
A Report of the 2nd Preparatory Meeting of the ‘National Contest on the Obstacles of Democracy in Cameroon’

August 21st 2015, WDYP’s office

By Neh Jessica,
Intern, World Dynamics of Young People

With regards to the upcoming International Day of Democracy, the organizing committee of the national contest on the obstacles of democracy in Cameroon held its second preparatory meeting on Friday, August 21st 2015, within the premises of the World Dynamics of Young People (WDYP). It’s worth noting that this contest is organized by the World Dynamics of Young People (WDYP), in collaboration with the other organizations that make up the Faith and Liberation Network. The meeting that was attended by nine persons had the following items on the agenda;

- An evaluation of the communication done on the contest.
- Examining the essays received.
- Preparations for the press conference
 - deciding on a convenient place
 - elaborating a programme
 - deciding on who to invite

Five out of the seven organizations that make up the organizing committee of the contest, were present at the meeting.

The meeting was moderated by Michel Fokou from the WDYP. Before entering into the agenda proper, the representatives of the member organizations were called upon to recapitulate on how they communicated about the event at their various levels. The organizations made mention of common communication tools such as the traditional media (television, radio and print), the social media (facebook, e-mails), outdoor advertisement such as the pasting of posters in almost all the regions of the country, and lastly mouth-to-mouth communication mostly done in church gatherings and in youth associations. The table below shows how the dissemination of the contest was individually carried out by each organization present at the meeting.

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	COMMUNICATION TOOL
❖ CEPCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Featured in radio programmes in Yaounde.-Distribution and pasting of posters in churches and school campuses.-Visited youth association in Yaounde and in the North region of the country.

	-Disseminated information about the contest on facebook.
❖ CDJP, Bafia.	-Pasting of posters in public places such as the regional department of the youth council. -Broadcasted of information about the contest on Radio Melea, FM105 for 4 months. -Distributed terms of reference where necessary.
❖ CIPCRE	-Pasted posters in public places such the University campus. -Featured in radio programmes and paid for the dissemination of information about the contest (CRTV Bafoussam, among other radio stations). -Took advantage of a congress at Baham and a field work at Bamendjo to talk about the event. -Mouth to mouth communication to interested persons.
❖ CDJP, Eseka.	-Took advantage of the ‘Journee Diocesaine des Jeunes’ to spread the news. -Pasted posters in towns and remote villages. -Mouth to mouth communication with interested persons.
❖ DMJ	-Sent posters to branches in Ebolowa, Belabo, Ngaoundere, Garoua and Maroua. -Pasted posters in public places in Yaounde (churches, University campuses, public offices, etc.) -Informed their acquaintances through e.mail notifications. -Collaborated with religious leaders, and youth associations to spread news about the contest. -A communiqué was read on Kribi FM, added to the activity was made public through a local news bulletin.

The representatives of the organizations present equally outlined a couple of difficulties that they encountered while communicating the contest. Peculiar questions kept coming up such as; “Is the whole initiative going to mobilize youths to participate, with regards to the fact that the contest is organized during the summer break?” Some people even went as far as suggesting that the contest should be reopened on the 15th of September so that students might participate being in all their senses, without any distraction. The assembly appreciated the suggestion but grrred to apply it from next year. Another difficulty that was encountered on the field is the fact that the media was not really a success in some areas of the country such as at Eseka, due to power failure which destroyed the equipments. As such many in that area did not have complete information about the contest, the structure of the text they ought to produce, amongst other items. Also, many youths in remote areas felt excluded from the initiative because of the instruction that stressed that the essays should be typed. Consequently, organization members of the organizing committee within such localities had no choice but to accept hand-written copies. Examples of such localities were those of Belabo in the Est (9 copies), Bafoussam in the West (2 copies) and Eseka in the Centre (1 candidate) especially, which sent twelve hand-written copies.

During the meeting a dilemma surged in this perspective, as there was a need to determine how such candidates would be evaluated, in terms of number of pages, style and structure. The representative from Eseka suggested that the hand-written copies should be typed so that they would be in conformity with the instructions. But her suggestion was counteracted with the fact that doing that is more like rewriting the candidates' essay, thereby not making the contest credible. Thus it was decided that the papers be evaluated as they are since evaluation would be done on two main criteria: form/structure and content. For the sake of balance, it was agreed that more points should be allocated for the content and lesser points be allocated for the structure so that those who at least respected the basic instructions would not be totally penalized.

It is worth noting that twenty-eight candidates were registered to have participated in the contest. As such, five packs of the total number of copies received were provided at the disposal of member organizations present at the meeting. As far as taking a decision on how to appropriately evaluate the candidates is concerned, the general assembly agreed on individually grading the candidates after which another meeting would be held where each organization will provide justifications for preferring a particular candidate to the other. The marking criteria was adopted, but was to be completed by some details to help better mark the candidates. In this light the WDYP accepted to make available within the week the term of reference that would serve as a marking-guide to the organizations. This term of reference would be made up of the following main points;

- Objectives of the contest.
- Values that the network upholds.
- The candidates' perception about the nature of democracy in Cameroon. Etc.

In the same vein, it was suggested that a third party should be invited to give advice on the criteria that would distinguish and make a candidate the winner of the contest. Such personality must be a master of the subject at hand and should equally have good judgment ability in order to put more weight and credibility to the decision of the organizing committee. This idea was put on hold till a person with such personality, ready to collaborate with the committee is found.

Talking about the press conference, it was unanimously scheduled for the 15th of September 2015, at a not yet known place in Yaounde, and the elements on the agenda of the press conference would be;

- An opening statement
- Presentation of the results
- Brief history about the Faith and Liberation Network
- Debate, etc.

As far as the personalities and institutions to be invited are concerned, the committee agreed on inviting the ministries of youth and civic education, higher education, secondary education,

Mayors, the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, the National Youth Council, among others. Some media organs to be present at the conference include; the traditional media (CRTV, etc), Cybernetic Media such as Camnews, and the print media. To this effect specific tasks were allocated to the represented organizations, such as the preparation of a press release and invitation letters by the Justice and Peace Commission of Bafia and Eseka respectively.

Before separating another preparatory meeting was scheduled for an undetermined date between August 28 and the first week of September 2015. The main element on the agenda would be the justification and selection of a potential winner of the contest and the organization of the press conference. Below is the attendance list of the day;

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Nom et Prénom	Organisation	Fonction	Contact (Tel, E-mail...)
AMOUGOU NNOMO BENJAMIN	CDJP, BAFIA	Représentant, Cellule Animation	699 643 496 Benjamin_amougou@yahoo.fr
TIENTCHEU BERTRAND	CEPCA	Charge des Programmes Jeunes	677 329 693 virata16@gmail.com
MAHGNE NOUMBOU PELAGIE	CIPCRE	Animatrice Projets	698 959 787 pmahgne@cipcre.org
NGO NGANA MARIE MADELEINE	CDJP, ESEKA	Permanente	697 70 82 99 mngongana@gmail.com
NDANJI NEH JESSICA	DMJ	Stagiaire	677 634 777 nehjessica@yahoo.com
ESSIMI ALIMA BERNARD NELSON	DMJ	Stagiaire	699 975 699 nelsonessimi@gmail.com
FOMEKUNG SOLOMON HOPE	DMJ	Volontaire	675 563 636 kennesolomon@yahoo.fr
POKAM W. FABRICE DONALD	DMJ	BUCOM\Communication	675 365 028/696 240 281 wdypcm@yahoo.fr fabricepokam@yahoo.fr
FOKOU MICHEL	DMJ	Coordonnateur des Programmes	Michindex-dmj@yahoo.fr