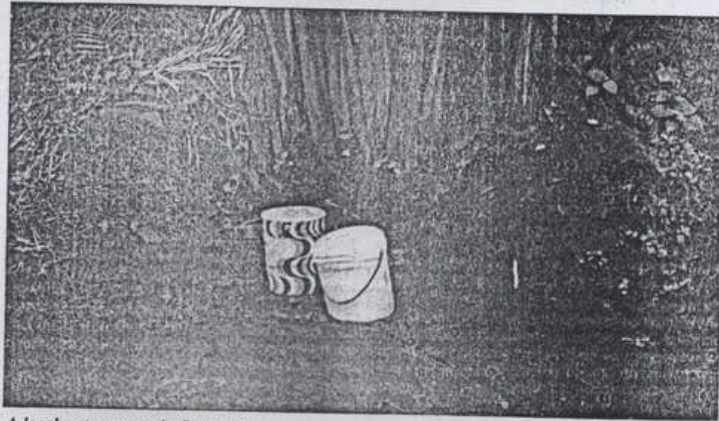


Article from Cameroon Tribune 01 June 1999
 Title: Drainage Problems Hit Bamenda

**LE FAIT
 DU JOUR**

**Drainage Problems
 Hit Bamenda**

Creating awareness in a city with no drainage system, where only 24 litres of drinkable water are available per inhabitant per day.



A local water source in Bamenda

From evidence, metropolitan Bamenda has taken the lead in research activities towards the improvement of her acute drainage problems and the improvement of the quality of drinkable water. Research results produced by the Integrated Development Foundation (IDF), an environmental NGO reveals that the city has enough dirty water to show. Such water result from indiscriminate refuse disposal; poor draining of toilets, solid and liquid wastes into water ways; river siltation, etc. Experts also blame the situation on the unplanned nature of infrastructure in the city, deforestation around the main sources of water in the neighbouring Mendankwe hills and sometimes on the population pressure on a limited land resource.

Worse still, the problem has gone for long without featuring for serious discussion until 1994 with the birth of the IDF. Since then, IDF has created awareness on this disturbing situation for the over 200,000 inhabitants of Bamenda. According to Djia Jean Baptiste of the IDF, statistics reveal that only 24 litres of drinkable water is available per inhabitant per day in Bamenda. This is short of the required 45 litres by WHO standards.

Among the major problems is the complete absence of any drainage system. Four main streams supply water and treatment and distribution is done by SNEC and local community initiatives. Lots of garbage is dumped on streets and rivers while the topography of the town generates floods that deposit refuse in water beds.

Presiding at a World Bank funded water and drainage workshop in Bamenda recently, the founder-president of IDF, Dameni Oussematou revealed that in an attempt to create awareness and ease project conception by the local community her organisation has so far produced a detailed map of Bamenda. Above all, IDF has provided Bamenda with a computerised map which masters the city's drainage problems. The organisation has also identified that there are only 47 SNEC and community water taps in Bamenda. Present at the participatory action research workshop on water and sanitation were over 40 representatives of the technical service of the Central administration, political parties, Development and Cultural associations, NGOs and parastatals concerned with drainage and water issues. By the time curtains dropped, all hailed the World Bank for funding and the IDF for the initiative to create awareness and give Bamenda a chance in drainage and drinkable water.

According to Mrs Dameni Oussematou the water and sanitation project is a pilot action financed by the French Ministry of co-operation. Co-ordinated by the Research and Technological

Exchange Group (GRET) and executed by the IDF. GRET and IDF are playing the roles of mediators while the bulk of the research is carried out by actors themselves as in Bamenda where they have set up a concentration forum and its functioning conditions. The IDF

strengthens rural and urban populations with viable managerial tools and relevant infrastructure through required knowledge and skills that enable them improve livelihoods.

Choves Loh

DU TAC AU TAC
**"Isolated Efforts
 Cannot Ensure
 Drainage"**

Mrs Oussematou, the initiator of the Bamenda workshop on water says lessons were taken home to educate inhabitants on the need for sanitary and proper waste disposal options.

What made the drainage and water workshop different from other workshops in Cameroon?

Our workshops have been different because they are often result oriented. This is the first time we involved the population who are the main actors to produce results on the study of drainage problems in Bamenda. Next, the actors or participants who are of different political backgrounds, development agents, government technicians formed a concentration or working group. This time around we charted another major way forward.



Mrs Dameni Oussematou

What concrete lessons did participants take home?

They all acknowledged that the problem of water and drainage in town cannot be solved through isolated efforts. Consequently they resolved to continue educating the population on the need for sanitary and proper waste disposal options and water management. They appealed for competent services to produce a master plan for drainage tracts and for feasibility studies to design a drainage system for the city. They also resolved that respective quarters or grassroots should initiate hygiene and sanitation activities and that data collection be improved. There was also an appeal for government to reintroduce the training of sanitary inspectors and that sanctions be meted out to defaulters of hygiene and sanitation rules.

C.L.

GUIDE

PHARMACIES ON CALL

- Plaza Pharmacy - 36 33 20
- Park Pharmacy - 36 37 12
- Vilen Pharmacy - 36 26 73

HOSPITALS

- Bamenda General Hospital - 36 11 08
- P.M.I. Nkwen - 36 24 06

SECURITY SERVICES

- Public Security - 36 21 67
- G.M.I - 36 12 14
- Brigade Terre - 36 25 63

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- Bamenda Urban Council - 36 12 67