

CATHOLIC HEALTH SERVICE BAMENDA
ACTIVITY REPORT JANUARY TO JUNE, 2019.
24/7/2019

1. INTRODUCTION

The Health Coordination Office in the Archdiocese of Bamenda is comprised of all the organs of the church that provide health care to the population also called the health commission. It includes: the health facilities, the health commission at different levels, BEPHA, the Archdiocesan health chaplaincy and other health care delivery organization like the Catholic Relief Service, Youth for life and the HIV support groups. The Health coordination office is the executive arm of the health commission as such has the responsibility to ensure the proper functioning of the commission.

There are 24 health facilities in the Archdiocese of Bamenda made up of 5 hospitals, 9 medicalized health centers and 11 primary care health centers. The Archdiocese of Bamenda owns one hospital (recently created) one medicalized health center and 9 primary health care centers. The rest are owned by different institutes of consecrated life in the Archdiocese.

2. OBJECTIVES FOR 2019.

- a. General Objective:** Improving access to quality and affordable health care to the people of the Archdiocese of Bamenda
- b. Specific Objectives**
 - Ensure the proper functioning of the health commission in 16 parishes of the Archdiocese.
 - Improve access to essential drugs, public health commodities and laboratory reagents
 - Create health boards for 15 health facilities
 - Develop health policy for the Archdiocese

- Ensure the reopening and functioning of the health units at Esaw, Bamessing and Njindom
- Fundraising through project writing.

3. ACTIVITIES

a. Humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPS)

The increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the felt suffering in the communities has tilted the attention of the office to assisting the IDPs. Our activities with the IDPs are being sponsored by the Diocese of Portsmouth (through the Ad Hoc Commission), Medicines for Humanity (MFH), United Fund for population Activity (UNFPA), Doctors without Borders and some people of good will.

With funds from the Diocese of Portsmouth and MFH we have been paying hospital bills for the vulnerable population amongst the IDPs (pregnant women, children below five years, IDPs with chronic diseases, victims of rape and orphans). We have also been able to provide delivery kits to 450 women. UNFPA supplied us with 550 Mama kits with content of a bag, 10 pieces of baby napkins, Bath towels, bath soap, soap dish and baby wrap. These were distributed to pregnant IDPs all over the Archdioceses using the health facilities. UNFPA have also supplied some medical kits to our health facilities in Widikum and Bali. We are still waiting for the next consignment.

The Doctors without Borders in partnership with some of our health units

have saved so many lives and rendered a lot of health assistance to the IDPs. Some health facilities carried out free consultations for IDPs in their health facilities.

The health coordination office with the health commission members of St. Paul's Quasi parish Nkwen, celebrated Easter with 100 IDP children and their parents sponsored by Fr. Bernardine Nsom and MFH. This was a psychosocial activity that left the children with so much hope and joy.

b. Health care delivery

It has continued to be very challenging running health services in the Archdiocese of Bamenda with the accelerated political instability in the Region. The many ghost town days and lock down days make it really difficult for health personnel and patients to move to the health units. Most of the health facilities are still open but not sustainable due to low patient turnout and patients not being viable to settle their hospital bills. Some health units still reported being attacked and threatened for treating victims of the existing war. A health personnel on duty was even raped at St. John of God Annex health post Ashong-Batibo. It has been difficult to carryout regular health facility supervisions due to the prevailing insecurity. However, quarterly coordination meetings took place regularly during which health

care managers shared their work experiences and drew strength from each other. Amongst the 24 health facilities in the Archdiocese of Bamenda, two are still temporary closed down due to the crisis. The Health centre in Njindom which was also closed down last year has been reopened.

St. Blaise Clinic has been raised to the status of a hospital. To meet up with the expectations of a hospital more health personnel were employed and a nearby building is being renovated for the use of the Laboratory. All departments are now running 24/24.

Even though the Health Centre in Bamessing is still closed down, the phase 2 project for the construction of a second building for the health facility is ongoing.

Recruitment was done to replace staff that resigned due to the crisis. Some staff from the health facilities closed down were transferred to other health facilities still functioning. There was also re-negotiation of salaries for personnel in some of the health facilities hit hard by the crisis.

c. Seminars and Trainings

Obstetric Kits project (OKP): As a means to promoting maternal and child health, the Regional team managing the OKP was invited to train Catholic

health personnel in the Archdiocese on the use of the obstetric kit on from the 12th to the 13th April, 2019. Discussions on the provision of public commodities for the health units through the drug was initiated with a positive feedback gotten. Most of the health facilities now use the Obstetric kit and can request public health commodities through the drug store.

MFH training of trainers for community health workers: This was done at the pastoral Centre from the 24th to the 29th of May, 2019. The chief of centers for all sites implementing the MFH project were trained.

There will be a seminar for all doctors working in health facilities in the Archdioceses of Bamenda on Saturday the 27th of July 2019 with the objective of explaining to the Doctors some Catholic doctrinal aspects related to health care delivery and also come out with a drug prescription formulary for the Archdiocese.

d. Celebrations

World day of the sick was celebrated on the 16th of February 2019 with Holy Mass celebrated at the Archdiocesan level by His Grace, Mgr. Cornelius Esua Archbishop. The sick were all present in their numbers to receive anointing and thank God for their lives. All health facilities around Bamenda

participated fully to see the day a successful one. The sick were offered gifts and lunch. It was also celebrated at Parish level on convenient days.

e. Projects

A fairly used RAV 4 has been bought for the health coordination office funded by the Diocese of Portsmouth. A Hilux for the drug store funded by the Diocese of Limburg has already arrived. About six health facilities have written projects this year for Portsmouth. The project for fencing the Mbessa health Centre funded by the Diocese of Portsmouth stopped last year and there is no report to enable continuity.

f. Policy harmonizing committee

As a follow up to the recommendations of the health council meeting that took place on the 12th of September, 2018, some selected members of the Archdiocesan health council had a meeting on the 23th of May 2019 to deliberate on the harmonizing of policies for the functioning of health facilities in the Archdiocese of Bamenda. The proposals made by this team will be presented in this meeting.

g. Drug Store

The drug store has been able to supply the needs of the health facilities in the present crisis thanks to the relentless efforts of the Pharmacist. An

account was open for the store at OPSECS as recommended by the health council. The Doctors without Borders donated a 40foot container to be used for the extension of the drug store. The drug store Manager will report on the store

h. Finance

The only source of income for the coordination office is from the annual dues paid by health facilities. So far only 7 health facilities have paid their dues. This makes it difficult for the office to run. Health facilities still see the payment of dues as a favor being rendered to the office and not an obligation. See financial statement on appendix 1

i. Statistics

Statistics are collected monthly from the health facilities and forwarded monthly to the National office.

(See data collected from January to June on appendix 2)

j. Annual meeting for Health Coordinators:

The health coordinator also attended the national meeting of the Catholic Health Organization of Cameroon (C.H.O.C) from the 11th to the 15th of March 2019. The final communicate for this meeting has been attached to this report. (Appendix 3)

4. The Church Coordinator office (CCO)

The CCO implementing the project Key interventions to Develop Systems and Service for Orphans and Vulnerable children (KIDSS) in partnership with

Catholic Relief Service have continuously rendered services to all children in the project despite the crisis. The Regional coordinator for CRS visited the office two weeks ago and was very please, with the level of project implementation. The 16 case workers and 4 office Staff work hard to ensure that all targets are met. The project has been extended for more three years.

5. CHALLENGES

- Continuous threats and attacks on the health facilities
- Inaccessibility of most health facilities due to insecurity and constant road blocks
- High level of unpaid bills in all health facilities
- Increase Prevalence rate of HIV, Sexually transmitted diseases, and teenage pregnancies
- Low patient turnout
- High staff turnover (moving from one catholic health facility to another)
- Inadequate finances to run the office
- Late submission of statistics
- The greatest challenge being faced by CCO is the lack of space to hold weekly meetings, space for filing and work space for the 20 personnel of the project.

- Inability to visit the health commission members in their parishes

6. WAYFORWARD

- Re-schedule and supervise health facilities with little access risk
- Encourage health facilities to write project proposals for sustainability and security
- Respect schedule plan to visit the commission members in their parishes
- Source income generating activities for the office
- Ensure all Archdiocesan health facilities use the drug store
- Where possible increase motivation for staff working in hard to reach areas
- Encourage online Statistics declaration.

7. CONCLUSION

The suffering and pain of the people of the Archdiocese of Bamenda gives us the zeal to go extra miles to ensure access to quality health care. With the help of MFH, health care managers have been trained to handle most health care issues in their communities. They are expected to do a step down training to community health workers to breach the community hospital gap. We are grateful to all our benefactors for their enormous sacrifices and donations.

Sincere gratitude to the Archbishop who is always available to give a listening ear to the worries coming from the health coordination office.