

The following document gives an overview of the aims and activity undertaken by the members of the Portsmouth Diocesan Bamenda Committee when they visited Bamenda in 2012. Details of the projects appear on the 'Projects' page. Opportunities for new developments appear at the end of the report, if you are interested in supporting any of the projects or becoming engaged in a new development, please contact Mr Colm Lennon (Chairperson) or any of the Bamenda Committee members.

EXCERPT FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT TO THE BAMENDA COMMITTEE ON THE VISIT DATED 14.1.12 – 26.2.12.

Participants: Mgr R. Hishon, Mr P. Feighery, Mrs J. Overton

Aims:

- 1) To continue to foster our link relationship with our friends in the Archdiocese of Bamenda
- 2) To view and / or discuss current joint projects being undertaken by the partnership
- 3) To gather information on current and prospective projects for feedback to Portsmouth
- 4) To liaise with the Bamenda Portsmouth Committee

Activity

Activity covered all categories of projects (as follows) and took the form of meetings, visits or ceremony. As always, we were greeted warmly wherever we went and after the business was done we were frequently offered refreshments and given extremely generous gifts. In return we were able to reciprocate with framed photos of our two bishops standing in friendship together and in the health centres we provided the gift of some medicines supplied by Clinicare.

Faith

- Meetings with the Archdiocesan Departments for Family Life, Justice & Peace, Catholic Women's Association
- Visits to Parishes / Churches: Widikum(Fr Paschal); St Sebastian's Batibo (Fr Bern); Wum (Fr Isaiah / Crysanthus); St Therese, Esu (Fr Emmanuel); Ntenefor; Bayelle (Frs Victor & Raphael); Njinikom (Fr Evaristus); Bafmeng (Fr Oliver & Fr Brian); Baba I Parish (Fr Norbert); St Peter & St Paul Parish Ndop (Frs Cosmos & Alain); Bambui Parish & Akossia Church (Fr George); St Joseph's Parish, Bafut
- Holy Mass and Blessing of the Maryvale Dormitory
- Sharing Benediction with the students of Lourdes College & Holy Rosary Sisters

Education

- Meeting with Archdiocesan Education Department staff (Fr John Ambe) and visits to:
- Achama Up Primary School
- St Benedict's Comprehensive College, Widikum (Fr Terence)
- Ashong Primary School
- Mekaf Primary School (Wum Parish)
- St Martin's Primary School Wum (Mr Smith Chia & Sr Marceline Yula)
- John Paul II Comprehensive Wum (Fr Cyprian)
- Primary School Esu
- Azire Primary School
- St Paul's College Nkwen
- St Gabriel's Bafmeng (Fr Brian Byrne) incl Treasure Centre
- Morning Star Primary School, Akum (for children with hearing impairment)
- Treasure Centre, Mendankwe (Sr Kathleen) (for children with learning disabilities)

Health

- Meeting with Archdiocesan Healthcare Co-ordinator & visit to HIV Support Group
- Visit to St Blaise Health Centre (Sr Lillian)
- Health Centre Wum (Sr Olive)
- Njinikom Hospital & Project Hope (HIV outreach)
- Baba I Health Centre (Holy Union Sisters)
- Sajocah (Rehabilitation Centre for Children and Adults with disabilities)

Social Welfare

- Meeting with Social Welfare Commission staff (Sr Benedicta & Victor)
- Visit to Ambele Zone Pit Toilet Project
- Visit to Bamenda Prison (Sr Dorothy & Fr Joachim)

Joint Evaluation Meeting with the Bamenda Archdiocesan 'Portsmouth Committee'

- Appreciation was expressed for warm welcome, hospitality and co-ordination of the visit. Considered a busy but profitable trip.
- Acknowledgement of hard work going into projects and the pain caused to some communities by some projects having recurrent problems.
- Recognition of benefits of the system for approving architectural project plans and suggestion that it might be wise to also have additional skilled supervision of projects to avoid the frustration of recurrent problems.
- Procedure reminder – it was acknowledged that some areas still required reminders of how to apply to the funds and also the importance of completing the progress reports.
- Acknowledgement that applicants wait a long time between application and response, sometimes not receiving a response if unsuccessful. A commitment was made to inform all applicants of the outcome of their application. Any applications turned down will be informed of the reason for this. The reason will be forwarded from Portsmouth and circulated by Bamenda.
- Discussion of financial process: suggestion that it might be beneficial for all if the Portsmouth Bamenda Committee (PBC) agree payments at set times in the year and that receipt and distribution of the monies is acknowledged by the financial secretary to PBC Treasurer (currently Mill Hill are informed). Once set frequencies are agreed then applicants will know when they can expect outcomes and feedback.
- Opportunity given to Bamenda Portsmouth Committee to volunteer thoughts on frequency and purpose of PBC Committee visits. Suggestion made that some future visits could be tailored to specific areas depending on the responsibilities of the delegates attending e.g. school twinning.
- There was some discussion of additional methods of deepening the link e.g. professional exchanges
- Appreciation for the two Bamenda priests serving in Portsmouth Diocese was expressed. Reassurance given that guidelines are in place to support and protect them.

Potential New Developments

PARISH TWINNING:

- *St Edmund's Catholic Mission, Mulang – Mankon*, St Theresia's Parish Azire, Small Mankon have written seeking a twinning with a parish. They would also like to embark on building a hall but there is no application submitted at this time.

SCHOOL TWINNING:

- St George's School, Southampton is looking for a mixed Secondary School Twin: St Gabriel's and St Benedict's schools in Bamenda are both willing.
- St Theresa Catholic Primary School Azire (827 pupils) wants a twin and has plans to set up a facebook page and email for the school. Contact: Fr Engelbert – manager, Richard Nde Lajong – PTA President, Headteacher: Mrs Yongabi Margaret.
- Esu primary schools (St Therese 212 pupils, St Joseph's 191 pupils) interested in twinning Contact: Fr Emmanuel – he would like someone to contact him.

SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECT PROPOSAL:

- ESU: There are plans to build a centre to train single mothers and youths: 1st phase a block in which to teach trades such as sewing / knitting / embroidery. The local Catholic Fon (chief) has given the land for the building. With the skills they will make school uniforms and generate income for the community group. The plan is for 2 year training courses to lead to independence / self-reliance for trainees.