

ASCOVIME

ASSOCIATION DES COMPETENCES POUR UNE VIE MEILLEURE



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

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Health Campaign

Mpagne

23.-25. March 2012

Introduction

This weekend, as most other weekends throughout the year, the Ascovime team is ready for another campaign. This time we are going to Mpagne – a first time excursion to one of the most isolated villages in the country, situated in the forests of the Mbam-et-Kim Region in Central Cameroon.



Statistics

1 village

24 hours of intense work

17 volunteers (9 with medical background, 8 civil volunteers)

558 medical consultations, free of charge

12 operations, free of charge

Ca. 600 anti-parasite tablets distributed to the village inhabitants

Thousands of medications were handed out to the patients

Clothes, shoes and books were also donated to the village



Team ASCOVIME

Total: 16 participants

Bwelle Georges	Surgeon	Cameroonian
Ekani Boukar	Surgeon	Cameroonian
Patric Savom	Surgeon	Cameroonian
Marzel Nzoume	Doctor	Cameroonian
Ide Nanfack Kenfack	Nurse	Cameroonian

Désiré Atangana	Medical student	Cameroonian
Astrid	Medical student	Cameroonian
Vanessa	Medical student	Cameroonian
Larissa	Medical student	Cameroonian

Etienne Nkoa	Electrician	Cameroonian
Zengue Anicet	Volunteer	Cameroonian
Tunisie Njille	Volunteer	Cameroonian
Natacha	Volunteer	Cameroonian
Sandra	Volunteer	Cameroonian
Natacha	Volunteer	Cameroonian
Frida Douglass Hylin	Volunteer	Norwegian

The Excursion

The clock is closing up on 18:00 Friday March 23rd and the hired van is finally loaded with this weekend's Ascovime volunteers and medical supply, ready for yet another 48hour medical marathon. Unforeseen work at the Central Hospital of Yaoundé has caused delays in our departure, and we set out some hours after schedule. We are heading north-west out of the capital and towards the cable-boat which will take us over the Mbam River just north of Bafia. Because of the initial delay, as well as city traffic, we arrive in Bafia well after dark to find out that the ferry-crossing has closed for the night. Someone is nice enough to lend us their backyard, where we set up camp for the night.

After some hours of sleep, we pack up the camp, reload the car and head for the ferry-crossing at 06:30 in the morning. We still have quite the distance to drive and want to arrive in the village as early possible.



There are several villages in the forests on the other side of the Mbam River, and the cable-boat is the villagers' connection to get to Bafia to sell their goods on the markets. Either that, or hand-made canoes.

Well over the river we head further into the jungle, knowing that we soon have to park the hired van and exchange it for a sturdier 4x4 pick-up and motorcycles – because the roads to the Mpagne village are of very poor quality.

As we arrive in Deuk, where Georges has arranged for the car exchange, we are surprised by the fact that we have to pay an additional 100 000 FCFA (about €150) for the pick-up and motorcycles that will bring us to the village. Georges has no choice but to pay the additional cost, from his already scarce budget. All finances arranged, three

moto-motos drive off with a total of five volunteers, while the others stay behind and reorganize the medical equipment, loading it from the van to the pick-up, before they set out on the last 15 kilometres to the village.



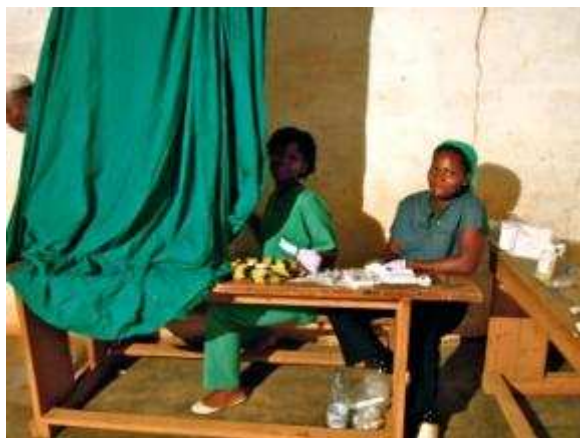
When we finally arrive in the village at 15:00, the Chief Jean Tata and his wife welcome us with a lovely lunch before we start preparing the medical work. The village school has been cleared and given to our disposal for the occasion. We set up the consultation room and the pharmacy, and prepare the operation room for the operations that will be carried out during the night. After Georges has given his information briefing to the village people, we all participate in the distribution of anti-parasite tablets to everyone present. The consultations start at 18:00 and the villagers line up outside the school. They are all excited, some a bit nervous, to see the doctors, and hopefully get medications for their maladies.





Collection of water by one of the four open water sources near the village - the women and children climb up and down a steep and muddy hill with heavy buckets on their heads to bring water to the village. Frida, one of the volunteers, is writing her master thesis on access to clean drinking water in Sub-Saharan Africa. She got a tour of the water sources which are used today, and also a demonstration of the hand-pumps which were installed some ten years ago. These all broke down six years ago and no one in the village is in any position to fix them. They ever heard from the organization that implemented the pumps.

Etienne, as the team's electrician, fired up the diesel generator, providing lighting for the consultation rooms as well as the pharmacy. This enables us to keep up the work into the night, and make sure that everybody who is waiting gets his or her medical consultation.



We finish the first part of our work at 00:30, and head down to the Chief's house for dinner and a pause before the operations start. In the meantime, Etienne reorganizes the lighting from the consultation rooms and the pharmacy to the operation room, to enable the surgeons to carry out the scheduled operations.



Examples of the operations that were carried out:

- Several Hernias, two which were very big
- 1 Inguinoscrotal Hernia
- Lipomas
- Filariasis
- 1 Onchocerca volvulus nodes
- 1 removal of extra finger



As this was the first time Ascovime visits the village many of the operations scheduled were old and big cases, making the surgical interventions complicated. But an excellent team of surgeons, doctors, nurses and medical students did their very best to make sure the patients got the treatment they needed. All the operations were carried out with local anaesthesia, making it a painful séance for some of the patients.

At 08:00 Sunday morning, after six hours of non-stop surgery, the medical team finished the last operation. Just as the last patient is seen out of the operation room, we start packing up our stuff and prepare for the drive back to Yaoundé – we can rest in the car. The Chief's wife has prepared a delightful breakfast after a long night's work, before they all see us off as we start our drive out of the jungle. Upon departure, the Chief offered Ascovime a pregnant goat as a symbol of the villagers' gratitude for the work we had done the last 24 hours. After some discussion on how we best could transport the goat to Yaoundé, she was given front-row seating on one of the motorcycles, together with the driver and two Ascovime volunteers.



The goat, which now lives by a grass patch behind Bwelle's neighbour's house – the bakery in Damas, Yaoundé. Her babies are within a couple of weeks' time

Back in Deuk after an interesting drive on the jungle roads, we changed back to the hired van and headed for the Mbam-crossing, with the goat on the roof.

On the road back we took a long awaited break at Owona Atangana's house in Ombessa. Désiré Atangana's brother had prepared a delightful lunch for the Ascovime volunteers, which we all enjoyed, though there were a lot of droopy eyes around the living room table. All reloaded with much needed energy, especially our fantastic driver Etienne, we set off on the last stage of the drive back to the capital.

We arrived in Yaoundé at 23:00 – just in time for Dr. Bwelle Georges to get some hour of sleep, before going to the Hospital to earn money for next weekend's trip to yet another remote village in need.