

Global Conscience Monthly

Global Conscience Initiative

March 2013

Volume 1

Welcome

Welcome to Global Conscience Initiative's (GCI) first edition of our new newsletter, Global Conscience Monthly. This publication will share with you our activities and events at GCI and the news from around Kumba.

GCI News

The Centres for Arbitration and Mediation Project (CAM's)

CAM's is a GCI project aimed at easing congestion within the state courts in Kumba by increasing the capacities of the traditional councils in the local small communities around Kumba to deal with low-level disputes. February has been a positive month for the CAM's project. Apart from being joined by a new intern from Switzerland, Lea Barbezat, the team proceeded on the full-scale project re-design. Armed with a new modified project, the team has begun implementing its programme in the community Bombe Bakundu, and in March will be beginning the research phase, before we begin workshops later this spring.



Above: GCI staff Minet Egbe, joined by international intern Max Perry-Wilson and Barrister Ernest for Human Rights hour

Human Rights Hour Mondays 6:30pm 91.8 FM

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In order to sensitise Kumba and the surrounding Meme Division on human rights issues, GCI holds a weekly radio show on Lake Site Radio called 'Human Rights Hour'. Last month's topics covered various issues including torture, child labour and freedom of movement, and gave practical information on the national identity card scheme and workers' rights. The GCI team was joined by Barristers Ernest and Elonge, who shared their professional and legal expertise. The team discussed International and Cameroonian Laws, and gave examples of local human rights violations and their effects on the community. Child labour has been a major concern for us as it represents a vast problem in Cameroon. Concerning freedom of movement, the importance of possessing a valid national identity card was highlighted. Make sure you tune in to this month's programmes every Monday at 6:30pm, on Lake Site Radio 91.8 fm.

GCI Events



Monday 4th March

-Human Rights Hour 6:30pm-
Women's rights

Wednesday 6th March

-In celebration of international women's day CAM's will be projecting the movie *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* in Bombe Bakundu

Friday 8th March

-International Women's Day.

Monday 11th March

-Human Rights Hour 6:30pm- Role of Women in Society Debate

-New Intern Giorgia will be joining the CAM's project all the way from Italy.

Monday 18th March

-Human Rights Hour 6:30pm- Election watch

Monday 25th March

-Human Rights Hour 6:30pm- Freedom of Expression

New Interns

Currently GCI has three international interns working on its main project: CAM's. Here's what they have to say about their time here:

Max Perry-Wilson, United Kingdom: *My time here has been great. GCI is a friendly, focused organisation doing really important work. It's been a great experience for me.*

Lea Barbezat, Switzerland: *I am having a really great time being an intern at GCI. It is a valuable experience where you learn a lot. I recommend it to everyone!*

Jessica Russell, Canada: *I have really enjoyed my time at Global Conscience Initiative. Cameroon is beautiful, the people are wonderful, and the work is fulfilling. Overall it's been a great experience.*

A Word of Advice

One of the things we do at GCI is give free consultancy. Last month we received a case that is typical. A man had been working as a security guard for a company in Kumba but had not been paid his full salary for over three months. He owed his landlord rent and could not afford to feed his family over Christmas. In frustration at this situation the man decided he could no longer continue to go to work and instead started looking for another job. In response to this his employer argued that as he had left his work he was no longer entitled to the money that he was due. Eventually his landlord began convocation against him with the police. At this point the

man came to our office seeking advice.

What should you do in this situation? You need not go to the police, simply visit your local Labour office and they will provide you with free legal advice and convoke the party at fault to come and arrange an amicable agreement.

Want to get involved? Beginning in April GCI will be offering individuals the chance to become exclusive members, with the first five people that apply receiving their membership free of charge. Beyond this, GCI also offers internships at certain times. For more information on this and more please get in contact with us! See the bottom of page 3 for contact details.

Culturewatch: Mofako Bekondo

Last month, GCI was kindly invited to the 39th Development and Cultural Jamboree at Mofako Bekondo, an annual cultural gathering of the Mbonge Tribe in Mbonge sub-division. Hundreds of people attended the event under the heavy sun and enjoyed dances, chants and speeches. We at GCI had the pleasure to listen to many talented singers (including the *Angels Singers* of Mofako Bekondo who sang the national anthem in the Mbonge language) and to observe some traditional dances including two men on stilts! Then a fundraising drive was initiated and nearly seven million CFA was raised. This money will fund several development projects in the local communities, many of which are in dire need of pipe borne water, electricity and roads. After the reading of resolutions and some closing remarks by the President of the Mbonge Cultural and Development Organisation (MCDO), a cow's head was given to the chief of the village that will be hosting the event next year, symbolising the passing of the event to the next bearer. The event culminated in a huge feast. We had the chance to be invited to the Chiefs' banquet where the GCI team indulged in a variety of tasty Cameroonian dishes and beverages. GCI extends our thanks to Chief Thomson Itoe for the invitation, the different animations and the exquisite food!



Global Conscience Initiative is a not-for-profit Human Rights organisation based in Kumba, Southwest Cameroon. For more information about what GCI does, if you wish to donate something, or anything else you can contact us through the following ways:

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