

News Bulletin No 9: Summer/Autumn 2011

The past months have been very busy for St Louis, Capitol, and Shisong Spreading Health candidates. Clinical internships, writing reports and preparation for exams are some of the major activities that kept them on their toes. The three students who graduated are working in their community health centres and are already having a great impact in their communities. SHUMAS holds meetings on the first Sunday of every month to get updated reports of the candidates activities, and follow up the trained nurses in their various community clinics.

In March, April and May Havilah, Jolene and Elvis took it in turns to lead the group. This rotating leadership is giving everyone a chance to develop his or her skills as a leader, and they try to bring in some innovations to make a difference.

The candidates have also composed a Spreading Health anthem which they sing at the beginning of every meeting. This has brought unity amongst the candidates and a sense of belonging.

The St Louis candidates

The first batch of the St Louis students who are the pioneer group of the Spreading Health project have just 5 months before they graduate and go back to their communities. This is causing some excitement for them, and their communities.

Havilah and Zuilaika



Havilah is being trained for Lui Community Health Centre in Oku Sub Division in the North West Region of Cameroon Her community has an estimated population of 1,000 inhabitants and 60% are women. Presently there are just 2 assistant nurses and 1 nurse aider working in the Centre. The services of Havilah as a State Registered Nurse will boost the health service delivery in Lui and impact on the general health status of her community. The Centre currently receives on average 4 patients a day. Due to the lack of qualified and sufficient nurses most people prefer to trek 15km to the nearest health centre with more qualified staff. On average, 30 children come for vaccination to the health centre per month and about 14 women for antenatal services.

Zuilaika's community is Ngendzend, located about 30 km from Kumbo town, the second main town in the North West Region of Cameroon. There is just one health clinic, currently with just one nurse assistant and two nurse aiders. The community is very much looking forward to the services to be delivered by Zuilaika. Close to 15 people arrive for consultations in the health centre each day, 60% being children.

Through the Spreading Health program Zuilaika and Havilah met and have become very good friends. They both chose to carry out research on the same topic and go to Bali Health centre for their internship.

Havilah and Zuilaika's activities included presenting their research findings and preparation for their final exams for the State Registered Nursing Qualification (HPD). Those who qualify are awarded a diploma by the state.

Havilah and Zuilaika jointly researched and presented on the topic "Assessment of people's knowledge and understanding of the benefits of voluntary screening HIV/AIDS". Their presentation performance was excellent and the examiners gave them a distinction.

Havilah's results of the second sequence were very good. She passed in all the 11 courses with distinct grades. She took the 3rd position in a class of 200 students. Zuilaika passed in 10 out of 11 courses. 25th position.

Omer



Back in the Bamdzeng community that Omer represents there are about 1,500 people with only one health centre. An average of five people arrive for consultations daily with just one nurse assistant to attend to them. The number of patients per day is not because of healthy people in the communities but because most people prefer to trek 11km to get better health services in the nearest health centre.

Omer researched and presented on the topic "Impact of health monitoring facility on cold chain management practice in Bamenda Health Districts". His brilliant presentation caused the examiners to score him as excellent.

Omer's performance for the second sequence test this term was very good with very good grades. His success with his entire course placed him in 10th position.

Omer is also now preparing together to participate in the HPD theory and practical exams coming up in June.

Jolene



Jolene's community (Kikaikelaki) is situated in Bui Division, in the North West Region, and has an estimated population of above 2,000 inhabitants.

The single health centre, Kikaikelaki Integrated Health Centre, receives about 10 patients daily with varying health problems but predominantly malaria. There is just one nurse assistant working there.

Jolene researched and presented on the topic "Assessment of community's involvement in

health care delivery". Her presentation was very good. Jolene had 9 out of 11 courses. She ranked 30th.

Elvis

After their internship the level 2 students went on holidays. Elvis spent the holidays with his parents and also spent two hours each day working at the Njeng Batibo Health Clinic where he will be working at the end of his training. Njeng Batibo has a total population of about 2,500 people with a greater percentage made up of youths. The health centre has just 1 nurse assistant and 1 nurse Aider. The community is impatiently waiting for Elvis to complete next year and deliver better health services to them. The nearest health centre to Njeng Integrated health centre is 8 km away, where cases that cannot be handled at the Njen health centre can be referred to.

Elvis also received his second sequence results, succeeding in 7 out of 8 courses. He took the 20th position out of 235 students.

Currently Elvis is with the other level 2 students, writing the last sequence exams, after which they will go for a one month internship.

Oscar

Oscar is the eldest candidate benefiting from a Spreading Health scholarship. He represents Noi Community situated in Jakiri Sub division in The North West Region. He has 6 siblings all subsistence farmers. He is also the father of three children. He is head of the family and this responsibility sometimes interrupts his concentration on his studies, and was the major cause of his having to repeat level two. Oscar went to his family at Noi Visombo for a holiday. He also spent a couple of days working at the Noi health clinic.

Oscar's performance in school has improved greatly as can be seen from his second sequence results placing him in the 50th position out of 235 students.

Like the others Oscar is writing the third sequence exams before going for another internship for a month. Later Oscar will come back to school to rewrite courses that he failed during the course of the year.

Rebecca

Rebecca went on holidays to her family at Folap for two weeks. Like Oscar and Elvis she worked a couple of times in the health clinic at Folap. In Folap community there are more than 2,000 inhabitants. The community health centre receives an average of 10 patients daily. Though with limited infrastructure, the 1 nursing aider and 1 nurse assistant do their best to meet the health challenges of the community. Rebecca's services after training will greatly improve the health service in the community. The health centre also serves 5 neighboring

communities.

Rebecca's performance was good as she passed in 4 out of 6 courses. She was ranked on the 60th position.

The Capitol Students

Gladys

Gladys from Nwa community in Dona Mantung division has been very busy. With her fellow Capitol students, Gladys wrote her second sequence exams and immediately went on clinical internship from the 20th May to the 20th of June. The first sequence results are yet to be published.

Emmanuel

Emmanuel also wrote the second sequence exams. He is on internship in Babessi in Ngoketunjia Division about 90 km away from Bamenda, and will be back to school with the others by the 20th of June.

Assanah

Assanah has written her exams, and is presently in Bafut health clinic for the internship.

Immediately after their internship the Capitol students will start preparing to write their pre final exams from the 24th of June. Their graduation is tentatively planned for November.

Shisong Nursing School

Sister Nicoline

The Reverend Sister Nicoline who is being trained for Ako community at Shisong Nursing School has also been very busy. Her first sequence results were published and she passed in 6 out of 8 courses. This placed her in the 30th position out of 150 students.

Sister Nicoline is presently on clinical internship at the Shisong General Hospital in Bui Division, 108 km away from Bamenda. The program is very intensive with more emphasis laid on practical experience, so the students have already spent about three months on internship at the Hospital since the beginning of the year.

Sister Delphine

Sister Delphine is being trained for Ntasen community located in the outskirts of Bamenda town. She has also been working hard to build her skills in the nursing profession. Sister Delphine received her first results from the Shisong nursing school, and her brilliant performance placed her in 5th position. She promises to do better next time!

Sister Delphine is also on clinical internship with Sister Nicoline at Shisong General Hospital. and will continue to provide progress reports.

Community Visits to Graduates from St Jude

Ashiatsu (Limbo community)



SHUMAS describes their visit to the communities as the high point during this period's activities. They visited Limbo community where they met Ashiatsu who is working tirelessly for her people.

Ashiatsu directly assists the one State Registered Nurse who is the main nurse, and



who has had no rest until Ashiatsu's arrival.

Ashiatsu does consultations in the absence of the main nurse. She also works in the laboratory, administers drugs, conducts normal deliveries, and facilitates antenatal and infant clinics.

The people of Ashiatsu's community are impressed with her performance and hope she will work for a long time in their community.

Prior to her coming there were no consultations when the main nurse was absent, but now consultations can take place every day, and has risen from 30 patients to 40 monthly.

The major challenge Ashiatsu is facing is that the clinic lacks some basic equipment like a cooker to sterilize equipments, forceps and drugs.

Ethel (Faahkui community)

Ethel is equally very busy in Faahkui. Prior to her arrival in the community the clinic was operating out in the open, and because of the lack of a nurse the clinic was shut down. With Ethel's arrival the community bought a four room house where Ethel is presently carrying out minor consultations and administering prescription. She is assisted by one community nurse who conducts deliveries. Ethel receives 5 patients a day on average..



The health clinic has no laboratory and no pharmacy.



Like Ashiatsu, Ethel's major problem is lack of equipment. They only have a scale, a few forceps, a locally made delivery bed, and two other beds.

There is still a lot to be done to make her work effective. To try to resolve this problem SHUMAS held a meeting with the community health board to reflect on possible ways of raising income to buy the basic equipment. The community made a commitment to do this.

The impact of Ethel's work is none-the-less greatly felt, as minor illnesses and some emergencies can be handled within the community instead of going 2 km to the nearest health centre.

Seraphine (Buchi community)

Seraphine worked in her community for five months after her graduation. Due to a problem with the community she left the clinic last month. SHUMAS have arranged a meeting with representatives of the community and with Seraphine, to find a way of resolving the problem.

The new applications

The Spreading Health program is now well known in most of the communities that SHUMAS is working with. The number of new applications testifies to the need for efficient and effective health services. By the time of this report SHUMAS had received 30 applications from the communities around Cameroon. They planned to carry out interviews by the end of June.

Future plans

SHUMAS plan to hold a general meeting with all benefiting Spreading Health candidates in the first week of June. They will continue to receive and process applications of new candidates for the academic year 2011/2012. SHUMAS continue to monitor and report on candidates' activities in school and in their communities. They will meet with community representatives for the St Louis and Capitol students to remind them of the objective of the Spreading Health project and plan for the installation of candidates upon graduation in their various communities.

Dr Peter Hearn and wife Glynis, founders of Spreading Health, plan to visit Cameroon in November this year.

****Together we are SpreadingHealth****