



**REPORT OF HIFA'S
PARTICIPATION AT THE PAN-AFRICAN HEALTH
CONFERENCE
AT THE SALOMON TANDENG MUNA FOUNDATION
FROM THE 8TH TO THE 10TH APRIL 2019
CAMEROON**



From the 8th to the 10th of April, Yaoundé hosted the Pan- Africa health conference under the theme: *addressing health challenges of rural and marginalized African communities*. This conference was organised by the Pan African health initiative. (PAN-AFHI). During this three days event, health professionals, leaders of civil society organisations, NGO leaders, students in health, other professionals passionate about health issues and advocates gathered to discuss on health issues. The discussions were organized around six axes that were presented in various sessions from Monday to Wednesday.

1. Innovating to accelerate impact at scale
2. Measuring for evaluation and accountability
3. Bridging equity divides
4. Generating new evidence to fill critical knowledge gaps
5. Strengthening demand for health care
6. Increasing health systems' capacity to respond to population needs

Mr Didier Demassosso, Healthcare Information Country Representative for Cameroon (HIFA) moderated a panel discussion on *increasing health systems capacity to respond to population needs*.

Panel six discussion: Increasing health systems' capacity to respond to population need

Panellists

Mr Sukpa Sam Nloin, Founder and executive director of Clean Water and Sanitation Africa, fellow of the African grassroots leadership academy (AFGLAC.)

Ms Queen Dorothy, student in farm management and members of several NGOs

Ms Monica Ewang, Founder of Our health foundation

Mr Denzy, third year nursing and midwifery student at the University of Bamenda

Summary of panel discussion

From the different panel members Increasing Health systems capacity implies

- Developing health infrastructure to meet health demands
- The need to manage or provide direct healthcare to populations

- The need to address more specific needs of specific populations e.g. student population, people with disabilities
- The need to address new and growing health needs e.g. the increase rate of mental health issues in the North West and south west region implies a specific approach to Cameroon's health system
- Bridging the gap between health professionals to ensure collaboration and multidisciplinary so as to enhance health provision
- NGO mobilization to work with hospitals in promoting health
- Avoid wastage of resources through the understanding of the poor utilization of the little available healthcare facilities in the rural areas
- Generating evidence to understand why and how health delivery is not made available, usable and of quality
- Investing and using research effectively for problem solving in health issues and for evidence-informed health decision making at all levels of the health sector
- Improving on service delivery through quality training and professional development
- Cultural sensitivity
- Developing quality care and professionals through the development of review boards
- The need to develop rigorous methods to develop methods to access quality medications
- Interest in the Sustainability and improvement of health systems implies focusing on increasing health system capacity
- Developing cross sectional approaches to evaluate determinates of health
- Intensifying health promotion
- The need to enhance partnership for health development with the support of Local NGOs

Recommendations from panel

- Using volunteerism as a means to promote health
- Developing cross sectional approaches to evaluate determinates of health
- Developing strategies for Quality care
- Increase outreach experience in university students into health students
- Improve quality of training
- Increase wages of health professionals
- NGOs role in advocacy and lobbying in health development is important

After a presentation of the HIFA which was co-organizer of the PANCON 2019, Didier Demassosso , Country Representative of HIFA in Cameroon focused his presentation on the role that accessing and making available health information has in empowering populations anywhere and especially in rural areas to have a good health. 25 participants decided to become HIFA members.

During the conference the health professional present voiced different aspects of the health realities of the Cameroonian health system. It was amazing to realize how from my perspective there was a marked difference in the health philosophies portrayed through the discourse of the health professionals from what is often heard. Moreover, the experience of other countries enabled me to realize that albeit differences African health systems share something in common, the community is very important.

The following recommendations were made at the end of the conference

Be healthpreneurs ready to work to bring forth health information to rural communities while empowering ourselves and these people in benevolent from the services we offer.

To partner and work with other teams and associations and community to handle the health needs of rural communities.

Improve the quality of health we offer to the people by improving on our attitudes willingness and response to work in those rural areas.

Work with researches to carry out research on the frequent disease affecting people in these rural areas and help provide proposed solutions to these problems.

Work as a team in our health in our health services to improve the demand for health care

Conclusion and my observation

There was recognition of the divide in access and availability of health information in Africa, and between urban and rural areas in Africa. Even though discussions on how to address it were not specifically made, an important emphasis on the use of ICT in health was made. There was great diversity of approaches to healthcare as one moved across the different African representatives but what seemed interesting during the conference is this deep intention of a truly people-centered approach to healthcare delivery. Frequently issues of quality of training was raised. It was not surprising as that but it still remained amazing that albeit the great amount of evidence and even from indigenous knowledge, the discourse on mental health was systematically absent. The presence though of **Mental Health Innovation Network Africa (MHIN-Africa)**, came to shed more awareness on the undeniable place of mental health in mental healthcare. The conference enabled a unique way of engaging actors of the health system to discuss grassroots issues. This conference was important because it highlighted and showed what and how NGOs do and can do to develop African health systems. It matters that INGOs and other stake holders in health collaborate more with local NGOs. In Cameroon, I intend to see how well the recommendations of the conference are picked up by Cameroonian health authorities, especially the Ministry of Public Health. The next Pan-African Health conference will be held in Nigeria. A copy of this report will be given to the Ministry of Public Health in Cameroon.

Didier Demassosso
Healthcare Information for All Country Representative for Cameroon

Yaoundé, 7th May 2019

Annexes



The first photo above and the one on the left bottom corner show HIFA CRC Didier Demasosso presenting. The other photo to the right shows a panel discussion.



Toward achievement of sustainable development goals. Medical Laboratory students and professionals in first Medical lab professional Week in Rwanda presented by Gashema Pierre



The use of ICT in health was an important point raised during the PANCON2019. In Photo presentation of Arthur Zang’s Cardiopad, as well as Alain Nteff’s Giftedmom, all IT driven solutions to improve health in low resource settings. In fact, in Cameroon there exist local and isolated ehealth and mhealth initiative which can be used effectively for health information for all.



Photo shows reading of the recommendation of the conference marking its end.