98 54 Website : http://laliberte.webs.com

Organisation:	Local Youth Corner (LoYoC) Cameroon
Project:	Empowering Youth Civil Society Actors as Agents of Rehabilitation and Reintegration of people with a history of or propensity for violence in Cameroon
Location:	All 10 Regions of Cameroon
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of a 2 days residential consultation and training of 40 participants (30 youth civil society activists, 5 prison superintendents and 5 directors of correction centres) on rehabilitation and reintegration, peace building and Preventing / countering violent extremism • Developing a working document (action agenda) to promote youth engagement in rehabilitation and reintegration and also guide government policy on the subject • Organisation of Pass it On and advocacy actions undertaken by participants after the training
Objective of project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project has been developed as a scale up of Local Youth Corner Cameroon's peer to peer campaign to promote youth engagement in peace building, rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders and the fight against violent extremism
Number of Beneficiaries:	1500
Major challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main challenge was the volatile political atmosphere of the country now. Due to the ghost towns and strikes in the Northwest and Southwest Regions, some participants were prevented from participating in the consultation and training sessions and they

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

	<p>were unable to effectively organize their PIO activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the blockage of internet in the Anglophone regions of the country, communication especially on the dialogue platforms has been very difficult • Inadequate financial resources for the PIO as most of the participants complained that the \$80 subvention was insufficient • Inadequate cooperation from some leaders of the network in a few regions who did not properly coordinate the PIO events in their regions. They were inconsistent in communication and feedback.
<p>Major successes:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a network of civil society, penitentiary and social workers to promote rehabilitation and reintegration called the National Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NRRN) • Developed an Action Agenda to promote youth engagement in rehabilitation and reintegration which has been presented to Government to guide government policy • Carried out research to compile and showcase positive practices of over 20 youth civil society actors involved in rehabilitation and reintegration
<p>Partners:</p>	<p>Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Cameroon National Youth Council, Duke of Edinburgh International Award Cameroon, Ministry of Justice, Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, Search for Common Grounds</p>
<p>Contact of Organisation:</p>	<p>Email: info@loyocameroon.org Contact Number: +237 222313920 Website : www.loyocameroon.org</p>

CHAPTER TWO: TOWARDS BETTER REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN CAMEROON, SUMMONING THE ROME MEMORANDUM

The Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of violent offenders is very strategic as it is developed from a good background of empirical research, and expert workshops and conversations from civil societies, governments, and international agencies. This memorandum is very important because it provides adequate recommendations, which have the capacity of transforming R-R in Cameroon. In contextualizing this Memorandum, this chapter shall gather inspiration and facts from consultations and dialogue organized by LOYOC with youth civil society actors, front-line practitioners, and governments in Cameroon.

Section A: on Defining Goals and Objectives cover Good Practice Number 1

A rehabilitation program needs to have clearly defined goals, objectives, and indicators of success and failure. The goal could be changing the views or the behavior of the inmates, as well as focusing on lower and mid-level violent extremists or those in leadership or both. R-R programs should

have measurement mechanisms to determine their long-term effectiveness.

Section B on the Prison Context covers Good Practice Number 2 to Number 6

Good prison standards should respect human rights and international legal obligations, with efficient management to improve the safety of prison facility staff and other prisoners. An effective intake, assessment, and classification system should be developed for new inmates as their personal background, criminal history, personality traits, ideology and behavior are important for designing individual rehabilitation programs based on individual needs. During the dialogue, participants noted that in Cameroon, there exists a database or baseline information on prisoners and other violent offenders but which most often is not up to date. The call for action hence was to advocate for the creation of a national database center for prisoners and correction centers for effective follow-up of violent offenders.

Furthermore, states should consider how inmates (former violent extremist going through rehabilitation programs) are housed, if they should be segregated from or integrated into the general prison population. This separation can make

management easier, reduce negative influences, and make training of personnel to handle these special cases easier depending on the country-specific context. Staff trained to deal with the complexities of R-R efforts should be able to distinguish signs of radicalization, communicate in a way that is constructive and avoid conflicts, and respond appropriately to any potential extremist threat. According to Cameroonian Prison officials, the government has significantly improved on the housing of former violent extremist offenders and the training of prison warders to handle such cases though it is still quite inadequate and needs to take into consideration the current context of extremism. Also, numerous efforts have been deployed by the government to improve on prison conditions in Cameroon although some CSOs still believe some of these prisons are rather 'radicalization' and not 'rehabilitation' centers.

Officials should limit or restrict contact between the general population and specific segments of the prison especially violent extremist prisoners. This would ensure that terrorists do not coordinate attacks from prisons and these controls should respect the rights of the prisoners taking into consideration the level of threat.

Section C on The Role of Different Actors in Prisons covering Good Practice Number 7 to Number 14

This section emphasizes that R-R programs could incorporate experts from various disciplines with effective coordination among them. This was one of the central themes that dominated the dialogue and the various Pass It on (PIO) events given that it involved practitioners directly involved with R-R. Psychologists can help design an individualized rehabilitation plan by identifying the social and psychological factors motivating the individual towards terrorist activities. Prison officials and supervising officers must avoid actions that undermine rehabilitation processes. So they must be trained in professional conduct, prisoner rights, inmates' rules and responsibilities, and supervising prisoners using firm, fair and consistent techniques. Also, law enforcement officers interviewing inmates during rehabilitation should receive specialized training so that they avoid interfering with the rehabilitation progress of inmates. They must work closely with the rehabilitation professionals particularly in scheduling interviews and programming their activities. Participants noted that there were very few social workers in some rehabilitation centers in Cameroon while others do not have them at all, coupled with the fact that these social workers are not motivated by the pay package. There is already a very good

working relationship amongst actors of R-R in Cameroon and some training centers are reorienting their training of psychologists and social workers to suit the current context of violent extremism.

Moreover, dialogue between victims of terrorism and inmates may reduce psychological tension and contribute to successful rehabilitation if approached correctly. Testimonies from former terrorists who have gone through rehabilitation can positively influence inmates currently undergoing rehabilitation.

Celebrities and influential personalities from the community using captivating motivational themes can inspire change among prisoners hence could be integrated into rehabilitation programs. The government should take appropriate measures to protect some of these actors who can become potential targets.

Section D on Reintegration Components covers Good Practice Number 15 to 24

This section focuses on developing the skills of inmates and facilitating their reintegration into the community. Rehabilitation efforts should include cognitive programs that assist offenders in defining the factors that motivated them to violent extremist behaviors and identify possible solutions. Basic

education courses, vocational skills training, and employment assistance are also very essential. Literacy courses, math, history, and civics open up inmates' understanding and improves their self-esteem.

The employability of inmates makes them useful in society and their families. So there could be a liaison between prison services and employment services for skills development. Prison authorities could find ways of recognizing the achievements of inmates in rehabilitation programs as well as use incentives for these inmates. Numerous CSOs and churches in Cameroon have developed programs aimed at enhancing the employment skills of inmates and children in rehabilitation centers. The target domains of training based on the discussions include tailoring, hairdressing, ICT, agriculture, etc. At the end of these training, prizes and certificates are awarded to the outstanding students while the CSOs continue follow-up and mentoring. However, there are still challenges such as former inmates being unable to start a company of their own because they cannot obtain a certificate of non-conviction, and there is still a lot of stigmatization as companies find it difficult hiring an ex-convict no matter how qualified he/she is for the job.

Aftercare programs could be developed so that civil society organizations and communities continue educating inmates. This follow-up could enable protective measures when a reformed violent extremist faces threats to his life or the lives of his family members, and provide information on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. Families and communities should create a very conducive atmosphere to facilitate inmates' reintegration in the society. The Cameroon Government's Diversion Programs seeks to develop the skills of prisoners for a period of 6 months to 1 year. These inmates are sent under the guidance and mentorship of an organization. Following the transformation, their sentence is reduced, and then they return to the community and continue work with the organization.

Section E on Looking to Other Relevant Fields covers Good Practice Number 25

In designing rehabilitation programs, lessons should be learned from other relevant fields apart from terrorism such as dealing with gangs, sects and politically motivated movements. Successes in these fields could significantly impact rehabilitation programs.

Conclusion

The Memorandum concludes with an emphasis on capacity building despite the difficulties related to cost of training and facilities. Various actors of CVE in Cameroon noted that rehabilitation and reintegration efforts are too long and very costly, and they recognize the importance of capacity building in handling the current challenges of extremism. These actors need to work in synergy to search for funding and continue developing their capacities to handle violent extremist activities as the need arises. These Good Practices serve as a guide through which an effective R-R strategy can be developed for Cameroon especially in dealing with the young people in prisons and rehabilitation centers.

CHAPTER THREE:

ACTION AGENDA ON ENGAGING YOUTH CIVIL SOCIETY IN REINTEGRATION AND REHABILITATION OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN CAMEROON

Young Cameroonians from civil societies working on R-R in Cameroon after wide consultation on the subject of Rehabilitation and Reintegration have developed this action agenda. This consultation also involved government officials and front-line practitioners. This action agenda is very important because it represents youths' aspiration for effective R-R as well as presents a roadmap for the government, international organization, entrepreneurs, and youth civil society to collaborate in R-R in Cameroon.

PREAMBLE

We, young people from the ten regions of Cameroon working through Civil Society Organisations to promote Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent offenders, meeting in Yaoundé from the 17th -19th of January 2017, do present our aspirations through this action agenda, on how the Government, International organizations, Civil Society Organisations, entrepreneurs and young people in Cameroon

Local Youth Corner Cameroon 2017

can promote youth participation in rehabilitation and reintegration and build sustainable peace in Cameroon.

We draw from the current state of affairs in Cameroon where there is a marked increase in acts of violence from petty aggression to the radicalization and recruitment of young Cameroonians into violent extremist activities;

We build on the Presidential Decree No 92/052 of 27 March 1992 on the penitentiary regime of Cameroon, whose Section 2 enforces the creation of befitting penitentiary centers to ensure the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders;

With this Action Agenda, we reaffirm our strong will and unrelenting commitment to be partners and actors in promoting rehabilitation and reintegration as well as and the promotion of sustainable peace in Cameroon.

This document was developed by youths and it is the outcome of an open consultation process with frontline practitioners, experts, government and private institutions to ensure an inclusive and integrated approach to providing

rehabilitation and reintegration programs for violent offenders in Cameroon.

Reacting to the challenges we have identified as a deterrent to rehabilitation and reintegration process in Cameroon, we present the following recommendations which will provide solutions to these challenges and amplify our actions;

SECTION 1: GOVERNMENT

1. Infrastructure and policy

With the remarkable efforts by the government in tracking and arresting violent offenders and members of violent extremist groups, there is a need for a safe space and innovative programs within these institutions to contribute to the transformation of these offenders into change agents and peace advocates. There is the need for the Government to:

- a. Renovate and construct prison and correctional facilities, which will provide an acceptable living environment to violent offenders.
- b. Adopt and implement policies at the local and national level that are youth-friendly and promote collaboration

- between government institutions and youth civil society actors in Cameroon.
- c. Develop and implement psychosocial programs, civic education, vocational training, recreational, sports and other activities within incarceration facilities in order to forestall a holistic approach to rehabilitation and reintegration.
 - d. Incorporate the spirit of the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth Peace and Security into national policy orientations.
 - e. Promote quality and accessible education, properly address socio-economic and political grievances and provide employment opportunities, which are usually the driving factors of violence as well as propaganda used by violent extremist groups for radicalization and recruitment.

2. Capacity Building for actors and Frontline practitioners

With a disturbing rise in violence and terrorist activities within Cameroon, there is the need for capacity building and the nurturing of a generation of peace champions to match and surpass the vectors of violence. Thus, the government should:

- a. Invest in and promote the training and capacity building of frontline practitioners in prisons and correctional centers

- as well as local and community actors who engage in activities relating to rehabilitation and reintegration.
- b. Engage a multi-dimensional team of personnel from other Government Departments like Public Health, Social Affairs, Small business and Social Economy to be involved in the rehabilitation and reintegration process at local units.
 - c. In the case of an open prison system, the government should prioritize providing nonviolent communication, civic education and conflict resolution skills to help prevent the radicalization of inmates and other parties while in these facilities.

3. Conduct and promote Research

The lack of information and empirical evidence on positive practices and challenges faced in rehabilitation and reintegration is a major challenge to the promotion of this process in Cameroon. Thus, the government should:

Fund and work in cooperation with other stakeholders to carry out evidence-based research and provide information based on the state of reintegration and rehabilitation programs in Cameroon.

4. Collaboration with affected communities and families

The impacts of violent offenders run through communities and families as their acts are usually considered a taboo and betrayal. Communities and families of victims are exposed to stigmatization and humiliation, making it difficult for families and communities to accept their victims after rehabilitation. The Government should;

- a. Develop programs to protect and build the capacity of families and communities of victims in order to ensure effective integration.
- b. The government should work in collaboration with religious, traditional leaders, young people and civil societies to ensure that families and communities are prepared psychologically and physically to support reintegrated victims

SECTION 2: INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND CSOs

Considering the many international instruments, coordinated multi-lateral policies and action agendas which enshrine the role of youth in the rehabilitation and reintegration process, it is important for international organizations in

Cameroon to contribute further to the implementation of these policies at the national and local levels.

This will involve:

- a. Using their expertise and know-how to provide training, funding and technical support for youth actors as well as creating strong networks to facilitate the participation of these actors in exchange and capacity building programs across the world.
- b. Integrate a youth perspective in their programs and liaise with youth actors to understand and identify opportunities and challenges of their initiatives so as to put these young actors at the frontline of the reintegration system.

SECTION3: BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS

1. Support rehabilitation and reintegration as corporate social responsibility

In this connection, we recommend that business entities should allocate part of their corporate social responsibility resources to support youth initiative and organizations in implementing local and national initiatives on rehabilitation and reintegration as well as peace building and countering violent extremism initiatives.

2. Create Job Opportunities

- a. Entrepreneurs should create sustainable, accessible, and equal- opportunity employment for young people especially rehabilitated individuals so as to facilitate their reintegration into the society;
- b. Entrepreneurs should work in collaboration with youth civil societies to develop vocational training and capacity building programs for young people currently undergoing rehabilitation and reintegration.

SECTION 4: YOUTH CIVIL SOCIETY

1. Incorporate Rehabilitation and Reintegration programs in existing peace-building and CVE initiatives

In sum, we agree strongly on the need to perceive rehabilitation reintegration into the greater scope of peace building and Countering Violent Extremism. We equally affirm that if the violent offenders of today are not properly healed, they eventually become even more violent offenders in the close future.

2. Collaborate with other actors and strengthen networks of youth actors working on Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Youth Civil societies from the ten regions of Cameroon need to unite and work with each other to develop initiatives

that overcome frequent pitfalls and promote positive practices.

This will involve:

- a. Collaborating with other development stakeholders including the government, international organizations, researchers, religious and cultural institutions, entrepreneurs and other civil society organizations in developing and managing and accessing programs.
- b. Developing a comprehensive platform and solid network for the exchange of positive practices, capacity building, and training of actors from local to national levels.
- c. Identifying community radios and local media platforms, families, religious and cultural groups to spread messages of tolerance and peace so as to ensure the successful and sustainable reintegration of violent offenders back in their communities.
- d. Creating a common database for information sharing among youth actors on the general challenges and opportunities for peace-building in the respective localities for exploitation by the national network.

Conclusion

It is in this will and armed with the conviction that youths play a central role in this process that we have agreed on this action agenda whose implementation will take the form of a permanent national instrument to be implemented by the National Rehabilitation and Reintegration Network.

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