

AC Organization Activity Report April 2008



I- General

This month has been active in recruiting victims, publicizing the goal and the objectives of AC Cameroon to Cameroonians, building legitimacy through meeting with others organizations of civil society and official organizations in charge of fighting corruption.

II- Investigations

- After encountering difficulties trying to recruit victims directly from the places identified as the main sites of corruption, AC Cameroon decided to diversify the strategy of recruitment of victims. The new strategy was based on being in contact with people who are exposed to corruption because of their profession or their status like small traders, buy and sellers, associations of foreigners coming from African countries, association of taxi drivers.
- According to this new strategy, AC Cameroon's volunteers went to field and introduced the organization to traders of 7 markets (Marché Central, Marché de Mokolo, Marché d'Etoudi, Marché d'Essos, Marché d'Ekounou, Marché Melen).
- In the two first weeks of April, 13 new associations were met (see the list including names and phone numbers in Annex). These encounters assured AC Cameroon that there is a real need of fighting corruption through legal action as all of them are complaining against officials of Taxation Office, Ministry of Trade and Police.
- Another strategy introduced was the public hotline. 70 new posters advertising the hotline to report corruption have been posted in many main places in Yaoundé (Ministries, Officials offices, universities, courts etc.). The advert is annex to this report.
- Victims of corruption or others connected to them started calling AC Cameroon hotline in a rate of 4 phone calls a day. Most callers check if the line is indeed real, ask for more information about the organization, and congratulate for the initiative. 50% actually ask for help. 30% present cases that are acceptable to AC's criteria's (See March report on Cases Evaluation Grid),but only 10% finally accepted AC's strategy to open a court case Most of the victims that accepted have nothing more to lose.
- AC will start producing next month a weekly summary of selected cases. Some of the interesting cases of April include: A victim complains that after a work done for the state (Chambre d'Agriculture de Yaoundé) a year and half later, her payment is still blocked. She believes they were waiting for a bribe for the release of the payment. This seems to be common methods used by officials for kick backs.



- Another case brought to AC by ADDEC, is of lecturers who are selling grades in Yaoundé I university. In a meeting with a group of 10 students, they still insisted for their safety to get ADDEC representing their interest. AC Cameroon prefers direct contact with the victims. AC Cameroon is still trying to convince those students to take legal action directly.
- A third complaint concerns an application for bar licence. The Prefecture officials demanded from the victim more than 3 times the normal fees. This information is important because it helped to identify corruption in local government.
- AC Cameroon received complaints about human rights abuses. While formulating clear guidelines to complaints that are out of AC's scope, it gives legal advice to complainers and forwards them to appropriate organization. AC Cameroon has already forwarded victims of human rights abuses to COMICODI.
- 3 victims acceptable by AC criteria and willing to open court cases are already identified. The first one is concerning a lady who doesn't got a grant what she supposed to get for studies in France. The second one is concerning an old man who suffered about corruption because of court officials. He won a court case against his employer who didn't pay him during 5 years but corruption opened appeal possibility. The last one was brought by ADDEC of director of communication faculty of Yaoundé II university demanding 500 000 Fcfa for admission which is 10 times the official fees.
- The next step now after signature of convention between lawyer and victims is to get evidences of offences and open court cases. AC Cameroon expects this to happen by the second half of May 2008.
- Strategy of recruiting victims still has to be improved. AC Cameroon has not used all the directions that were decided in March month. The strategy of recruiting victims through lawyers, sending investigators on the field and getting victims from associations have not been properly exploited.

III- Media

- Two written media pieces introducing AC to the public were published in a francophone newspaper (Le Liberal) and in an Anglophone one (The Herald). Another one is still expected to be published in the bilingual Government Newspaper (Cameroon Tribune).
- An interview of AC Cameroon's lawyer on the fact that is a right of every victim of corruption to open a court case against the official involved in corruption is in preparation and it's supposed to be published soon. The news articles are needed to assist in convincing the victims.

IV- Legal

- AC Cameroon is still at the stage of recruiting victims according to the action plan. That's why the legal activities are still at the same level since March.



- Regular phone contact and meetings are maintained with the lawyer and the bailiff.
- The lawyer met the 3 victims identified by AC Cameroon and an accord may be finalized between them.

V- Human Resources

- Between the volunteers tested by AC Cameroon, some of them have a problem of conviction which is causing the lack of activism that the young organization needs to grow up. 2 of 4 were dismissed during this month. One major criteria beyond results and learning curve is the spirit of activism and fighting.
- AC Cameroon is still recruiting volunteers because only one of the first three has been accepted.
- AC Cameroon is also using students as volunteers to get them involved in finding solutions of corruption in the universities.

VI- Finances

- AC Cameroon is still waiting funds from British High Commission and until now the organization is working on loans and private money.
- A.C Cameroon got a cash box and a registry book to control the use of money. The coordinator set up transparent financial accounting system.
- AC Cameroon didn't succeed yet to get a bank account because in all the banks, the definitive act of legalization was needed and the problem is that AC Cameroon is still processing this issue.

VII- Management

- AC Cameroon got a Post Office Box - 5031 Yaoundé- Nlongkak Cameroon.
- Translation of concept note in French to facilitate the introduction of AC Cameroon to francophone people.

VIII- Relations with institutions

- Meeting between AC's coordinator and the US Embassy's Mr Tad Brown concerning the US Embassy's support to AC and its legalization by MINATD. In a second meeting the embassy asked for a new proposal for a possible future financial support.
- Meeting two times with Mr Peter Essoka who is member of National Program of Governance (Anti corruption unit of Ministry of justice). He promised to introduce AC Cameroon in National Program of Governance (PNG) and fight to get for AC Cameroon the status of official partner of this institution. He also promised to introduce AC Cameroon to National Committee of Fighting against corruption (CONAC) and to PNG.



- The Process of legalization of AC is still delaying as the file has not yet left CNR. AC Cameroon will need the help of the international community to solve this situation.
- AC Cameroon had a meeting with Daniel Whitman who is the state Department official in charge of Public affairs in Africa. The main promise that AC Cameroon got from him is helping to get funds to produce “Tribune of Governance” which is the review that AC Cameroon would like to produce every six month.
- AC’s coordinator met with US Ambassador. AC Cameroon was introduced to her for an hour and she expressed her appreciation of the achievements of AC in less than 2 months of existence. She appreciated the approach because of the importance of empowerment of ordinary citizens. She also promised to assist AC Cameroon within the US Embassy capacity.

IX- Relations with NGOs

- Meeting with team of Open Society Initiative for West Africa of the Soros Foundation on the action of civil society in Cameroon. This was also an opportunity to introduce AC Cameroon as a young organization.
- Meeting with Mr Djonttu Mouafo who is the former head of ADDEC and he was the one introducing AC Cameroon to this organization that the goal is defending the rights of students in Cameroon.
- Meeting with Mr Betonia who is the actual chairman of ADDEC. The decision to collaborate for fighting corruption in Cameroonian universities has been taken.
- Meeting with Dr Shanda Tonme of COMICODI about victims. He was saying that AC Cameroon can use his website to get victims but he was really skeptic on the chances of success of AC Cameroon initiative because according to him all the system is corrupted in all the levels. That’s why according to him it will be really difficult to get people agreeing to open court cases against officials and he doesn’t believe that the magistrates who are an important part of corruption into the system will sanction corrupted officials.
- 13 new associations are met this month and they agreed to let AC Cameroon know when they are facing problems of corruption. See the list in Annex of this report.

Marius Talla
Coordinator AC Cameroon

