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Dear valued supporter

This is a slightly different newsletter as it's coming to you 'live' from Cameroon. Marianne and Stuart are in the country after three years of being unable to travel here; it's great to be back!

We are visiting the projects that have been funded during this time and more recent programmes that are in response to the crisis that still continues to cause disruption.

We're going to be sharing with you updates during our trip over two weeks, below is an account of week one!

A healthy start to life



Our first visit was to St. Odile Health Centre in Edea to assess the impact of the project where we funded solar panels which were installed in 2020. The panels power three incubators and a small vaccine fridge essential for the safe delivery of premature babies in the region.

During our visit the unit was unusually empty, as in the weeks post Christmas mothers cannot afford the small fees payable for the safe delivery at the centre.

The charge for a uncomplicated delivery is £20 with a caesarean costing up to £200, but these charges are a fraction of the cost charged in government hospitals.

Now that the health centre has reliable lighting and heating for the incubators it's now attracting more patients from the surrounding areas. Last year 86 babies were born prematurely so the incubators were in high demand.

St. Odile Health Centre, run by a team of six nuns, is investing in constructing an x ray and physiotherapy unit and providing antenatal training in other regions.

They are now being recommended to be upgraded to a hospital which will attract more resources to meet the needs of the local community and beyond.

Sister Geroline

"Everyone is very happy with the impact of the solar panels, the health centre is the only place in the area that has light at night."

An update on our special appeal



You may remember Yvonne from our Special Appeal at Christmas. She and her nine children were destitute, because she had lost her home and her business in the war, her husband had left her and she had just given birth to triplets.

We were thrilled to be able to have the opportunity to meet Yvonne and her family during our visit to Bamenda. They all looked really well and seemed to be thriving, the children were enjoying being at school and the triplets were bundles of energy and were busy taking in the sights.

The family has moved to a small village where Yvonne's mother lives so that she can help with the childcare whilst Yvonne is growing her business and selling dresses to her local customers.

This is a great success story for the Economic Empowerment for Education Programme.

Economic empowerment for education



We met Emilie (fourth from left) in SHUMAS' new office in Douala where their activities for the region are coordinated. The office also has the facilities to provide a short term safe space for women facing physical harm from GBV. Emilie is the coordinator for the Littoral region in the South of Cameroon. The focus of her work at the moment is on IDP women who have moved from villages in the war zone in the North West and South West of the country to the comparative safety of the city.

The team has identified 500 IDP women so far who were destitute and in need of a means of earning a livelihood and provide for their children. SHUMAS has created a programme for empowering women by training them in small business management and providing the necessary materials to start their businesses. The aim is for these women to generate sufficient income to feed their children and be able to send them to school.

Monitoring the progress of both the women and their children is the most important element of this work. Some of the children would have been out of education for up to five years so it's vital to know if they are settling back into school life and thriving.

[The women's stories are really powerful and you can read about them here.](#)

Thank you so much for all of your continued support and generous donations, we could not do any of this with you.

Marianne and Stuart from Cameroon and Andrew, Ian, Judith, Marianne, Nick and Stuart Trustees



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