



## Interface Nord-Sud et forum d'échanges sur les questions de société et d'auto-développement

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BP 4717 Yaoundé/Cameroun Tel: (00237): 99588031 -22068667

Web: <http://www.fondationkana.org>

Email: [info@fondationkana.org](mailto:info@fondationkana.org)

### REPORT PHASE II

#### ACCESSIBLE ELECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY PROJECT: EXECUTED IN THE CENTRE AND SOUTH WEST (FAKO) REGIONS



Workshop training of  
observers with disabilities



Fondation Kana in full  
training presentation



A person with disability in  
front of Elecarn office for the  
withdrawal of voter's card



Sensitization campaign on the  
withdrawal of voters' cards  
with a team of volunteers



Radion Emission on sensitization  
for the withdrawal of voter's card  
at Radio Bonne Nouvelle



Family picture on the training  
workshop

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* <sup>6</sup> find a recapitulative table of persons with disabilities who participated in the electoral process	
* <sup>7</sup> find DVD containing photos, videos and radio emissions radio relating to the project ACCESSIBLE ELECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY phase 2	

\*<sup>8</sup> find the training programme

## **I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

On the occasion of the forthcoming elections notably Presidential, it is a matter encouraging at close range all persons with disabilities, at voting age to fully participate. As provided by law N° 2010/002 of 13 April 2010 relative to the protection and promotion of persons with disabilities – Article 27 (2) “The State encourages the presence of persons with disabilities at different levels of social and political life” in Cameroon.

Fondation Kana is one of the associations of the Plateform supported by Sightsavers, whose intention is for persons with disabilities to have maximum sensitization in the different regions of Cameroon, through pilot stations put in place. It is therefore important to bring to their knowledge that their vote as citizens is an excellent method in take part in the community life.

Two meetings, thus :

- Stakeholders of the PLATEFORM, ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS and the partner Sightsavers, at the National Centre for Rehabilitation of Persons with disabilities, Cardinal Paul Emile Leger, located at Etoug Ebé quarter, on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011.
- Another with Elecam and Associations which make up the PLATEFORM, ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS and the Partner Sightsaver in order to deliver a series of document in Braille to help the blind to vote with dignity in the electoral process.

This was an issue among others to draw up a timetable of activities followed by ensuring massive participation of persons with disabilities during the Presidential Elections of 2011, after the execution of the first of activities whereby persons with disabilities were sensitize to massively enrol on the electoral list.

After signing the contract<sup>\*1</sup> with SightSavers, we immediately implemented the project which progressed as follows:

Working together with **GAPPH** (Groupe d’Action pour la Promotion des Personnes Handicapées), we found it advisable to continue our activities together in order to deploy ourselves better and to massively sensitise our target group on the withdrawal of their voters’ card and to vote massively.

A team of 4 persons were deployed in the South West (Fako) region to carry out the sensitization campaign with another partner association called, Manyu Circle Association for the Blind (MACAFOBI).

## **II. Objectives to be attained**

- Increase the level of interest and engagement of Persons with disabilities to take part in the electoral process,
- Encourage persons with disability to withdraw their voters' card,
- Encourage the effective participation during the vote of persons with disabilities in the pilot zones where there have already been sensitized,
- Advocate for the taking into consideration of the social inclusion strand in election observation,
- Organize a regional training workshop of observers with disabilities
- Organiser un atelier régional de formation des observateurs handicapés.

Our activities were centred in the centre region.

## **III. Planned activities in the centre region**

During our planification meetings we envisaged to:

- Organise a campaign for the withdrawal of voters' cards for persons with disability,
- Train observers with disabilities during the vote,
- Media transmission (radio and print)

## **IV. Activities achieved in the centre region**

A team made up of **Fondation Kana** and **GAPPH** associations came together to set up strategies which will permit them carry out their activities in target zone to obtain optimal results.

So, in the centre region notably in the divisions of Yaounde IV and VI, a circular letter was addressed to each Quarter head to inform families who take care of persons with disabilities of the sensitization campaign which will be carried out by our volunteers deployed on the field.

A sensitization campaign on the withdrawal of voters' cards was organised, during which persons with disabilities were made to understand that having themselves registered on the electoral list was just one step, withdrawing and actually voting is very important in accomplishing his/her civil duty as the electoral process is concerned.

Consequently on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2011 following the different sensitization campaigns carried out notably door to door campaign by our volunteers and the various media involved, a good number of persons with disability massive came for the withdrawal of their voter's card which Elecam made necessary efforts to put at our disposal.

After the sensitization campaign for the withdrawal of these cards, a regional workshop for observers with disabilities was held at the conference hall of GAPPH, situated at Nkol Eton on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2011.

For proper functioning of this workshop, we worked with a team of journalists<sup>\*2</sup> who announced it over the air<sup>\*3</sup> and wrote it over **Radio Siantou, radio bonne Nouvelle** and equally on the website of cyber presse **journalducameroun.com** on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 : entitled : **Training of Persons with disabilities as Election observers by an association named FONDATION KANA and GAPPH with the support of SIGHTSAVERS.**

Since Persons with disabilities were trained as observers during the workshop<sup>\*4</sup>, we had at the level of the Plateform (made up of organisations of association of persons with disabilities) candidates to this training as well as persons with disabilities who during our sensitisation campaigns showed some interest not only to participate to this training but also to be observers during the electoral process.

After the vote, it was a matter of analysing the observations<sup>\*5</sup> done by persons with disabilities who were volunteers during the vote which took place on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

In the South West region, Fako, the same sensitization campaign for the withdrawal of voters' cards was also organised but no accreditations were obtained from the Ministry of Territorial Administration. We were not permitted to organise another training session of observers rather a sensitization and motivation campaign of those persons with disabilities who have withdrawn their cards to massively turn out for the vote.

Persons with disabilities in this respect were often those who are visually impaired. The strategy implemented here was that of door to door campaign as was the case in the first phase. Hence the Quarter Heads with the support of our team on the field, an association named MACAFOBI carried out a campaign on the withdrawal process in collaboration with Elecam.

Over 50 visually impaired persons with disabilities were able to withdraw their voters' cards and voted like other citizens on the 9th October 2011.

Radio Emission : Radio tiémenie Siantou, radio campus et radio bonne nouvelle (see radio emission attached DVD)

At the end of the day, in collaboration with the mobile team of Elecam<sup>\*5</sup>, over 200 persons with various disabilities collected their voters' cards and we think that to an extent we achieved our goal. (Find attached photocopies of voters' cards).

## **V. Challenges in the Centre and South West Regions**

In the framework of this project we faced diverse challenges:

First on the field, as during the sensitization phase, the volunteers who were sensitising persons with disabilities to withdraw their voters' cards in order to vote on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2011 were mistaken at first sight as supporters of political parties. This rendered the task more difficult because we had to explain in greater detail our reason for being on the field.

Most Persons with disabilities who were registered on the electoral list were no longer motivated to withdraw their voters' cards hence there was need for many campaigns to be organised in these zones where sensitization had already been done and the means were not yet put at our disposal.

In the framework of training observers with disabilities, we had difficulty to train people with disabilities, in that the demand was so high and in addition to that some organizations sent valid persons instead of persons with disabilities.

The names of persons with disabilities which we sent to the Ministry of Territorial Administration for accreditations were rejected for reasons we do not understand and that derailed us from our action plan which was to send observers in polling stations in Yaounde especially the pilot stations.

The refusal of accreditation equally hindered us from training observers in the South West region.

Another factor that we highlighted is the time factor in the sense that our activities on the field were limited. There was very limited time to get to the target group, very limited time to train observers with disabilities and deploy volunteers on the field in the South West region.

This time factor had an effect on the implementation of the entire project but with a good management team, strategic planning brought the project to realisation.

## **VI. LESSONS LEARNED**

As a lesson learned, we noted that to make a person with disability interested to participate and develop himself and the society is an experience to be renewed because it is important to have them involve in all that concerns them.

We also noted that time does not belong to us and henceforth we ought to pre-plan on what we suppose to do.

It was interesting to note within the framework of the project, ACCESSIBLE ELECTION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY how these persons with disabilities became involve in implementing this project, considering their reluctance which was a major factor at the beginning of the project.

All persons with disabilities who participated in this project showed interest to participate in the next electoral process and the aspect of social inclusion was immediately noted which was a peculiar motivation and often become generalised as an exclusion factor, once it is not taken into consideration.

Like other lessons, it was important for the community at large to understand the depth of the sensitization with respect to problems relating to the society especially those of persons with disabilities.

We who were able to go to many polling stations noticed that the measures taken for the pilot stations were necessary in the sense that, persons with disabilities voted with dignity in these stations without any barrier hindering them from performing of their civic duties.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a recommendation guide, it is important that in the future all should be organised especially that the time factor and the means to implement the project.

For future elections, being it legislative or municipal elections, the platform should put in place a well elaborated plan of action for effective implementation of all activities.

Persons with disabilities should be sensitised in this light so that it will not be forgotten and organisations of the platform should integrate this into their programs for proper follow up.

Partners like Elecam and Public Administration should always be contacted for a better strategic involvement of persons with disabilities in the electoral process.

For the following elections be it legislative or municipal, an advocacy and participatory program in the government concerning the approach to disability should be immediately taken into consideration so that the latter will be able to participate in decision making. For example, having a say in local development plan for services like offer to education, health, water or to vote during elections as we have just started through this project.

### **Recapitulative Table on the participation of persons with disabilities in the Project, Accessible election for people with disability: executed in the Centre and South West (Fako) Regions**

Number of registered persons with disabilities	Number of persons with disabilities who were in possession of their voter's cards	Number of trained observers with disabilities	Number of trained observers with disabilities who carried out electoral observation	Remarks
500	430	45	10	It should be noted that the figures pertain to the Centre and South West regions



## **VIII. CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS OF SUCCESS**

In conclusion we think that a person with disability as earlier said should fully participate in decision making and political life as any other citizen.

For more success, means should be set aside for sensitization at the suburbs because it was noted that certain zones were not informed of such an initiative.

Also, the impact of this project as we noticed was that awareness was created on the minds of those persons with disabilities who took part in the project. This made us to understand that for forth coming elections we could count on some volunteers with disabilities to go close to other persons with disabilities for sensitization.