

# ASCOVIME



ASSOCIATION DES COMPETENCES POUR UNE VIE MEILLEURE

Récépissé de déclaration N°0082/RDA/J06/BAPP

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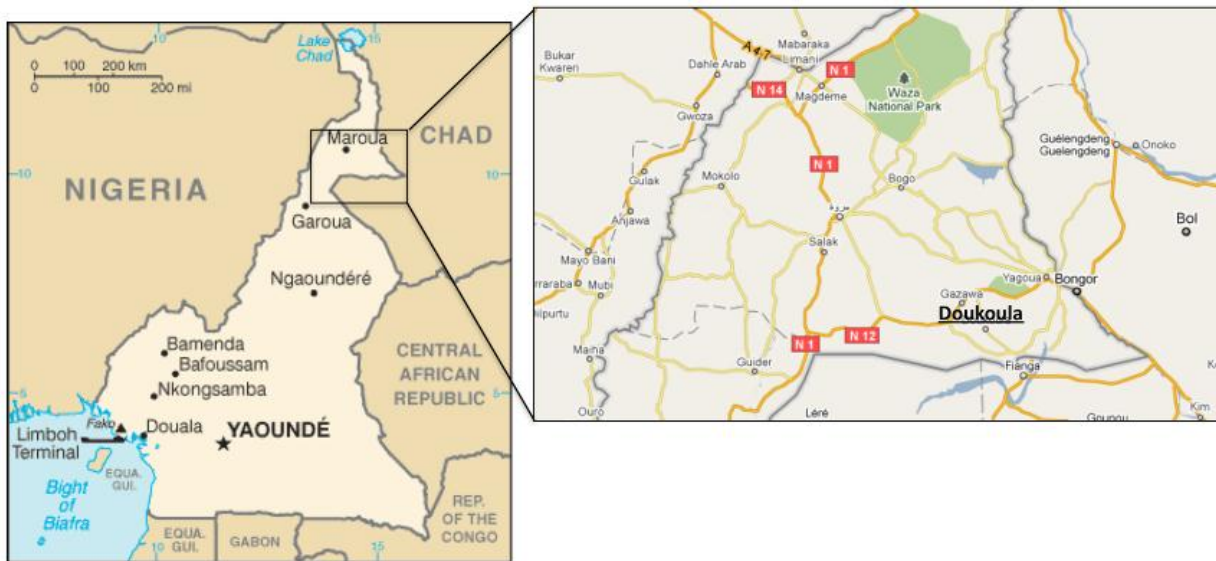
**The annual main excursion to Doukoula**

**28. February-5. March 2011**

**-Health and Education-**

## Introduction

At doctor Georges Bwelle's house bags are packed filled with medical equipment, clothes, shoes and school materials. It is Saturday February 26th, and the Ascovime team has met up to embark on the 1200 km long trip north. Invited by the Bayaola family, it is time for the first main excursions which Ascovime does twice a year to Doukoula, in the Extreme North province of Cameroon. The objective is to provide free medical consultations and surgery, and to distribute hygienic articles and school materials. In addition to this there is the opening of a library at Datcheka high school.



Ascovime is a Cameroonian non-profit, volunteer organization with a mission to **fight illiteracy and disease in rural Cameroon**, providing free medical care and school supplies. Based in Yaoundé, Ascovime was founded by surgeon Georges Bwelle five years ago. Bwelle himself has been offering medical services to inhabitants of Cameroon's rural areas for many years alongside a full time job as a surgeon at the capital's central hospital. Ascovime Paris was founded three years ago by a dedicated group who were fascinated by the work of Dr. Bwelle. The Paris branch of the organization mainly works with fundraising and collecting medical material, to facilitate the work in Cameroon.

The Bayaola family, with the director of the Chamber of Commerce, Boniface Bayaola as head of the family, facilitated the group from Ascovime with food and shelter during the stay in Doukoula. In addition they contributed financially to the purchase of material to help the inhabitants of the villages, where they themselves grew up, get a better education and health care.



### **Statistic summary of this excursion:**

**7** villages were visited by the Ascovime team

**4** days and **4** nights of intensive work

**33** volunteers (16 with medical education, 17 civilians)

**1892** free medical consultations

**28** surgeries, free of charge

**1370** anti-parasite pills, mainly given to the children of the village

**Thousands** of medicaments to the patients

**350** packs of toothbrushes and toothpaste

**350** pairs of shoes

**200** notebooks

**200** pencils

**400** books for the opening of the high school library in Datcheka, educational literature as well as fictional literature

**Ascovime Paris** contributed with ten volunteers, 1000 euros and 200 kilos of medical equipment.



## Team Ascovime

In total 33 participants of the excursion

### Doctors:

Georges, Cameroonian – surgeon, internal medicine

Ekani, Cameroonian – surgeon, internal medicine

Patrick, Cameroonian – pediatrician

Bouba, Cameroonian – surgeon, orthopedist

Din, Cameroonian – general medicine

Christelle, Cameroonian – dentist

### Medical interns:

Jeremy, French – surgeon, internal medicine

Christian, French – Anesthesia

Peggy, Cameroonian – Anesthesia

Diane, Cameroonian – general medicine

### Nurses:

Claire, Cameroonian – nurse, anesthesia

Nicole, Cameroonian – nurse

Joel, Cameroonian – nurse

### Medicine students:

Julie, Norwegian – first year student

Trine, Norwegian – second year student

Karen, Norwegian – second year student

### Biologist:

Jacob, American

### Journalists:

Hilda, Cameroonian – Cameroon TV

Brice, Cameroonian – Cameroon TV

Civilians:

Boniface, Cameroonian

Marie, Cameroonian

Sirwe, Cameroonian

Mesmin, Cameroonian

Zenge, Cameroonian

Tunisy, Cameroonian

Britaline, Cameroonian

Etienne, Cameroonian

Adama, Cameroonian

Tristan, French

Charles, French

Louise, Norwegian

Kathrine, Norwegian

Frida, Norwegian



## Summary of the excursion

After thirty hours of travelling the crew arrives in Doukoula late Sunday evening. Here we are welcomed by the Bayaola family, who gave us dinner and sets up a camp for sleeping. Monday morning, like every morning during our stay in Doukoula, we gather for a common breakfast where Georges briefs us on today's work before we leave for the villages where the consultations are held.



**The work can be divided into three main tasks:**

1. Medical consultations and the distribution of medications
2. Surgeries
3. Distribution of school material and hygienic articles

**1. Medical consultations and the distribution of medications**

The Ascovime team is split into two groups, to concentrate the work around two smaller villages, both situated about half an hour drive from Doukoula. Since Ascovime's arrival is expected, a lot of people have already met up. A lot of people have been waiting since dawn, and are patiently waiting around the few trees in the area where there is possible to find some shade and shelter from the hot sun. Part of the Ascovime team gets started informing the patients, organizing lines, and making sure the Ascovime team is supplied with water.

The doctors are given four straw huts that will function as consultation rooms the next days. The teams' nurses and civilians are running the pharmacies, handing out the drugs that the doctors prescribe. The drugs are pre-packed in small plastic bags, in accordance to standard prescriptions. The dosage is clearly written on the bags. One nurse is responsible at each pharmacy, controlling that everything is being done correctly, both packing and distribution.



Since the Ascovime crew does not speak the local language, Toupouri, translators are present at the consultation and at the pharmacy. By the end of the week though, the group at the pharmacies have learned some necessary phrases – bon gue tchagon, bon gue tchegge, bon gue lao. It means: “One in the morning, one at noon, and one in the evening”.

The consultations and the handout of medicine happen while using the sun as a work light. In the evening at sundown the local women have prepared a meal, which makes the tired team very happy, before going back to Doukoula by bus.

## 2. Surgeries

Some of the patients seen during the daily consultations are in need of more extensive medical treatment. In the cases where surgeries can be done, the patients come to Doukoula in the evening to have a surgery performed during the night.



For most of the Ascovime team the work is not over after dinner. Between 23:00 and 06:00 the medical team operates continuously, to get as much as possible out of the short time Ascovime is in Doukoula. The operations are conducted at the local infirmary in Doukoula, which is at Ascovime disposal for the occasion.

Through four nights of intensive work 28 people are operated by the team’s surgeons, with help from the volunteers.

The most common operations:

- inguinal hernia
- umbilical hernia
- Hydrocele (in testicle)
- ovarian cyst



### 3. The distribution of school materials and hygienic articles

Ascovime visited three elementary schools and one high school in the area around Doukoula. The schools were chosen on the basis of lack of school materials, in cooperation with local acquaintances. At each elementary school the following materials was distributed:

To each student

- a notebook
- a pencil

To selected students

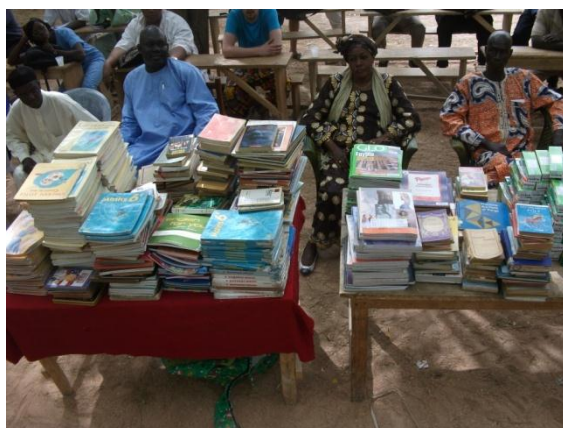
- a toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste
- a pair of shoes

Because of a large number of students there were not enough of the materials for all of them. The priority was given to orphans and the best students.

To the teachers:

- blackboards and chalk
- workbooks and paper
- notebooks and pencils
- teaching books
- clothing

In connection with the opening of the library at Datcheka high school Ascovime donated textbooks (mathematics, philosophy, languages and grammar) and a number of fictional books. In total Ascovime donated 400 books.



## Special thanks

On the behalf of Ascovime Paris and the Norwegian volunteers, we wish to extend a special thank you to some of the excursions participants:

First and foremost a big thank you and our deepest respect to Georges Bwelle, for his admirable effort in the work with the disadvantaged rural areas of Cameroon, his ability to motivate the people around him to do their best, and last but not least, his wonderful personality that spreads joy all around.

A big thank you also goes to the Bayaola family for their economic and material support, both to Ascovime and the inhabitants of the village where they grew up.

Thank you also to Zenge for his never ending involvement and his laughter (unanimously chosen the most wonderful guy in Africa), and to Mesmin for his endless enthusiasm.

A thanks to all the people who provided us with food and beverage along the way to and from Doukoula. These moments were greatly appreciated on a long and tough journey.

Thanks to Jeremy, the president of Ascovime Paris, for exceptionally organizing our stay in Cameroon. Last, but not least, we want to thank the members of Ascovime Paris who did not have the opportunity to join us on this trip, but have contributed greatly to the enablement of it.



## **Last notes**

Transport costs stands as a large parts of the budget, and a great financial challenge at every excursion. One fourth of every excursions budget is spent on rental of transport. Transport is a necessity to get to the remote areas where help is most greatly needed. Georges Bwelle has a strong desire to spend this money on medications and other necessary equipment to reach out to even more people. Ascovime's project is to invest in a pick-up truck and a small bus. Ascovime Paris has therefore started to raise money for this purpose the next years. Through corporate sponsorship, fundraising and personal donations we hope to reach our goal by the end of 2013. If you wish to help us realize this project, go to [www.ascovime.fr](http://www.ascovime.fr)