



SCAN ME



Bamenda News

OCTOBER 2021

Project Applications

Conditions remain very challenging for the people of Bamenda, where many are said to be subsisting on just £1 per day, making it nigh on impossible for them to meet school fees for their children to be educated nor medical fees, should their health be suffering. The situation has been exacerbated by the pandemic and the ongoing conflict. As rural schools were forced to close in the early days of the conflict and people fled their homes to seek shelter in the relative safety of the city, the strain on resources in Bamenda city has increased with the influx of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). In these circumstances, people naturally turn to the Church to help them.

The Archbishop's Education Fund helps orphans and vulnerable children to meet the costs of attending primary school. A standing order for £6 per month would help us support one child's grant.

The renovation of schools damaged or neglected in the crisis and the extension of those in urban areas to accommodate IDPs are the Archbishop's priorities. We have also received an application to support 60 students at the High School in Bafut who cannot afford the £100 fees for secondary education and Fr Bon has applied for funding of a computer lab at St Joseph's College, Mankon, to enable nearly 600 students to acquire necessary IT skills to enhance their studies and help them find better work opportunities in the future. Education projects will need much support this year.

For many years, Copnor Parish has generously raised funds through lunch events to supplement the meagre food provided at Bamenda Prison. The situation in the prison has deteriorated, resulting in an application from Sr Carla from the Catholic Chaplaincy at the

prison, which cares for the 600 prisoners, whatever their faith background. Many prisoners have been awaiting trial for years!

Her application makes harrowing reading of the real hunger experienced by many prisoners, who have no family in the city to bring them any food they might be able to spare to supplement their very basic diet. There are limited opportunities for prisoners to earn any money to buy themselves extra food rations, clothes or toiletries. Few prisoners would be able to pay medical fees to obtain treatment when needed and she told us of one prisoner suffering from gangrene with no means to pay for treatment. Sr Carla would put our donations to good use!

Other Social Welfare applications include: teaching poultry farming skills to 10 adults with learning disabilities; a Justice & Peace Commission application to overcome gender based violence through education and sport initiatives and skills for self-reliance; the provision of a clean portable water supply at Holy Trinity, Wum, which would serve the mission, nursery and primary schools and neighbouring communities.

An application from the St John of God Brothers in Batibo combines social outreach with medical support for: 50 physically challenged people to be fed and treated for free; 10 physically challenged children requiring medical intervention; 5 physically challenged people to be assisted to start a self-reliance micro business.

When we go to hospital or health centres, there are hand sanitisers and face masks readily available to help us protect ourselves, other patients and medical staff and no fees for treatment. In Cameroon, people have to pay for medical services. Medical staff are a scarce resource. In these Covid times, the absolute necessity for frequent sanitising, masks, gloves and other PPE has become all too apparent. The Archdiocesan Health Co-ordination

Office needs PPE supplies to pass on to its health centres throughout the region.

Other health projects include the provision of an incinerator for the safe disposal of medical waste at Ntasen and solar equipment for the provision of a constant power supply at the Martins health centre in Nkwen, particularly important when handling emergencies at night.

The needs are great, please be as generous as you can.



Mary Lee
Bamenda Committee



Reflections from the Chair

Jo Overton
Chair of Committee



Sadly, once again, the past year has seen no relief from the crisis which has been affecting our brothers and sisters in Bamenda Archdiocese since 2016.

Widespread human rights abuses across the Anglophone regions have been reported by Human Rights Watch (<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/cameroon>). The UN has identified Cameroon as 'a situation of concern' and says the relief response in the region has not been able to meet the most urgent needs of affected people (<https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/cameroon/>). Attacks on humanitarian workers have resulted in some being forced to suspend their activities. We are needed all the more to stand in solidarity with our friends.

The Bamenda-Portsmouth link is at a time of renewal. As the 50th anniversary of our relationship approaches and with recent changes in personnel at both ends, we need to reflect and also, look to the future.

Financially, over a number of years and at the request of the Charity Commission, we have spent almost all our investment funds (some on urgent humanitarian grants to provide for people displaced by the crisis).

This leaves us relying on current donations for any project work

ahead. Last year our Bamenda Sunday income was down by 25%.

The link is not, however, primarily about sending money, it's about sharing our faith. In our diocese, we benefit enormously from the service of 6 Bamenda priests but the challenge ahead is how to think more broadly aside from the money and the priests.

How can the link become more of an expression of our faith, our love for one another and the planet? What else could we share and work on together?

Personally, I consider myself very privileged to have served on the Committee. As I end my term of office with mixed emotion, I reflect on the relationships, the opportunities and the learning which have been part of that experience - influencing my faith and being influenced by it.

This year we are celebrating as Colm Lennon, who served with dedication as Chairperson for 9 years, is awarded a Papal Knighthood. Working together and with other Committee members, we made a number of visits to Bamenda (at no expense to the funds), to reinforce links, exchange information and collaborate on projects funded by your generosity.

The fun and frustrations, highs and lows have been a rollercoaster ride but

brought important lessons: in the harsh reality of living with discrimination, poverty and injustice; in understanding my own and others' cultures; in awareness of conscious and unconscious prejudices; in trying to avoid the White Saviour complex and in learning to work collaboratively with partners from a distance (the latter becoming all the more pertinent as our climate requires us to travel less).

I dream that going forward, the dioceses can work together remotely in an effective manner, encouraging each other to enact our faith and values - supporting marriage and family life, justice and peace initiatives and environmental activities together.

This Bamenda Sunday we will hear the hopes and plans of Archbishop Andrew, inviting our twin dioceses to journey together in areas of evangelisation and pastoral life and instituting a 'Portsmouth Sunday' to mirror our Bamenda Sunday. He aims for the Archdiocese to pray for us and the needs of our Diocese and will reflect on how they may support us in our challenges.

So what do you want the link to be? Just another annual collection or something more exciting, educational and evangelising? Do you have an opinion? Could you get involved?

This Bamenda Sunday, please pray for peace in our twin diocese and if you would like to support the link in any way, our website has information and contact details at www.bamendaandportsmouth.com.



How can you donate?

- 1 Give to the collection on Bamenda Sunday
- 2 Set up a regular Standing Order
- 3 Give Online:

www.bamendaandportsmouth.com/donate.php

What could your donation fund?



£20

Hospital disinfectant

Help an orphan attend secondary school for a year

£100

£195

Solar panel

Materials for 5 people to start a micro business

£647

£1000

10 Community Outreach staff for 4 months

Admission and nutrition for 50 malnourished people with physical disabilities & urgent health needs

£1300



£5
Light Bulb & Switch

Box of latex gloves
£5

£20
Pack of surgical masks



£72
Help an orphan attend primary school for a year

PROGRESS REPORTS

Social Welfare

Laura Anyola from the Justice and Peace Commission reported on the application for civil documentation:

“So far more than 4,000 deaths have been registered, more than a million displaced, more than 300 homes and settlements completely burnt down, education has been deprived from more than 800,000 children of school going age, there have been arbitrary arrest and detentions and it has been announced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) that more than 4million persons need humanitarian assistance.

The non-possession of a National Identity Card in Cameroon is a criminal offence and many victims of the conflict have been arrested and imprisoned because of this. At the time of presenting the application, the office had received request for assistance from 5 students who lost their academic certificates, 27 children whose births were not registered and subsequently did not have birth certificates, 40 women and 70 men who had lost

their national Identity Cards. We applied to support 60 who could provide information to help reconstitute their lost documentation. As a result of the project, all 60 persons targeted had their lost documentation repossessed and 1 other person who was not targeted.”

St John of God Project supporting IDPs in Batibo:

Br Linus’ project to assist displaced, elderly and vulnerable people in the villages reached hundreds of recipients. They reported “displaced persons who ran from south west region, from Numba, and other places were spread in some of our outreach villages. The beneficiaries received packages and bags of rice, savon, maggi (spices), milk, groundnut oil, toiletries. Elderly persons, pregnant women and malnourished children received medical care at the hospital and in our outreach clinics. Mothers of malnourished children were given financial assistance to start a small business to sustain the family.”



Faith

12 postulants received Maryvale catechetical training.

Sr Elizabeth reported that the candidates had deepened their faith and been enriched by the program. “The postulants now have a sense of deep conviction in the Christian faith through teaching and practice of their various apostolates. Many of them have influenced the lives of those around the area where they are found and have taught or are still teaching catechesis especially during their field work in the communities.”

Health

Sr Louisa reported happily that the dispensary and the health coordination office can now continue to function even when there is no power because of the standby supply from the new generator. She said “invoices and bills are being printed regularly after each drug supply and the cold chain for substances in the drug store refrigerator is well maintained. We have not recorded any faulty results from the Laboratory reagents that we supply due to good storage”.



Please pray!

Please pray for peace in Cameroon and the Archdiocese of Bamenda and please keep our priests from Bamenda in prayer who are working in our Diocese!

Contact the Team!

Have any Questions?

Any ideas for developing our links with the Archdiocese of Bamenda?

Please email our Chair, Jo Overton or our Treasurer, Denis Murtagh at:

joverton@bamendaandportsmouth.com
dmurtagh@bamendaandportsmouth.com

Other contacts are on our website:

<https://www.bamendaandportsmouth.com>

