

News Bulletin No 10: Spring 2012

In the latest of the SHUMAS *Spreading Health* progress reports (covering the period from December 2011 to February 2012) we learn more about the monthly monitoring meetings with eleven students in training, the graduation ceremony of students who completed the course in June 2011, students going on internship placements, and the continuing nursing activities from those nine who have already returned to work in their communities.

NURSES IN TRAINING

Currently we have 11 nurses on training, 8 State Registered Nurses (SRN), and 3 Nurse Assistants.

Elvis

School: Elvis is in his final year at St Louis Clinic and will complete his final examination (Higher Professional Diploma HPD) by May this year. In December Elvis was busy writing his Research proposal. His topic is on “the assessment of nurses’ knowledge and practice on wound management”. Elvis is currently on internship in Batibo Health District and collecting data for his research. From the correspondence between Elvis and SHUMAS we know that he is doing well.

Community: Back home there are four members of staff at Njeng community health clinic, one state registered nurse who is the main consulting nurse, one nurse assistant, one pharmacist, and one laboratory technician. Elvis will be joining the team in August. Njeng community has a population of more than 10,000 inhabitants, and the major problem is poor facilities and insufficient equipment. The main consulting nurse is working part time and many patients are still forced to move to the nearest Health Centre which is about 10 km away from Njeng.

Personal: Elvis is healthy and enthusiastic. He is hard working and has been elected by the community members as their Youth President. This has boosted his self esteem and he feels confident now.

Oscar

School: Oscar is also in his third and final year. His research proposal is on “the usage of treated Mosquito nets distributed by the Cameroon government in Limbe, in the South West Region of Cameroon”, and on the 28th of January Oscar travelled to Limbe to carry out a 4 weeks internship.

Community: Back in Oscar’s community health clinic there is only one nurse assistant who is unable to meet the health needs of the population. So everyone continues to move several kilometres to the nearest Hospital for health services. The entire community is looking forward to Oscar’s return in August. The Noi-visombo community clinic also has

serious problems of facilities and lack of equipment. These things could be put right if there was a good nurse to raise income from consultation. Oscar's return will therefore bring a big change in his community.

Personal: Being the head of the family, and the "bread winner" means that it has not been easy for Oscar to meet his own needs. Currently Oscar receives a small monthly allowance from *Spreading Health's* new hardship fund, which is helping him to provide for some of his personal needs.

Rebecca

School: Rebecca is another finalist and hopes to return to her community, Folap, in August. However Rebecca has had a problem completing courses at the St Louis Health institution and her fees were suspended. Since the beginning of January Rebecca has been attending her classes regularly and she wrote her first semester exams together with Elvis and Oscar. Rebecca is currently on Internship with Oscar in Limbe where they are both carrying out research on the same topic. As a result of this positive change since January, her fee has been paid.

Community: Folap is a well mobilised and hard working community. There are five members of staff, 1 nurse assistant who is the main consulting nurse, 2 auxiliary workers who have received in-service training, 1 pharmacist, and 1 laboratory technician, all paid by the community. Just like any other rural community health clinic they have the problem of insufficient health facilities and equipment. The community is counting on Rebecca to complete her training and improve their health situation.

Personal: Rebecca is in good health, and doing well.

Sister Nicoline

School: Sister Nicoline is in her second year, and is doing extremely well. In December she was busy with lessons and assignments. During the Christmas break she went to her community, Ako, where she was assisting in the clinic. During the month of January second year students wrote their continuous assessments, but the results are not out yet. Shisong Training School is situated close to one of the most renowned hospitals in Cameroon, Shisong Hospital, which serves as a practical training ground for nursing school students. From January 20th to February 20th, Sister Nicoline worked on the Female ward, where she carried out activities such as administering drugs, IV injections, Infusion, and wound dressings. She reports that she has gained lots of new skills.

Community: Ako community is one of the border communities to Nigeria. The community clinic has four members of staff comprising of 3 nurse assistants and 1 laboratory technician. During the Holidays Sister Nicoline spends most of her time assisting in the health clinic. Besides the problem of understaffing, the community faces problems of bad roads which make transportation of drugs to the health centre difficult. Thus raising the cost of drugs which many poor community members cannot afford. There is also the common problems of poor facilities and lack of some basic equipment.

Personal: All is well with Sister Nicoline. She lives in a convent with other nuns and is well taken care of.

Sister Delphine

School: Sister Delphine is in the same class as Sister Nicoline. She is also working very hard in school, and completed the continuous assessment test in January. She also spent 1 month in Shisong Hospital, but was working on the Surgical ward. During this internship she gained skills in patient care, wound dressing, pre and post operative care, and administering injections, including IVs. Sister Dephine feels the job is very challenging, but is determined to work harder.

Community: Back in Sister Delphine's community, Ntarsen, all is moving fairly well but for the lack of health staff to meet the huge population that flock to the clinic daily.

Personal: Sister Delphine is doing well and lives with Sister Nicoline and the other nuns.

Donald

School: Donald is one of the students who came in to the *Spreading Health* program this year at Level 2. During the month of December he was busy with continuous assessment up to the Christmas break. In January he went on community health studies in Ndop health district where he gained lots of practical skills on consultation, patient care, and pre and post operative care. Currently Donald is in School preparing to write the first semester exams coming up in March.

Community: Donald's community (Roh vitangtaa) clinic is managed by a nurse assistant and two support workers. His community has the common problem of insufficient equipment and poor facilities.

Personal: Donald is in good health and studying very hard. He is a dynamic person and in charge of social activities in his class.

Lawan

School: Lawan is an SRN student in Capitol. He is in his first year and is working very hard. Starting school in October 2011, Lawan was busy with intensive classes and continuous assessments until December. After the Christmas break he came back to school and started preparing for the first semester exams taking place in February. Currently he is on internship at General Hospital Bafoussam, the capital city of the West Region. The internship will end on the 24th of March.

Community: Lawan is from Dom community, which has a population of close to 15,000 inhabitants with no health clinic. Community members trek 30 km to the nearest health clinic. The community has started building a health clinic which will be complete before Lawan completes his course.

Personal: Lawan is doing well, is confident and hard working. He does photography during his free time to get some income and take care of his personal needs.

Aoudou

School: Aoudou is a Nursing Assistant student studying in Capitol Health Institute. He started school in October and completed his first semester exams in December. Immediately after the Christmas break he returned to school for a week to prepare for his internship which started on the 9th of January. This is in Mataka health centre in the west region of Cameroon. On the 16th of March Aoudou will be presenting his internship report in School with other students.

Community: Aoudou is from Njitapon community in the West Region of Cameroon. Njitapon community health clinic has three members of staff, 2 nurse assistants and one state registered nurse. The community population is estimated at 12,000 inhabitants. The health centre is operating in an incomplete structure with no lights, no water, and limited equipment.

Personal: Aoudou is working very hard to perfect his English skills. He feels coming to study in the English zone was very good because his community is a bilingual community and he will be able to attend to all patients without any language barrier.

Mabelle

School: Mabelle is in the same class as Aoudou, and is now on internship with him in Makate. From the verbal report she gave SHUMAS, we know that Mabelle is learning a lot from the internship and can now administer an injection, carry out patient care and administer drips.

Community: Mabelle is representing Manseng community in the West Region of Cameroon. It has a population of over 10,000 inhabitants. The health clinic has just two staff, 1 nurse assistant and one state registered nurse. Mabelle's community is very active and supports her with some of her needs in school.

Personal: Mabelle is a very jovial and dynamic person. With the support she receives from her community, she is able to concentrate on her studies without any major problem. She is doing well.

Innocent

School: Innocent is in the same class as Aoudou and Mabelle. He is on Internship in Ndop health district, and is gaining practical skills in administering injections, wound dressing, pre consultation examinations and patient care. He will be presenting the internship report on the 17th of March.

Community: Innocent's community is known as Amasi in the South West region of Cameroon. A very large community with more than 15,000 people. His community is one of the most remote communities benefiting from the *Spreading Health* program. The

community clinic presently has no health staff. The state registered nurse who was sent there in 2008 by the Cameroon Government resigned from her job because of the remoteness. Since then no nurse has been posted there. Community members trek 40 km to access health services in the nearest health centre. The community members are waiting for Innocent to complete his training and come to their aid.

Personal: Innocent is doing well and receives a lot of support from his community. He is very sociable and outgoing. He feels the health of his community is in his hands and is working hard to return and help his people.

Sidick

School: Sidick is one of the new students who came into the program this year. He is an SRN student in the first year studying in “complex prive de formation personnels medicaux santair in Garoua,” North Region of Cameroon. Since October Sidick has been busy with class work and continuous assessments. He went on internship on the 11th of January and will be back to school by the 1st of March. He reports that the internship is going well and he is gaining practical skills on consultations and patient care.

Community: Sidick is from Sao Goulfey community in the extreme north of Cameroon. His community is a moslem community with a population of more than 15,000 people. The community has just one health clinic which he is being trained for. Currently there are just 2 nurse assistants working at the health clinic. The Clinic also has insufficient equipment.

Personal: Sidick is well and working hard. His community members support him with food and money. He is committed to complete his studies and go back to his community.

The picture shows Peter and Glynis with SHUMAS' Director and project co-ordinator, with students from Capitol college. Cameroon, November 2011.



NURSES ALREADY WORKING IN COMMUNITIES

Currently we have 9 State Registered Nurses or Nurse Assistants already back working in their communities.

Havilah

Community: Havilah is a State Registered Nurse and very busy working in almost all the units at Lui oku. She does consultation, conducts deliveries, stitches wounds, administers injections. The number of patients now consulting at Lui health centre has increased tremendously since she started working there. From interviews with community members SHUMAS reports that they are very happy with her services and hope she stays there forever! Many people are now leaving neighbouring communities to come to Lui health centre for consultation.

Personal: Havilah officially graduated from St Louis in December. Some of her community members came to her graduation ceremony. Havilah has a very big responsibility. She is the bread winner of her family and responsible for the education of her younger siblings, although one of her younger brothers is benefiting from the SHUMAS Scholarship scheme. Havilah's salary has been slightly increased by the community health board, having seen the income she is generating in the health centre

Zuilaika

Community: Zuilaika's community is Ngendzend, located about 30 km from Kumbo town, the second main town in the North West Region of Cameroon. She is an SRN and is working hard in her community under the supervision of another SRN who was recently sent to the community by the government. Zuilaika's daily tasks involve patient care, conducting deliveries and ante-natal and infant welfare activities. The community members are happy with her services because she is reliable and punctual. With the presence of 2 state registered nurses and 3 nurse assistants, the five neighbouring communities all come to Ngehzeng community for health services.

Personal: The community is now giving her a small monthly salary which is helping to meet her personal needs. They hope to increase this with time.

Omer

Community: Back in the Bamdzeng community Omer is very busy. He works alone at the health clinic. He sees an average of 5 patients each day at the clinic, and is also involved in outreach programs, where he give health talks and consultations in some remote communities with no health centres. Omer's impact is widely felt and he feels satisfied with his job.

Personal: Omer is doing well. He receives a monthly salary. He is very motivated and determined to work for as long as possible. He needs to re-take his final exams this year, and is confident that he will make it. The picture shows Omer with Peter in Cameroon in November 2011.



Jolene

Community: Jolene's community (Kikaikelaki) is situated in Bui Division, in the North West Region, where Jolene is working hard to meet the health needs of her community members. Since December the number of patients has greatly increased. However for the past month she has been consulting only on Mondays and Wednesdays because the community is doing some painting work and installing some equipment at the newly constructed clinic. The childbirth section is also becoming operational and she conducted two deliveries last month.

Personal: At last month's community health board meeting they discussed Jolene's services. After some deliberations the board agreed to pay her a small salary which will be improved as increased income is generated at the health clinic. Jolene is also preparing to re-take the HPD exams.

Ethel

Community: Ethel is equally very busy in Faakui. Ethel was one of the first nursing assistants to return to her community. She is doing well and working with another community trained nurse. Ethel is focusing on consultations while the other nurse assists her in conducting deliveries. The community members are very supportive of her activities and recently bought some health equipment to facilitate her work. Ethel does minor consultations and refers serious cases to the nearby health clinics.

Personal: Ethel is doing well. She is very committed and feels she still needs some refresher courses to meet some challenges she is facing. The picture below shows Ethel with Peter in Cameroon in November 2011.



Ashiatu

Community: Ashiatu, just like Ethel, has been working now for close to eighteen months in Limbo community. She works with a dynamic SRN who has helped her through many things. She has gained a lot of experience and now does consultations with no supervision. She also carries out deliveries and patient care.

Personal: Ashiatu is doing well with her job, and with looking after her baby. Her community gives her a monthly allowance which is helping her to meet her personal needs and those of her child.

Emmanuel

Community: Emmanuel is one of the nurse assistants who returned to his community in August last year. He works under the supervision of an SRN, and has gained lots of new skills, and is gradually gaining confidence in his work. His colleagues and the community members are very supportive, and are happy with his services.

Personal: Emmanuel received his certificate from school in December at his graduation ceremony. Community members provided a party for him when he returned after the graduation Emmanuel is confident now, and hopes to continue to improve.

Assana

Community: Assana is an SRN and very busy in her community, Fosset. She works in all the clinic departments and has gained a lot of experience and now carries out consultation in the absence of the main nurse.

Personal: Assana was sick in December and could not participate in the graduation ceremony. However she came later and collected her certificate. Currently she is doing well and working very hard to serve her community. Assana receives a small salary from her community, but it is not commensurate to her activities.

Gladys

Community: Gladys is an SRN and back in her community, Nwa, working at the clinic. She works with two other nurses who are more experienced and are helping her. Gladys assists in patient care, conducting deliveries, circumcisions, and antenatal and infant welfare.

Personal: Gladys came for her graduation ceremony with her little baby girl, born immediately after she completed her training in August. Gladys received her medical equipment package from *Spreading Health* at the same time, and is very grateful to *Spreading Health* supporters.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Since December SHUMAS have held two meetings with all the nurses on training. In December Elvis led the group while Donald was the note taker. In January, Rebecca was the leader and Lawan was the note taker. The next meeting will be held on the 4th of March when some of the students are back from Internship. The leader facilitates the meeting, asking each student to give a report of his or her school activities, community situation, and personal activities. Everyone is invited to ask questions about these reports. SHUMAS representatives generally makes some comment, and advise the students on strategies to use in order to succeed. Non-attendance at meetings is always followed up by SHUMAS, and those who do attend are often given their transport costs.

NEW APPLICATIONS RECIEVED

During this period SHUMAS received five more applications, making a total of 10 applications so far. SHUMAS are carrying out community visits as part of the *Spreading Health* program, to give the opportunity for most needy communities to put candidates forward. Applications will continue until May, when SHUMAS will make a short list and set up the interviews.

CHALLENGES FACED DURING THIS PERIOD

The major challenge faced by SHUMAS was the poor communication network in Cameroon, making it difficult to get work progress reports from nurses in communities, and those students on internships. Many communities are located in areas where there is no communication network and sending a letter takes weeks, and sometimes months, to get a reply.

SHUMAS' PLAN FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS

- Monitoring of nurses on training, and in communities
- Community visits, and reception of applications
- Holding of monthly meetings with students
- Writing and submitting progress reports to *Spreading Health*
- Organising meeting with nurses in training to reflect on possible short term needs.

Peter and Glynis did return to Cameroon in November last year. They met many of the trained and training nurses and have put together a video of their experiences, which should be available soon. The photographs used in this Bulletin are from the recent trip.

A report of the Annual General Meeting held this month (March 2012) for *Spreading Health* trustees and supporters confirmed the success of the *Spreading Health* project.