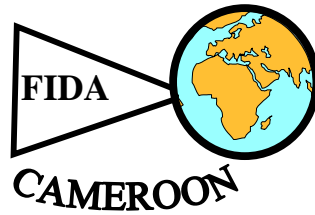


FIDA CAMEROON



ANNUAL REPORT 2010

FIDA (The International Federation of Women Lawyers) Cameroon is a Non - Governmental, Non Profit Women's Human Rights Organisation based in Limbe, South - West Region of Cameroon.

With a vision to ensure a society free of discrimination and Violence against the woman and child in Cameroon, we have been working on through our goals and objectives of training, awareness raising, advocacy, and lobbying, court representation and counseling.

The past two years have not been easy for us with the world economic downturn meaning fewer funding opportunities as well as some funding agencies such as the Gender and Development Fund of the Canadian Cooperation Office of Yaounde Cameroon closing down thus limiting our funding resources a great deal. However we have built on our assets and continued to strive towards our goals and objectives in a bid to ameliorate the standards and welfare of the woman and child in Cameroon.

PROGRAMMES CARRIED OUT

In the last year, FIDA has carried out projects and programmes in the following categories:

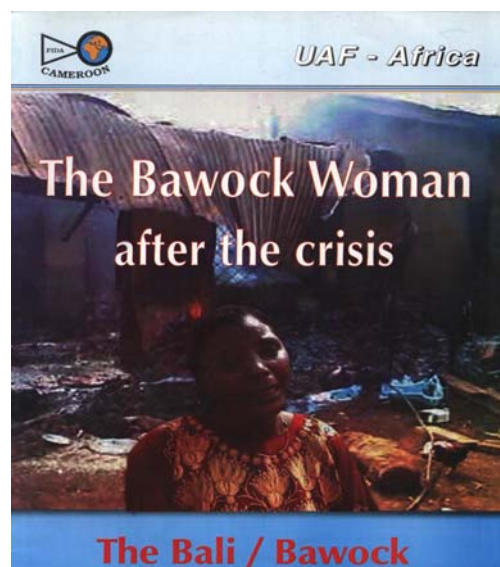
- 1 Research and Documentation
- 2 Advocacy
- 3 Information and Communication
- 4 Training

RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

Under this head, FIDA conducted research and investigation of the violations of the Human Rights of the displaced Women in Bawock village after an armed conflict involving the Bali and Bawock tribes of Mezam Division of the North - West Region of Cameroon.

For this reason FIDA Cameroon conducted a fact - finding mission to Bawock Village where investigations proved that close to One thousand (1.000) persons, mostly women and children had been left homeless and

destitute when their homes, farms market stalls were burnt beyond recognition during the armed conflict. As no home was found standing, the entire population sought refuge in a local government primary school where everyone was living with no privacy. A report written after the fact finding mission highlighted the need for protection of all victims from further violence especially the women and children who were found to be more vulnerable to diseases stemming from lack of portable water, proper sanitation, no medical attention etc. A journal “The Bawock woman after the crisis” was produced.



THE CEDAW DOCUMENT

The convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against the Woman (CEDAW) was simplified and disseminated to the general public especially women’s Human Rights NGOs for study in anticipation of the project of preparing a shadow Report. By this project, the capacity of many Women’s Human Rights NGOs was built.



LIBRARY

FIDA Cameroon has a small library at its office which stores material on Women's Human Rights as well as other materials related to our work. Books are constantly being acquired and stocked in our library for use by FIDA members and a restrained group of Human Rights Activists as well as University students in the Gender Department of the University of Buea.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

TRAINING OF PARALEGALS

With an increase in the number of grassroots women from the hinterland visiting our clinics, it became very necessary to train more paralegals. This was for the purpose of giving legal Aid to destitute and indigent women from the hinterland. This served two purposes:

- 1) Our trained paralegals became our eyes and ears in areas we could not easily reach. They act as satellite for us and deal with minor issues of counseling and advise while more serious matters are forwarded to any of our clinics for further action. By this many conflicts are resolved and advice given to these women by the trained paralegals. Where necessary, court representation is given by lawyers afforded by FIDA to those in dire need of this service.
- 2) It is cost effective as most women coming for Legal Aid are destitute, having little or no money for transportation. As the paralegals are on the spot, they have no need to look for money for transportation to our offices.

The Legal Aid clinics are also sustained.

We run two Legal Aid Clinics in Limbe and Kumba as well as Two Legal Aid Posts in the villages of Wum and Tombel. These clinics and posts run throughout the year to ensure the protection of women from abuses and violations of their Human Rights.

So far several thousands of women have been reached and their rights protected. The counseling services offered have to conflict resolution, while a few have gone to court where victims of violation have sought and received redress.



TRAINING OF MUSLIM WOMEN

Muslim women in our society have been considered the most deprived set of women because of either culture or religion. FIDA therefore embarked on a series of training programmes in most towns in Cameroon in order for the Muslim women to assert their Human Rights. One of the major outcomes of this training is that many Muslim families and couples have started registering their marriages thereby giving the Muslim women status in marriage.





ADVOCACY

FIDA has been advocating for the change of laws and legislation discriminatory against the woman.

FIDA was a participating organization in the drafting of the new law on Violence Against Women and the new Family Code. These two laws are at the level of the ministry of Justice and hopefully will be sent to Parliament for the bill to be passed into law.

PRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE SHADOW REPORT TO THE CEDAW COMMITTEE OF THE U.N.

FIDA, a lead organization, worked with 32 other organizations in preparing a Shadow Report. This Shadow Report was presented before the CEDAW committee in its 42nd session in Geneva in January last year. FIDA with three other NGOs were present at the U.N. during this reporting session.

At the end of the Constructive Dialogue between the Committee and the state of Cameroon, the committee came up with concluding comments for implementation by the state of Cameroon. We are at the stage of monitoring our government's implementation of the Concluding Comments.



WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

FIDA conducted several workshops on Women's Human Rights throughout the nation. It was realized that most people especially women are ignorant of their rights. Most Human rights document are simplified, produced and disseminated. This has been the case especially for the CEDAW document which is considered the Bill of Rights for the woman.

Lawyers especially have been trained on CEDAW in order that they can better defend the rights of women in court so as to seek redress for victims of violations.

The CEDAW document was treated article by article for proper understanding and appreciation as a major tool for advocacy for women's Human Rights.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

As is the custom every year, FIDA Cameroon traveled the length and breadth of this nation, holding workshops on the theme of the year's Women's Day Celebration. It was realized that most women celebrate this day without understanding what it is all about. These workshops have helped in bringing better understanding of the rationale of this day. This year, men were invited and were involved in the workshops on ending violence against women.

This yearly practice ensures that women's rights are being protected and promoted effectively.

Linda Azap
Secretary,
FIDA Cameroon