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Himalayan Institute Cameroon
2009 – Annual Report



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2009 Milestones and Accomplishments

Over the course of 2009, Himalayan Institute Cameroon took great strides in serving Cameroon with its educational offerings, empowerment programs and services. Utilizing its fully established community center in Kumbo NW Cameroon, HI Cameroon put explicit emphasis on penetrating the core of key issues in the province such as:

1. Health Care
2. Education
3. Micro Enterprise
4. Vocational Training
5. Environmental Regeneration

Through the centers programs and events, HI Cameroon was able to deliver both personal and group attention to tens of thousands within the region. Community awareness was a major theme throughout the year both in conveying the Institutes message, but also by observing and utilizing the valuable input from the community.

Operations

- Organizational changes were made to increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the centers operations.
- Cross training was completed to help accommodate broader staffing changes and to expand the competencies of all staff.
- Spending caps were put into place to help reduce foreign funding needs.
- HI Cameroon vehicles caused major set backs and expense throughout the year and plans have been made to repair and sell both vehicles. A replacement vehicle has been purchased which is locally repairable and suitable for the driving conditions.

Financial

- Strengthened accounting systems and increased efficiency by developing various procedures for budgeting, expense tracking and reporting.
- Substantial changes have been made to the banking system in order to better safeguard HI Cameroon funding.

Public Relations

- HI Cameroon president has been positively leading relationship building and networking throughout Cameroon.
- In addition to increasing the HI Cameroon retail centers, exposure has been made through the use of local publications, radio commercials, monthly newsletters and community appearances.



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- Several high level relationships have been made including the current prime minister of Cameroon, a member of parliament and mayors and divisional officers of division within the NW province.
- Presentations have been made at several meeting groups in the NW including the Capital city.

Total Health Centers

- Aside from the main health center located at the HI Cameroon community center, two additional centers have been opened in nearby villages. All centers are providing free health consultations.
- All three centers are situated in strategic locations and are positioned as HI Cameroon branch centers, which allow exposure to every aspect of the Community Centers offerings.
- A Total Health Mobile Units has been created which is a health center on wheels and has expanded the reach of the HI Cameroon and made affordable health services available to far away villages.
- HI Cameroon estimates that 15,000 – 30,000 people per year can be served between the 3 branch centers and the Mobile Unit.
- Free Yoga Classes and public health outreach was provided throughout the year and is planned to increase in 2010.

Energy Farming Academy

- Began demonstration and cultivation of food crops, herbal crops, oil crops and environmentally rejuvenating tree species on its 50 acre training plot in Kishong Village.
- Honey production is underway using Kenya top bar hives along side 135 planted bee loving trees.
- A well with an electric pump and storage facility was constructed to accommodate irrigation needs on the land and as a source for free clean water to the community.
- Our Tobin Campus has developed a demonstration garden that mirrors the activities happening at Kishong.
- A small-scale production room was created for basic processing of Energy Farming herbs into medicinal products for use in the Total Health Center.

School of Carpentry and Construction

- After receiving a shipping container full of carpentry equipment, a fully functional training facility and workshop has been opened.
- This state of the art facility completed two 10 week long training courses in advanced carpentry methods.
- One which was conducted as a service to local government tech schools to train their teachers.
- Another training was taught as a vocational training course to local carpenters. 3 of which work at the C&C to staff the school.



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- Mini workshops and weekend courses have also been created.
- Several microenterprises have been created to support the HI Cameroon community center with revenue generation as well as provide a service to the community, including:
 - i. Service Programs
 - ii. Furniture enterprises
 - iii. Specialty construction services
 - iv. Cement block enterprises

Sacred Link Jewelry

- Started offering trainings to women's empowerment groups throughout the NW province. This model is great for outreach, significant revenue generation and by training local women in the philosophy, technical and business aspects of Sacred Link Jewelry, this creates jobs for many women throughout the region.
- Sacred Link Jewelry is also well established and ready to take orders for delivery to the USA for sale in its Humanitarian Trade product line.

Kumbo Public Library

- After several power struggles, the HI Cameroon and the Honesdale Rotary Club have independently launched the Kumbo Public Library.
- This will make great use of the space in the HI Cameroon main campus, previously known as the "main hall". This library will also increase general traffic to the community center.
- This purely charitable project will allow the HI Cameroon to be recognized as a leader in the community for promoting education and literacy within the community.
- The library will have quiet reading areas, a children's corner, a textbook area, and computer work stations for typing and Wikipedia referencing.
- This library will offer literacy classes and afterschool programs.

Educational Activities

- The annual Scholarship program in 2009 was able to support the schooling of 48 Kumbo children.
- The HI Cameroon "Book for schools" program delivered hundred of books to less than fortunate schools.
- Literacy outreach efforts and programs.



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Program Overviews

1. Total Health Center
2. Energy Farming Academy
3. Center for Carpentry & Construction
4. Sacred Link Jewelry
5. Kumbo Public Library



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Total Health Center Program Overview

The Himalayan Institute Total Health Center in Cameroon pioneers access to holistic, preventative healthcare, providing a range of custom-tailored natural health products, and public health education and outreach. These health services are aimed at a core set of the most prevalent health issues, including digestive tract issues, joint pain and arthritis, cough and cold, fever, blood sugar problems, anxiety and depression. Locally staffed by trained Total Health Consultants, each center distributes nutritional supplements as well as herbal products based on Ayurveda and homeopathy. In addition, the center offers community health services such as educational programs about diet, exercise, hygiene, and public health issues.





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Training Total Health Consultants

In May 2008, twelve students were chosen to take a six-week Total Health training program covering the Total Health philosophy with a strong emphasis on hands-on experience in basic public health education and dispensary services. The training curriculum was developed by the Institute's team of medical and holistic health practitioners. Five custom herbal formulations and a once-daily multivitamin have been created by the Himalayan Institute especially for the Total Health Center. In addition, about 50 homeopathic remedies were chosen for the conditions observed in Cameroon. Upon completion of the training program, all twelve students became certified Total Health consultants. They now run the Total Health branch centers and several consult patients and distribute remedies through their own micro-enterprises.

Branch Centers



There are three Total Health Branch Centers in Cameroon staffed by members of the inaugural Total Health consultant training program. Each branch center is equipped with a private consultation room and a pharmacy. Community members go to the branch centers



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to receive health consultations and to purchase herbs and homeopathic remedies. The Total Health Centers advocate preventive health techniques, which are much less expensive than costly trips to the hospital. Free yoga classes, offered at the branch centers on Saturdays, help to teach the community even more ways to bring long lasting health and vitality to the body.

Mobile Health Unit

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon is bringing affordable health solutions to more and more communities every week with its Total Health mobile unit. The mobile unit team is made up of three members: a trained Total Health consultant, a Total Health pharmacist, and a public relations specialist. Each week they drive to a new community with a van full of medicinal herbs, vitamin supplements, Neti Wash Neti Pots, New Vision reading glasses, homeopathic remedies and a host of other natural health products.



A temporary Total Health Center is set up alongside the van, complete with a private consultation room and benches for the waiting patients. The back of the van becomes the pharmacy where patients go to fill their prescriptions. Each time that the Total Health Center mobile unit visits a community, 100 – 200 free consultations are given.

The HI Cameroon's Total Health Center believes that preventative medicine is the best way to bring affordable, sustainable healthcare to the people of Cameroon. And by putting the



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center on wheels, the HIC is reaching smaller, more isolated villages and is serving an ever broadening population.



Total Health Mobile Unit Expands Its Reach

In the Northwest Region of Cameroon, most of the roads are still unpaved and in the rainy season these dirt roads turn into slippery mud-rivers. Without a rugged vehicle, travel can be dangerous or simply impossible.



A small car gets stuck in the mud on a typical road in NW Cameroon.



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For the Total Health Mobile Unit, being able to reach remote villages is sometimes the most challenging part of the job. The original mobile unit vehicle was a rear wheel drive GM van. The large van is perfect for city events, but had a hard time in the mud. To remedy this problem, HIC Managing Director Jeff Abella and General Manager Bannyuy Justine travelled to Douala to secure a more versatile vehicle.

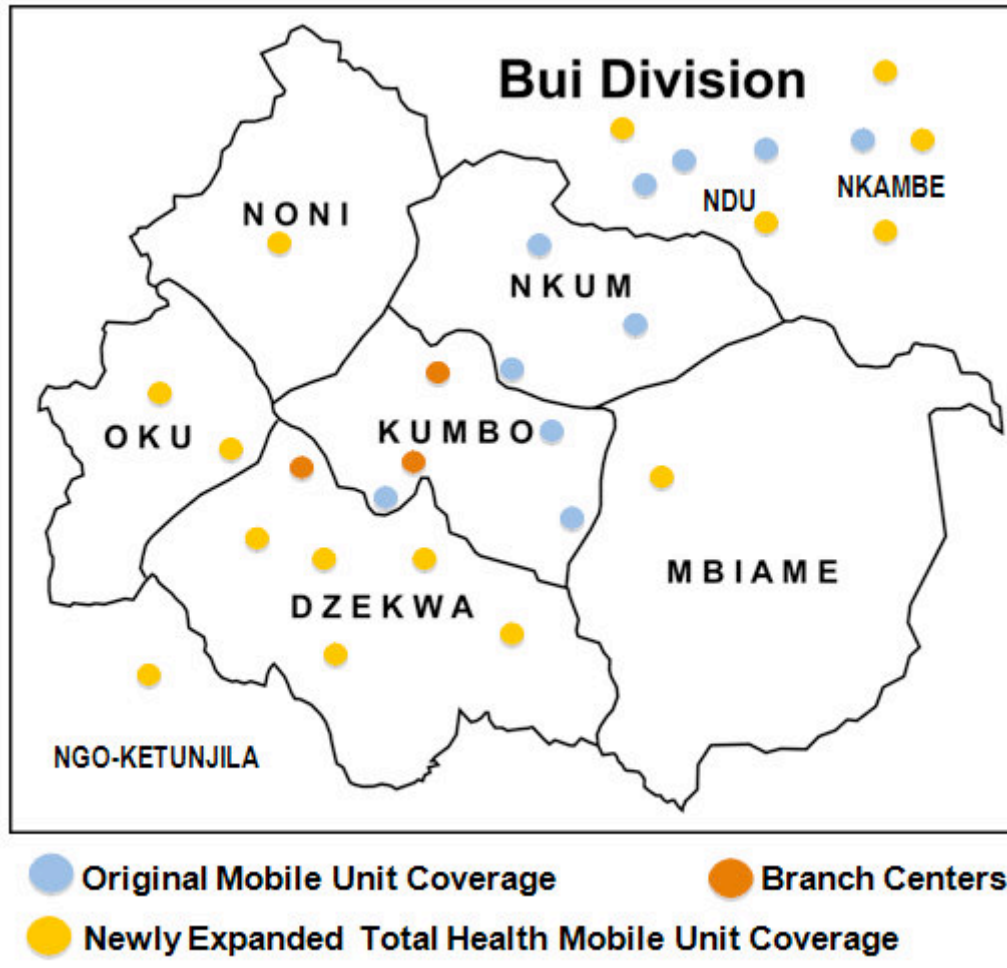


Jeff Abella and Bannyuy Justine with the new Total Health Mobile Unit truck, a Toyota Hilux.

Thanks to generous contributions provided by several HI project supporters, this four-wheel drive Toyota Hilux will allow the Mobile Unit to reach more villages than ever before. The Hilux has a reputation for being an “Indestructible Car” and can exceed 300,000 miles with regular maintenance. ([Wikipedia](#)) With this new car, the muddy roads of the rainy season will be no obstacle for the mobile unit.



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In 2009, the Himalayan Institute Cameroon Total Health Centers and Mobile Unit served over 40,000 people. Now that the mobile unit is expanding to more villages, even more people will have access to affordable health care. “The local feedback is motivation enough,” says THC consultant Laisin Wirngo. “When we return to a community and are flooded with positive results, I feel like I have done my job.”

Himalayan Institute Total Health Program

The Himalayan Institute’s Total Health Program is creating global solutions to health problems in rural communities by using a holistic approach. Chosen candidates for the program receive an in depth training in anatomy and physiology, Ayurveda, homeopathy, hygiene and sanitation, diet and nutrition, yoga therapy, dental hygiene, eye care, public health, and micro business and sales. After completing the program, these trained Total



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Health Consultants are able to use their education to work as independent health consultants, work in Himalayan Institute Total Health Centers and operate the Himalayan Institute Mobile Health Unit.

Click the image below to watch a video about the Total Health Program and interviews with THC Consultants.

Yoga for Nurses

As part of its ongoing community outreach, the Himalayan Institute Cameroon is now working with a local hospital to teach nurses practical yoga techniques. Juliette Fai, a teacher at the Shisong Nurses School, invited yoga instructor and HIC volunteer John Daskovsky to come teach in her Alternative Medicine class. Fifty nursing students in their final year of school were in attendance for the class.



The class learns some basic Joints and Glands exercises—excellent for stimulating the cardiovascular and lymphatic systems.

After beginning outside with some simple warm-up exercises and stretches, the class moved indoors to discuss how these same exercises could be modified for bed-ridden patients. Bringing movement and increased circulation to bed-ridden patients was a primary focus of the class, and so, a few self-massage methods were taught to supplement the Joints and Glands exercises.



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Kegel exercises, the abdominal squeeze, and Agni Sara were taught as a means of improving digestion and increasing energy. After pregnancy, many women have a difficult time bringing strength back to their abdomens. The nurses in the class were excited to learn new exercises to increase strength and burn fat.



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Next, the class brought its focus to breath techniques and exercises. Several exercises were taught to identify the difference between diaphragmatic and chest breathing. Students experimented with crocodile pose to better feel the movement of their diaphragms and to strengthen their diaphragmatic breathing. After practicing diaphragmatic breathing, alternate nostril breathing was introduced as a way to calm the nervous system, and bring health and balance to the body. To help support these practices, HIC volunteer Amanda Masters demonstrated the use of the [Neti Wash Neti Pot](#). Congestion is a year-round problem in Cameroon caused by the dust of the dry season and the cold and wetness of the rainy season, so the nurses were thrilled to learn a safe and inexpensive method for cleaning their noses.



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Students practice alternate nostril breathing.

The class concluded with a guided relaxation. The nurses hope to use this guided relaxation exercise to help patients relieve stress and to give rest to patients who are having trouble sleeping.



HIC volunteer John Daskovsky presents yoga books to class instructor Juliette Fai.

The HIC donated several copies of the books [Yoga: Mastering the Basics](#) and [Exercises for Joints and Glands](#) to the nursing school's library. Nurses at the school will be able to use these books as references to further their own study of yoga and to teach the exercises to



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patients. Collaboration with hospitals and nursing schools is a new way that the HIC is working to bring affordable holistic medicine to the people of Cameroon.



New Vision for Rural Communities

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon has unveiled a new rural empowerment project called New Vision. The goal of the project is to bring affordable reading glasses to the rural communities of Cameroon and at the same time create jobs for the people selling the glasses. Reading glasses are hard to come by in Cameroon and the ones that are available are often too expensive for the average person to buy. When elderly members of the community begin to lose their vision, there is nothing to be done. Even worse, tailors and seamstresses lose their livelihoods when their vision starts to weaken. The New Vision program is providing a remedy to this problem.



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A customer tries on a pair of New Vision glasses at the Himalayan Institute Total Health Center in Jakiri.

Classes are already underway to train several New Vision consultants. The class covers the biology of the eye, how to diagnose eye and vision problems, and how to run a successful small business. Topics such as financial planning, making appointments, and customer service are all covered to ensure that each New Vision consultant has all of the skills necessary to create and sustain their own small business. Upon successful completion of the course, consultants are eligible for a micro-loan to get their business started.



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New Vision consultants practice giving eye examinations at the HIC.

The HIC selects consultants that come from many different areas of Kumbo and the surrounding villages. As more consultants are trained, more self-sustaining jobs are created and more communities in Cameroon will have access to reading glasses.



The first graduating class of the New Vision training course.



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Yoga for Kumbo's Kids

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon offers free yoga classes every Saturday morning to the people of Kumbo. Special classes for kids have drawn large groups with students ranging from toddlers to high-school age.



Even the youngest member of the class enjoys a forward bend.

“I was surprised at how much muscle tightness there is in the young people of this community,” said HIC volunteer and class instructor John Daskovsky. “In Kumbo, almost every family has a farm and the children help with the farm work from a very young age. It’s hard work, so many children develop strong but stiff muscles.” To remedy this problem, the HIC is teaching kids some basic and fun techniques for keeping their muscles loose and flexible.



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HIC volunteer Amanda Masters practices the Whirling Dervish with elementary school aged students. The class incorporates fun exercises such as this to help hold the attention of younger participants.

In addition to working on flexibility, the class also focuses on relaxation. Most kids go to school, have household chores, and work at their parents' farm or shop, which is a lot of responsibility for young people and can be the cause of stress. To help address this problem, each class begins with a centering exercise and ends with a guided relaxation. For many of the students — like so many yoga practitioners around the world — the relaxation is their favorite part. By teaching fun and relaxing health techniques, the HIC is working to cultivate a generation with healthy bodies and clear minds.





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Total Health Center Goes Mobile

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon is bringing affordable health solutions to more and more communities every week with its new Total Health mobile unit. The mobile unit team is made up of three members: a trained Total Health consultant, a Total Health pharmacist, and a public relations specialist. Each week they drive to a new community with a van full of medicinal herbs, vitamin supplements, Neti Wash Neti Pots, New Vision reading glasses, homeopathic remedies and a host of other natural health products.



A woman from the village of Tatum is tested for a pair of New Vision reading glasses.

A temporary Total Health Center is set up alongside the van, complete with a private consultation room and benches for the waiting patients. The back of the van becomes the pharmacy where patients go to fill their prescriptions. Through loudspeakers, the public relations specialist announces the arrival of the Total Health Center to the people of the market place, "Attention, attention, attention! Come and receive a free health consultation



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from a trained Himalayan Institute Total Health Consultant.” Each time that the Total Health Center mobile unit visits a community, 100 – 200 free consultations are given.



People wait on benches outside of the consultation room.

Little by little, in each community that the mobile unit visits, a crowd begins to form. Mothers bring their children, the elderly walk over arm in arm, and many others, old and young alike, find their way to the waiting benches. For many, going to the hospital to seek medical attention is too expensive, so a mobile health center coming to their market place is a rare opportunity to seek medical help before their condition gets too serious.



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Total Health consultant Laisin Wirngo consults with a mother and her son.

The HIC's Total Health Center believes that preventative medicine is the best way to bring affordable, sustainable healthcare to the people of Cameroon. And by putting the center on wheels, the HIC is reaching smaller, more isolated villages and is serving an ever broadening population.





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Growing Medicine

Together, the School of Energy Farming and the Total Health Center are bringing the healing benefits of medicinal herbs to the people of Kumbo. Energy Farming has expanded its cultivation of medicinal herbs to include turmeric, brahmi, calendula, echinacea, isabgol (psyllium), and ashwagandha. Once harvested, these herbs are processed into teas, ointments and medicinal honey, and dispensed through the Total Health Center.



A water-loving plant, the recently resumed rains have turned the brahmi beds into lush carpets. The entire plant is processed into a tea that supports memory, mental clarity and general bodily health.

April 16 marked the first harvest of turmeric grown in the Energy Farming demonstration garden. With a few set aside for replanting, the unearthed rhizomes were soaked and rinsed, then cured in boiling water. They were then sliced and dried in a dehydrator.



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Harvested turmeric is cured in boiling water over a fire. Turmeric is a root in the ginger family characterized by its deep yellow color and is familiar to many people from Indian cooking.

The dried, ground turmeric will be offered as a tea, for use in treating cataracts, joint and muscle pain, and disorders of the immune system. It is also a main component in the Total Health Center's Medicinal Honey, which is made using locally produced honey.



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HIC volunteer Amanda Masters prepares cured turmeric for the dehydrator.

By utilizing the high quality, organic herbs grown right in the gardens of the HIC, this collaboration between Energy Farming and the Total Health Center makes the HIC more self-reliant and less dependent on the importation of foreign medicine. Most importantly, a broad number of ailments can be treated using these low-cost, sustainably produced plants, affording a greater number of people the better health that they deserve.



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Calendula flowers are made into a soothing ointment that heals skin irritations, rashes and burns.

Jakiri Total Health Center Grand Opening

Jakiri is a small town about 45 minutes away from Kumbo. Jakiri does not have a hospital of its own, so the town's people must travel to Kumbo for treatment. Because the taxi ride to Kumbo is expensive, people often do not seek healthcare until it is an emergency. The Himalayan Institute is hoping to change this trend.





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On Saturday, the new Himalayan Institute Jakiri Total Health Center opened its doors. The center was greeted with a flood of community support and excitement. On the very first day Total Health consultants Isabella and Anita saw 110 new patients. Many more people also came in to see the new center and browse the shelves of books, health products, and Humanitarian trAID merchandise.



As the day went on a crowd formed. People piled into the store while others waited outside under the tent.

The Jakiri Total Health Center offers a wide range of new medicinal options for the people of Jakiri and stresses the importance of preventative care. The Total Health consultants have been trained to prescribe homeopathic remedies and herbal supplements to treat a wide range of ailments. By employing health consultants and offering inexpensive healthcare, the Total Health Center model is able to provide a sustainable solution to the healthcare problem.



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Some new products had their debut at the grand opening. The Himalayan Institute Energy Farming program unveiled its new Brahmi Tea, which was grown, harvested and processed at the Himalayan Institute Center in Kumbo. Bramhi is an ayurvedic herb that is used for mental clarity, reducing stress, and improving memory. In addition, the Himalayan Institute's New Vision program revealed its affordable reading glasses for the first time. Reading glasses are often unavailable or too expensive for most people, so New Vision gives many a chance to reclaim their ability to read.



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A tailor was tested for a set of New Vision glasses. He said, “As I am getting older it is more difficult to see my work, but these glasses will take care of that!”

The success of new Total Health Centers, like the one in Jakiri, will enable the Himalayan Institute to continue to expand its reach, bringing affordable healthcare around the world.

Yoga at the Palace

Continuing with the HIC Total Health Center’s Yoga Month, a free yoga class was held at the Fon’s Palace last Saturday.



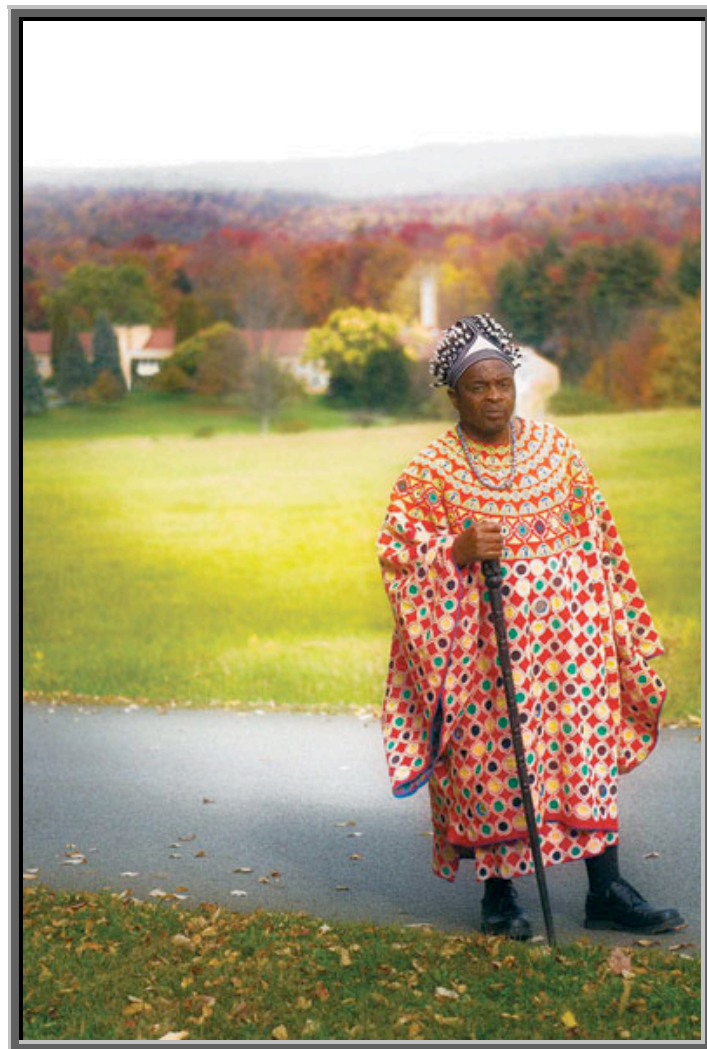
HIC volunteer John Daskovsky leads the class in some rousing knee raises.



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Fon Sehm Mbinglo I, traditional ruler of the Nso Kingdom in which Kumbo lies, invited the Himalayan Institute Cameroon to hold a class at his palace in the spirit of a years long relationship between His Majesty and the HIC. From the Himalayan Institute's first visit to Cameroon, the Fon has been helpful in assisting the HIC connect with needed resources and has provided visible support for the center's projects.

In October 2008, the Himalayan Institute in Honesdale, PA was pleased to host the Fon for a memorable visit that included the Fon's first hatha yoga classes. He left Honesdale eager to continue his own yoga study and to promote its practice for good health among the people of Kumbo.



On Saturday the Fon joined staff and volunteers from the HIC and over 30 members of the public for a yoga class held outside in a courtyard at the palace. Laughter abounded as class members, most of whom had no previous knowledge of yoga, learned and practiced poses selected for their strengthening and relaxing benefits, as well as for their enjoyment.



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Yoga class members cultivate balance—and smiles—with Eagle Pose.

As leaders in the community, the Fon and the HIC will continue to work together to promote health and happiness in Kumbo and surrounding communities.

Yoga Class at Mbveh Center



As one of its ongoing community services, the HIC Total Health Center offers a free yoga class each Saturday morning. March is the HIC's Yoga Month, featuring yoga classes in different locations throughout Kumbo, in addition to the weekly class at the main campus in Tobin. This week HIC volunteer Jeff Abella led a class on the rooftop of the building that houses the HIC Mbveh center. Nine community members attended this class, stretching tight muscles, increasing flexibility, and practicing techniques for reducing stress against the



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beautiful background of Kumbo's rolling hills. The Total Health Center continuously works to find new means, such as these free yoga classes, to teach natural, preventative health techniques to the surrounding community.



Mbveh Health Center Grand Opening

After a week of renovation, the Himalayan Institute Cameroon opened its first branch center in Mbveh, revealing a freshly painted building stocked with herbal medicine, homeopathy, Neti Wash Neti Pots, Sacred Link Jewelry, and Humanitarian trAID products.



John Daskovsky, Chelsea Abella, and Rylan Grady hang the sign for the new Mbveh Center

The Grand Opening fell on Kaavi, which is LamNso for 'market-day'. As on all Kaavis, the market was full of people shopping for fresh produce and other household needs. Ntani Divine, HIC's Program Coordinator, spoke into the sound system and addressed the crowd, "Attention, attention, attention! The Himalayan Institute Cameroon is now opening a center here in Mbveh. Come and receive a free health consultation and find out what the HIC is all about."



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Customers swarm the pharmacy counter to sign up for Health Consultations

For many, this was a first encounter with the HIC and the work that it is doing in Cameroon. Dozens of curious people came up the steps to the new center to see what was going on. They were greeted by the smiling faces of the local HIC staff, an invitation to receive a free health consultation, and a brochure about the upcoming events that the HIC will be hosting. Through public events, seminars and conferences the HIC has been able to provide the local community with new techniques for self-empowerment. Constantine, 34, said, "So many times I had walked by my neighbor, the Himalayan Institute, but I had never gone inside. When I was at market today I heard these announcements and I recognized the Institute. I thought it was a good opportunity to see what was really happening. I now understand what kind of impact they are having in my community."





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Trained Total Health Consultant Vershiyi sees a patient

During the course of the day, 85 new patients were seen by Total Health Center consultants Vershiyi and Eucharia. One soccer player waiting in line for a Total Health consultation said, “For many months now, I have had this pain in my back. I am hearing that the Himalayan is very strong at treating this, so really it is like a dream come true.” Besides receiving medicine to help his back pain, he has also been invited to attend the free yoga classes offered every Saturday at the HIC.



A Kumbo motorcycle taxi driver eyes a piece of Sacred Link Jewelry

The Grand Opening was a huge success, not only because of the large turnout and sensitization, but also because the entire HIC staff showed how well they are able to work together. Security guards were passing out fliers; the Groundskeepers were showing people around the center; and everyone was smiling and welcoming the new guests. It is this team that has proven again and again that the HIC has a great capacity for self-reliance, creativity, and positive change in the Kumbo community.



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Energy Farming Academy

Program Overview

Energy Farming ideologically means ‘Cultivating the limitless potential that lies dormant in our soil, environment, and society. We Base our principles around sustainable farming, land management, and crop diversification and incorporate organic farming techniques. By utilizing organic agriculture and land management techniques, the land and the jobs that depend on that land can be sustained. Energy Farming methodology is also applicable to food, medicinal, aromatic, and cash crops, and its holistic approach increases crop productivity, decreases cost of cultivation, and offers environmental regeneration.





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Energy Farming Service Program

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon has received three new tractors. Local farmers can access this equipment through a service rental program, which will allow them to more easily till, plow and irrigate their fields.



By bringing new agricultural tools and methods to Kumbo, the School of Energy Farming is giving farmers the opportunity to cultivate more land with greater ease. In most parts of Cameroon, fields lay barren during the dry season, but with this introduction of irrigation equipment, local farmers will have the means to extend the growing season. With access to these tools and services, farmers will be better able to provide a sustainable crop yield and income for their families.



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Demonstration Plot and Well in Kishong, Cameroon

In the rural village of Kishong, the School of Energy Farming has installed a deep well, which holds water throughout the dry season, even when the water table is at its lowest. Most importantly, because of its depth, the water will be clean and suitable for drinking.





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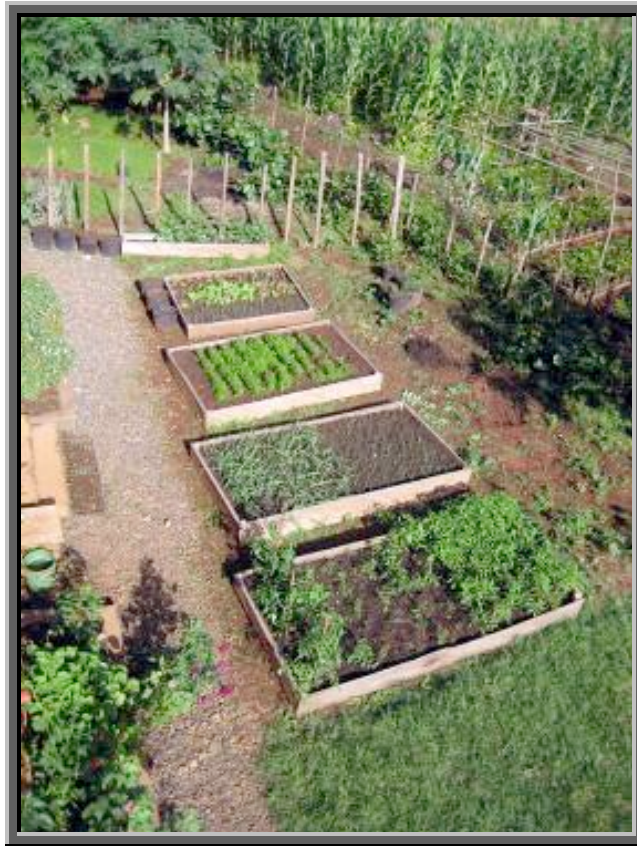
Water from the well will be used to irrigate the Energy Farming demonstration plot, where biofuel, medicinal crops, food crops and bee loving tree species are grown. In addition, the well will supply a water tap installed at the edge of HIC property along the main road through Kishong Village. This public tap will provide the villagers with a reliable and clean water source, all year round. And with this water, the people of Kishong can regain time and energy previously spent traveling to fetch river water, and regain the health and quality of life that suffers so during the dry season.

Demonstration Plot in Kumbo, Cameroon

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon center in Kumbo has a demonstration garden in its own backyard. Community members are welcome to tour the gardens where Energy Farming techniques such as composting, raised-bed gardening, intercropping, rain water harvesting and live fencing are used to grow biofuel, medicinal, and food crops. In the center of Kumbo, this demonstration farm gives the local farmers an opportunity to learn different techniques and how to put them in to practice.



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Alleviating Water Scarcity in Jakiri

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon with support from the [Buffalo Arts Studio](#) has been working to address water scarcity in rural Cameroon. November to April is the dry season in northern Cameroon – 6 months with hardly any rainfall. During this time, rivers dry up, municipal water sources are rationed, and village people are forced to travel further and further each day in order to get a bucket of water. Often, water sources during this time become dirty and disease ridden due to overuse and increased traffic. Wells provide year-round water that is clean and more readily accessible.



The HIC School of Energy Farming is currently finishing construction on a [well and irrigation pipeline in Kishong](#) and preparations are underway to install another well in the nearby town of Jakiri. Jakiri is home to roughly 100,000 people, all of whom must suffer through challenging circumstances during the dry season of Cameroon. It is not uncommon for the people of Jakiri to pass 2 or 3 months without municipal water, instead being forced to travel for miles to carry water from unclean streams.



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To ensure that the well will be protected, maintained and always available to the public, HIC is partnering with local ruler [Fon Sehm Mbinglo I](#). The well will be constructed on the grounds of the Fon's palace in Jakiri, a site that is centrally located and accessible to all.





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In a town where water is precious and clean drinking water is virtually unavailable for half of the year, a free, permanent water source will make a tremendous difference in the health and quality of life for the people of Jakiri.

Raised Bed Gardening To Teach From and Eat From

Many of the stories about the HIC feature public outreach endeavors and service programs, but some efforts have also gone toward making the HIC more self-sufficient internally while at the same time providing education. This spring a portion of the backyard was converted to a raised bed garden for growing organic spices and vegetables for use in the residential and staff kitchen. Residents and HIC staff worked together to build the garden frames, haul dirt and manure, and plant the beds with local and imported seeds. The first planting included a variety of lettuces, onions, garlic, carrots, hot and green peppers, cucumber, watermelon, heirloom tomatoes and green spices such as cilantro, thyme, rosemary and dill.



In addition to providing HIC residents and staff with a variety of delicious and interesting herbs and vegetables to supplement what is locally available, the garden also serves as a good demonstration in organic gardening principles. Chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides are in heavy use in Cameroon, a practice that degrades soil quality and consumes a large percentage of the average family's earnings. Most farmers plant the same crops each



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season, so the garden also suggests some methods for using crop rotation and companion planting to benefit the whole farm ecosystem.

The raised bed concept, also known as the French Intensive Method, is based on the efficient use of space and resources to meet the needs of plants without requiring a large amount of inputs. This style of gardening is particularly advantageous to gardeners with limited space, as the added depth of the bed enables plants to flourish at a greater density than in traditional gardening: roots have room to grow straight down to access soil nutrients, rather than spreading out. The soil in the raised bed is less compact, allowing for increased oxygen availability to roots and improved drainage, an important benefit in Cameroon where plants like tomatoes suffer from blight during the heavy rains of the wet season. During the dry season, the close proximity of the plants helps to shade the soil, keeping the surface temperature lower and reducing evaporation.





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The beds were filled with a base layer of dirt collected from piles along the roadsides that were recently turned up by road grading machinery. The upper part of the beds were filled with a mixture of cow manure and fertile compost from the compost pile.

The beds were designed with a consideration for the principle of companion planting—grouping plants that are beneficial to each other. A large planting of garlic will hopefully provide some deterrent to insects, and intercropping with onions will enhance the flavor of the onions. A border of hot peppers will discourage pests from attacking the carrots. Further pest treatment that may be required will be carried out organically, using homemade sprays from honey soap, garlic and hot peppers.

Over time, the crops planted in each bed will continuously be rotated and replaced, alternating between crops that deplete the soil and crops that nourish the soil and early-harvest crops with late-harvest crops.

As the garden continues to provide for the HIC kitchen, it will also serve as a teaching tool for the local community.

Energy Farming Expo:

The arrival of three new tractors was a cause for celebration at the HIC and will be a great help for local farmers in Cameroon's Bui Division. The modern equipment will be available to farmers through a service rental program, which will allow them to till, plow and irrigate their fields.

During a public expo hosted by the HIC School of Energy Farming, farmers from as far as two hours away viewed the new equipment, saw different tractor attachments in action in the HIC garden, and learned about how the service rental program can assist their own cultivation. They also received a tour of the Energy Farming Demonstration Garden and viewed a display about the new line of medicinal teas, developed through a collaboration between the School of Energy Farming and the HIC Total Health Center.

By bringing new agricultural tools and methods to Kumbo, the School of Energy Farming is giving farmers the opportunity to cultivate more land with greater ease. In most parts of Cameroon, fields lay barren during the dry season, but with this introduction of irrigation equipment, local farmers will have the means to extend the growing season. With access to these tools and services, farmers will be better able to provide a sustainable crop yield and income for their families.



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Growing Medicine

Together, the School of Energy Farming and the Total Health Center are bringing the healing benefits of medicinal herbs to the people of Kumbo. Energy Farming has expanded its cultivation of medicinal herbs to include turmeric, brahmi, calendula, echinacea, isabgol (psyllium), ashwagandha and honey. Once harvested, these herbs are processed into teas, ointments and medicinal honey, and dispensed through the Total Health Center.



A water-loving plant, the recently resumed rains have turned the brahmi beds into lush carpets. The entire plant is processed into a tea that supports memory, mental clarity and general bodily health.

April 16 marked the first harvest of turmeric grown in the Energy Farming demonstration garden. With a few set aside for replanting, the unearthed rhizomes were soaked and rinsed, then cured in boiling water. They were then sliced and dried in a dehydrator.

By utilizing the high quality, organic herbs grown right in the gardens of the HIC, this collaboration between Energy Farming and the Total Health Center makes the HIC more self-reliant and less dependent on the importation of foreign medicine. Most importantly, a broad number of ailments can be treated using these low-cost, sustainably produced plants, affording a greater number of people the better health that they deserve.

Irrigation in Kishong Village:

The site for the Energy Farming project in Kishong is beautiful: a large hill leads down to a stream, which runs along the base of the land. The dry season leaves this area without water for 6 months at a time, so without irrigation the growing season is limited to only half of the



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year. However, over the past few months, plans to irrigate the land have begun to take shape.

Irrigation infrastructure will enable the Energy Farming School to do proper nursery and crop multiplication as well as provide water for its demonstration facilities. One possible method for irrigation would involve digging a well at the base of the land and then pumping the water up to tanks, which would be located at the top of the hill. From there gravity would do all the work, piping the water to sprinklers across the land.

An added advantage to this proposal is that the well would provide a fresh source of water to the people of that rural community who often have to travel to get water during the dry season. Last week, preliminary measurements were made in Kishong to decide the location for the well and pump system.

A Well and Irrigation for Kishong

One of the most exciting projects that the HIC School of Energy Farming is working on is the installation of a water system on HIC land in Kishong Village. Most of the roughly 35,000 residents of Kishong have access to municipal water in their homes or from a small number of public taps. However, during the dry season, which lasts from November to March, these taps are frequently turned off to ration dwindling water supplies. Because of its rural status, Kishong Village suffers from the most severe rationing and villagers are forced to haul water from nearby streams. The incidence of diseases related to poor hygiene, water-borne microbes, dehydration and malnutrition greatly increases during the months that villagers must harvest unclean water for themselves.

The School of Energy Farming with support from the [Buffalo Arts Studio](#) has been working with a rural engineer to install a deep well on HIC land, which will hold water throughout the dry season, even when the water table is at its lowest. Most importantly, because of its depth, the water will be clean.



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HIC managing director Jeff Abella and rural engineer Visi Edwin examine the well's depth. Now finished, the hand-dug well reaches 9 meters, with standing water at a minimum of 3m, even at the height of the dry season.



Energy Farming technician Collins Litika describes how the concrete rings are cast. Once the well was dug, the entire length was lined with concrete rings to strengthen the well and prevent soil from entering the water.

With the well now in place, the project has moved into the final phase. Trenches have been excavated to lay pipelines that will carry the water from the well to large storage tanks at the top of the land. From these tanks, water will be piped downhill to irrigate 6 acres of land for



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growing medicinal and oil seed crops. Without such a water supply, the land is virtually uncultivable during the dry season.

Another pipeline will carry water to a water tap installed at the edge of HIC property along the main road through Kishong Village. This public tap will provide the villagers with a reliable and clean water source, all year round. And with this water, the people of Kishong can regain time and energy previously spent traveling to fetch river water, and regain the health and quality of life that suffers so during the dry season.



The 452m pipeline trench was dug by hand over five days.



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Center for Carpentry & Construction Program Overview

The School of Carpentry and Construction is an interdisciplinary vocational training program supplying access to a large range of modern tools, equipment, and techniques that will improve the efficiency, safety, and quality of construction projects in Kumbo, Cameroon.



Kumbo, Cameroon suffers from an overwhelming deficiency of tools, and workers lack experience integrating the various trades required to efficiently build or renovate a building. The result is that construction projects are frequently plagued with inefficiency, inconsistent quality, high cost, and numerous safety concerns. By integrating several vocational trades, including carpentry, masonry and plumbing, the School of Carpentry and Construction is



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training a new generation of general contractors who will be equipped to more effectively address the challenges of construction.



The School of Carpentry and Construction offers a 10-week vocational training course on advanced woodworking techniques and furniture-making. The course includes training in structural design, furniture design and upholstery, detail carpentry work, wood preserving and finishing techniques, project estimating, and shop management. With a strong emphasis on hands-on experience, the program provides ample opportunity for student projects and internships. Upon graduation, select students have the opportunity to join the furniture production or service program, where local craftsmen can take advantages of the school's wide range of carpentry equipment. By utilizing the service program, local carpenters can increase their efficiency and be more productive.

Community Impact

- Local carpenters can improve their skills by either attending the schools 10 week program or through frequently offered work shops and seminars.
- Student can use their skills to create their own micro-enterprises.



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- Direct employment for select students through the furniture production and specialty wood-services programs.
- Local carpenters and craftsmen can gain access to modern woodworking tools through the specialty wood-services programs. This will save them time, which will increase their productivity.
- The community will see an increase in the quality of furniture and other construction projects throughout Kumbo.

Carpentry Tools and Services Demonstration

The School of Carpentry & Construction opened its doors for two Saturdays in June to give public demonstrations of its new carpentry equipment and services. Local carpenters, craftsmen, and apprentices spent hours examining the machines and getting their questions answered about how these new tools can improve their work.



Victor, one of the Carpentry & Construction students, explains the various uses of the band saw, which is an entirely new tool in Kumbo.



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Students from the School of Carpentry & Construction led the tours and gave the demonstrations. They explained that local carpenters can have access to all of the tools through the new Specialty Woodworking Service Program. Through this program, carpenters will now be able to bring in boards to be cut, sanded, and finished by trained Carpentry & Construction Technicians.



Stephen demonstrates the mortising machine, a tool which will save carpenters from hours of chiseling out joint mortises.

For both the professional craftsman and the amateur woodworker, this service will provide increased value and productivity to projects while decreasing time and labor. After the demonstration a local carpenter commented, “With these tools I will be able to make better furniture and so much more quickly!” The Himalayan Institute Cameroon hopes that this service will enable carpenters to increase the size of their businesses, and as businesses thrive and grow this will create more opportunities for employment.



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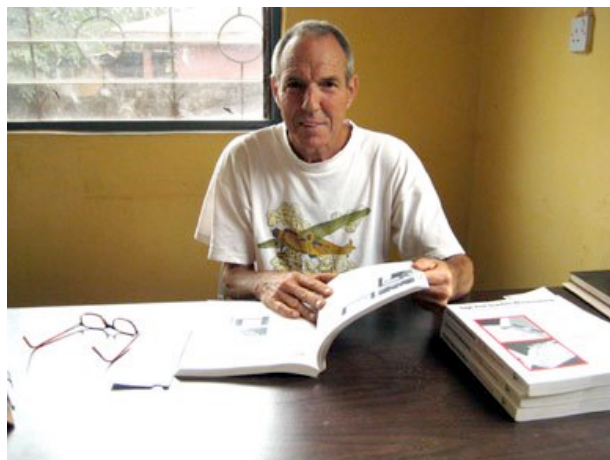


Edwin demonstrates the safety precautions that are used when operating the table saw.

For more information about the School of Carpentry & Construction please see: [New Carpentry Tools for Kumbo](#) and [Carpentry Class Launching](#).

HIC Spotlight: Marten Nyar

In the midst of the Himalayan Institute Cameroon's major humanitarian initiatives, the remarkable stories of those responsible often go unreported. This section of the blog seeks to showcase the diverse range of backgrounds, talents, obstacles, and triumphs represented in our local staff and contacts.



Marten Nyar first came to the Himalayan Institute Cameroon in the summer of 2007. Since then he has worked steadily to identify and address the challenges that the community faces in the area of construction. Marten is uniquely qualified for this job having 20 years



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experience in construction trades and 12 years experience making handcrafted furniture. Marten learned to make furniture as an apprentice in Santa Fe, New Mexico, before opening his own furniture shop. Now, he has taken these experiences and created an apprenticeship program in Kumbo, Cameroon which will teach advanced wood finishing techniques to local craftsmen. Much of the equipment and techniques that will be used and taught in the class are entirely new to Kumbo, and Marten hopes that this will enable woodworkers in the area to make higher quality products in a shorter amount of time.

Marten now makes his home in Kumbo with his wife Mary and their family.



Marten and family pose at Mary's shop.



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Carpentry Class Launching



On June 1, the School of Carpentry and Construction began its first 10-week vocational training course on advanced woodworking techniques and furniture-making. The school pioneers a range of new tools, equipment, and design techniques to improve the quality, efficiency and safety of all carpentry and construction trades. The class is already off to a running start with lectures and practicums underway.



HIC volunteer Marten Nyar gives the first lecture of the class.

Every Monday morning there is a lecture that introduces a new tool and skill set. The rest of the week is spent mastering those skills during practicums and discussing the various



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applications during subsequent lectures. On Friday of each week, the students are tested on their ability to handle the machines, demonstrate the skill sets, and verbalize the process. By articulating their knowledge during the test, the students show not only their personal understanding, but also their ability to convey these concepts to others. The HIC believes in a train-the-trainer style of education, and hopes that some of these students will be the instructors during the next training course.



A student practices using a hand belt sander during the first practicum on wood finishing techniques.

Upon graduation, select students will have the opportunity to join the furniture production or service program, where local craftsmen can take advantages of the school's wide range of carpentry equipment.





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New Carpentry Tools for Kumbo

The Himalayan Institute's School of Carpentry & Construction is busy preparing for its first 10 week course on advanced woodworking techniques. Electricians and mechanics have been working at a furious pace to get all of the tools installed and tuned up before class begins on June 1.

Many of the tools and techniques that will be used in the class are entirely new to Kumbo, Cameroon. Here are some examples:



Mortising Machine – cuts square holes for precise joinery. Currently, carpenters in Kumbo must spend hours cutting mortises by hand. With the introduction of the Mortising Machine to the community, a cut like this takes only minutes.



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Drill press – bores exact holes at exact angles and depths, which is almost impossible with a hand held drill.



Miter Saw – makes angle cuts and is very efficient making accurate repetitive cuts.



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Band Saw – great for cutting arcs and circles, cutting tenons for joinery, and resawing boards. Making these sorts of cuts in Kumbo is currently done with a handheld frame saw. The band saw will make this work more efficient and more accurate.



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Plunge routers, hand held belt sanders, and random orbit hand sanders will make quick work out of smoothing boards. All of these tools are currently unavailable in Kumbo, where all finishing prep work must be done by hand.

Additional tools, although not new to Kumbo, include cabinet table saw, jointer and thickness planer, providing the full range of tools for a professional woodworking shop.

The upcoming 10 week course will train students how to operate these machines in a safe and effective manner. Select graduates of the program will have the opportunity to work directly for the School of Carpentry & Construction and all graduates will be certified operators who can use the machines for their own work. In addition, the machines will be made available to the public through a specialty woodworking service program in which carpenters can bring boards in to be processed in whatever way they need.



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Arrival of Supplies and New Services

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon celebrated the arrival of a 20-foot shipping container from Guangzhou, China bearing tools and equipment for the development of HIC programs, particularly for the School of Energy Farming and School of Carpentry and Construction. With the arrival of the container's contents, newly planned community services and educational training courses are able to move forward.



Using eucalyptus poles, ropes and excellent coordination, the team maneuvers a generator down from the container. The donated generator will supply power to the HIC main campus and the School of Carpentry and Construction.

The School of Carpentry and Construction received pieces of large, stationary equipment including a band saw, table saw and mortising machine as well as a full complement of power hand tools for woodworking. Everything, down to the screws and nails, will be put to use in C&C's largest project yet—the upcoming Modern Carpentry Methods Training Course. Over 16 weeks, beginning on June 1, students enrolled in the training program will become acquainted with the practical application of modern carpentry tools, skills and techniques in a professional working environment. The course will emphasize business and project planning aspects of carpentry as well as specific techniques, aiming to prepare trainees to succeed in their own independent business enterprises. Upon completion, students will receive a certificate of competency that will also make them eligible for a full-time or part-time position with the School of Carpentry and Construction.



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Unloading a band saw for the Carpentry and Construction program.

The School of Energy Farming received large machines of its own: three riding tractors with attachments for tilling, disc plowing, furrow plowing and irrigation, as well as a trailer. The tractors are unique in this area of Cameroon where the majority of the population farms by hand, spending weeks of intensive labor to prepare the land for planting. Energy Farming will offer a low-cost service program in which farmers may hire a technician to cultivate their land using the equipment, achieving in hours what normally takes a family many days. The equipment will also be put to good use developing fields on the HIC School of Energy Farming land in Kishong village for growing medicinal herbs, oil crops, trees and market produce.



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Assembling one of the tillers.

With each program and service, the HIC is continually looking for new ways to bring rural empowerment and sustainability to the people of Cameroon.



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Sacred Link Jewelry Program Overview

Sacred Link Jewelry is a handmade natural jewelry line with designs and materials that come from around the world—India, Nepal, Columbia, Mexico, Thailand, and Africa. Exemplifying the spirit of Sacred Link, they have cultural and spiritual significance in the land of their origin, as well as healing properties.

This universally recognized concept of beauty is the philosophical foundation for Sacred Link Jewelry. In 2003, the first Sacred Link Jewelry internship was launched in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. Students learned to combine astrology, herbalism, gemology, and spirituality in their jewelry making.

Now Sacred Link Jewelry is an international project. Through vocational training and internship opportunities, Sacred Link Jewelry is bringing the beauty of the village market to the global market. By creating sustainable micro-enterprise, Sacred Link Jewelry helps to create income opportunities which can eradicate poverty and heal economic isolation.

In July 2007, the Himalayan Institute launched Sacred Link Jewelry internship program in Cameroon, West Africa. Seven local students were chosen to take part in the class. These students were carefully selected from hundreds of applicants to form the nucleus of the program. Over the next three months they received intensive training and hands-on experience in the complete art of Sacred Link Jewelry and learned the business skills necessary to put the knowledge into action. Based on a “train the trainer” model, these students had as much one-on-one contact with HI faculty as possible, so they would become fully prepared to remain with the Community Center as trainers or start their own micro-enterprise upon graduation.

The Sacred Link Jewelry students have graduated from their three month long training program. Several of these students currently manage their own independent micro-enterprises where they create and sell jewelry, and work on developing future designs. In addition, several other students teach Sacred Link Jewelry techniques at local high schools, women’s empowerment groups, and other development clubs throughout Cameroon.



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Teaching Job Creation:

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon has been teaching students at Kumbo's Government Technical High School (GTHS) the theory and technique behind Sacred Link Jewelry.



The goal is simple: teach interested students the skills needed to design and produce jewelry, so that they can create micro-enterprises for themselves. In its first week, the course attracted over 160 students.

“There are two key considerations whenever you produce jewelry” local technician tells the class. “They are the customer and the materials. You must discover what the customer needs and how to produce it with what is available to you.”





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After a week of jewelry theory and business strategy, HI Cameroon returned to GTHS to begin the practical portion of the course. With round and chain-nosed pliers in hand, students created a wide variety of earrings from scratch.



Gladys works on her first piece of jewelry.

Gladys, one of the students, dreams of attending university in Yaounde, but her parents are subsistence farmers from isolated Banton village. She relies on her aunt for help with school fees and for a place to stay while attending GTHS. She explained, “If there’s any education that can teach me a skill to employ myself, then the knowledge really pays for itself.”

The students at GTHS are quick to recognize an opportunity when they see one. Self employment through jewelry-making will enable them to support themselves and their families as they finish school.



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Kumbo Public Library & Educational Program Overview

Throughout Africa there is a consistent lack of access to information, most vividly obvious in the scarcity of books. This was shockingly evident in Kumbo where, despite a relatively high literacy rate, books are hard to find. Even when available, a used paperback routinely costs \$15 to \$20 in a country where many earn only \$2 per day.



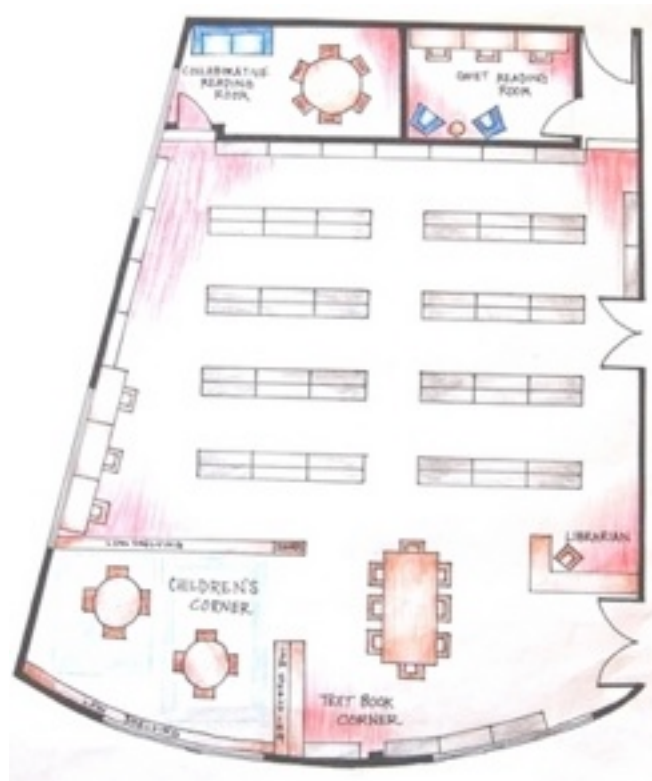
The Himalayan Institute Cameroon is addressing this dire need with the establishment of the Kumbo Public Library. The Kumbo Public Library will be the largest in the entire nation, with over 25,000 volumes. A wide range of educational programs will be hosted at the library, including literacy workshops, children's programs, public outreach and research computers for free use.

Building the Kumbo Public Library Begins:

After more than a year of fundraising, book drives and planning, the construction of the Kumbo Public Library has begun. The Himalayan Institute in partnership with the Honesdale Rotary sent 25,000 books and archival quality shelving units to Kumbo, Cameroon. The Himalayan Institute Cameroon community center was chosen to house the new library, and plans have been drawn up to convert the center's main hall.



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The hall is 1500 square feet with 13 feet high ceilings. There are windows on the north and east sides, providing the hall with natural light all day.

On September 28, 2009, community members and HIC staff began to move the shelving units and books out of storage and into what will be their permanent location. Hundreds of boxes of books were carried by hand and by wheelbarrow. Once the books were brought into the building, a second team began the project of sorting, organizing and alphabetizing the books.



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Because of the generous fundraising efforts of the Honesdale Rotary, the hall for the library will be completely renovated with new furniture and structural improvements. The Himalayan Institute School of Carpentry & Construction (C&C) has undertaken the complete renovation and furnishing of the library. C&C technicians are building custom-made tables, desks and chairs for the library. In addition, the windows are being upgraded, so that the library can be a fully climate controlled facility. This will ensure that the books last for many generations.



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C&C technicians organize the shelving units for assembling.

Community education programs will be hosted at the library, including adult literacy classes, children's afterschool programs, and educational video nights where films such as *Plant Earth* will be projected onto the 12 foot cinema wall. Three computers will be available in the library for educational use and they will be loaded with [Wikipedia For Schools](#), an offline version of Wikipedia that is about the size of a twenty volume encyclopedia. So even when the computers are not connected to the internet, students can still do research and access up-to-date information. The library will have a reading room, children's learning area, and a section devoted to textbooks. Books on average make up 44% of annual school expenses for students in Kumbo. Having access to textbooks through a public library will help make going to school more affordable.

HI Cameroon Scholarships Program:

School is not free in Kumbo, Cameroon. If parents want to send their children to elementary school and high school they have to pay each year for tuition and books, even in government-run schools. On average, the total cost for one year of school is roughly \$250. In a country where the average annual income is only \$1050 ([Worldbank](#)), it can be very challenging to put an entire family through school.



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The Himalayan Institute Cameroon has been working hard to support families in Kumbo by providing scholarship assistance. To date, the HIC has assisted:

- 26 students in 2008
- 42 students in 2009

The financial assistance goes towards, books, materials, uniforms and tuition. To further help reduce the cost of education, the HIC has dedicated a section of its Kumbo Public Library to house every text book needed in Kumbo schools. This collection includes over 1000 books and is available to the student to study from at no cost.



Students at the HIC's Back to School party.



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A sudden rain moves the party inside where students receive school supplies and continue the festivities.

To start the school year off on the right foot, the HIC hosts an annual Back to School party each September, which allows children to gather at the community center and enjoy food, games and festivities. This year the 98 students that came to the party each received notebooks, pens, pencils and a ruler.



Aisha in Class 6 writes to her pen pal in the US.

Promoting Literacy In The Area:

Education is a primary focus of the Himalayan Institute's humanitarian efforts. At the Himalayan Institute Cameroon work is being done to support local schools and promote



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literacy. In late February, the HIC teamed up with a local NGO, Knowledge For Children, to bring children's books to a rural school.



HIC Consultant Amanda Masters reads with a group of young students.

More recently, HIC staff members have begun to work with a reading group run by the Sisters of Notre Dame. Elementary age students attend the group twice a week where as many as 40 children pile into a cozy reading room to practice their alphabet, read stories, and sing songs. “The children who have been coming here since they were little are now at the top of their class,” said Sister Catherine, who has been running the small library for the past decade.



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The children pass around a bird's nest, before reading 'Are You My Mother?', the story of a young bird.

Books are expensive and uncommon in households, and children's books are even more scarce. The reading group helps children to establish an interest and an excitement about reading which in turn helps them to flourish in all of their academic subjects in school.



The Himalayan Institute Cameroon in collaboration with Rotary clubs around the world is also working to build a library. [30,000 books](#) have already been transported to Kumbo, where work is underway to secure a location for the library. The project aims to bring access



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to quality reading materials to the entire community, as well as adult and children's literacy programs, Internet access, and technology education programs.

Once completed, this will be the largest public library in the region. With greater access to books and educational materials, children and adults alike have more opportunities to better themselves and their community.

Helping Student Prepare for the Baccalaureate:

In Cameroon, passing the Baccalaureate Exam is the equivalent of earning a high school diploma in the US. Passing the exam is a ticket to better jobs and a chance to attend a university.



Sylvester, 25, compares notes with a classmate before the beginning of classes. Sylvester hopes to pass his baccalaureate, so that he can become the manager of the construction company where he works.



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Passing the Baccalaureate is not easy. The exam tests general education as well as the specific areas in which the students have studied. For students at Kumbo's Government Technical High School (GTHS) there is the added challenge of finding instructors to teach the necessary material. In recent years, teachers have been leaving GTHS for higher paying government jobs. Unfortunately, these vacancies have not been filled, leaving many classrooms without a teacher. Since education is a primary focus of the Himalayan Institute's work in Cameroon, the HIC has worked hard to find holes, such as the ones at GTHS, and fill them with capable staff.



Divine writes a pressure conversion chart on the blackboard.

The Himalayan Institute's Nfor Divine is a graduate of GTHS. After passing his baccalaureate, Divine took many jobs around the country working as a cement specialist before he came to work for the Institute. On top of assisting the development of the HIC's School of Carpentry and Construction program, the HIC sends Divine to volunteer at



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GTHS a few times a week to help teach a new generation of skilled workers. Because of the shortage of teachers, this sort of help is critical to the students' success.

Divine does not go easy on his students. He calls students up at random to solve problems in front of the class. Divine knows first hand that it pays to pass the test, so he urges the students to study hard.



Devin, 24, solves a problem in front of the class. He hopes to attend university in Yaoundé and become a civil engineer.

“If Divine had not come to teach our class, we would have had to find private tutors or try to learn everything on our own,” said Devin, one of Divine’s students. “Now that he is teaching, we have a much better shot at passing the baccalaureate.”

Planting the Seeds of Knowledge

This past week, the Himalayan Institute Cameroon teamed up with Knowledge For Children to bring books to a rural school. Knowledge For Children (KFC) is a Kumbo-based NGO currently working with 35 rural schools in Bui Division to increase access to reading materials and textbooks. When KFC invited the HIC to collaborate, the HIC eagerly agreed to help and gathered 100 children’s books to be donated.

On February 25th members of the Himalayan Institute Cameroon, together with Knowledge For Children, traveled to the Presbyterian School in the village of Memfu to deliver two carloads of books. The sounds of singing and clapping reached the cars before they had even arrived at PS Memfu; the long driveway leading to the school grounds was



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lined with smiling students singing, “We are happy to see you again.” A large crowd was assembled in a grandstand area, which included the parents of students, a Presbyterian women’s organization, the Parent Teacher Association, and local rulers and dignitaries.

The official ceremony opened with a blessing from the school’s pastor, Reverend Tata Henry, who read from the Bible, “Remember this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously” (2 Corinthians 9:6). The quote was especially appropriate for the event where parents, teachers, and local NGOs had gathered to support the growth of their children.



Reverend Tata Henry and HIC volunteer Amanda Masters. This year, Reverend Tata Henry will celebrate his “golden jubilee”, his 50th year of service to the community.

Speeches followed from the Head Teacher, PTA President and the coordinators of Knowledge For Children discussing the value of an education that comes from both parents and schoolteachers. All emphasized the role that PS Memfu has played in earning the books being donated that day. In order to qualify for a year of support from Knowledge For Children, schools must contribute a specific, increasing quota of books as well be able to demonstrate that all books from previous years have been preserved and well cared for. This is PS Memfu’s third year with the program and their third year as a Top 5 school among the 35 schools involved, so the pride and seriousness that the community has invested in its children’s education is obvious. There is no doubt that the books contributed by the HIC will be treasured.



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PS Memfu students and community members show off their new books

In his brief address to the crowd, HIC volunteer John Daskovsky pointed out that the books donated by the Himalayan Institute Cameroon are ones that the volunteers themselves grew up with. Such titles as *Corduroy*, *The Lorax*, *Amelia Bedelia*, *Berenstein Bears* and *Richard Scary's Busytown* taught the pleasure of reading, inspired writing skills and creativity and provided a sense of excitement for learning. Now these very titles will do the same for generations of students—and parents—in Memfu. All together, the books donated to the deserving school will reinforce each other: the HIC-donated books are perfect for beginning a day enjoyably and getting students into the spirit of learning, while the school primers contributed by Knowledge For Children will direct that energy toward academic subjects. It takes both kinds of books to inspire knowledge and passion in students.



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The HIC trusts that the seeds planted at PS Memfu will help to grow children eager to learn and prepared to face the challenges of improving their community and their lives.



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Organizational Development and Public Outreach

Community Radio in Kumbo

Up until 5 months ago, Kumbo had suffered from severe communication isolation—a city of 100,000 with no local TV or radio station. The Kumbo Development Organization in collaboration with the BBC has started a community radio station called Bui FM, and in only 5 months it's clear that community radio is doing its part to fight the stagnant economic conditions.



HI Cameroon public relations specialist Ntani Divine records the radio spots.

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon has been supporting the station's efforts and is airing several radio spots. Each commercial airs twice per day. The goal is to create community awareness about the community center's activities and to get more of the community involved with the center's programs. Currently airing is a general HIC commercial sensitizing the community to the mission of the HI humanitarian efforts in Kumbo, a School of Carpentry & Construction spot introducing its service program which allow local craftsmen to benefit from C&C's equipment, and a Total Health Center commercial informing people of the affordable natural health care options at all three of the branch centers.

Listen to the radio spots. You will hear 3 languages in these recordings — English, Pidgin-English, and Lamnso, a local dialect:

<http://hiprojects.wordpress.com/2009/11/09/community-radio-in-kumbo/>



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Internal Growth To Support Community Development

On Monday August 29th, the Himalayan Institute Cameroon held the first of a series of meetings and events that will result in an organizational overhaul of its community center operations. The goal of this reorganization is to make the center more efficient and more effective at delivering its programs to the community. By looking at the challenges and successes of the last two years, the staff will work together to identify methods for continued improvement.



HI Cameroon Managing Director Jeff Abella and General Manager Bannyuy Justine explain to staff how the reorganization process will improve the efficiency of the center.

“You have the weight of an entire community on your shoulders therefore you must remain solid to support that weight. Let’s keep working together to strengthen this organization so that we can continue to strengthen this community,” said Jeff Abella to staff. “Let’s think of this reorganizational practice as an operational reboot and system upgrade,” joked Abella as he made reference to the unreliable computer systems often found in the NW region of Cameroon. “To be effective in social development we must be confident in our approach and always think outside the box. We must also have access to cutting edge tools to support our work and the HI Community Center model is a tool in itself.”

In the meeting the staff recapped how Sacred Link Jewelry was the first rural empowerment program launched by HI Cameroon and how the center has since expanded to include Total Health Centers, the School of Carpentry and Construction, New Vision and the School of Energy Farming. Together these programs have touched thousands of lives in Cameroon and the numbers continue to grow. This success is due to the dedication and hard work of



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the local staff at the HIC. The reorganization will help to ensure that each staff member has the support they need to do the best work possible.

Labor Day Parade

May 1, 2009 was Cameroon's national Labor Day. For the Himalayan Institute Cameroon it was a day of celebration and pride.



Each year, Labor Day in Kumbo is marked by a grand parade at the stadium to honor all vocations, businesses, and organizations in the area. The HIC staff assembled on the stadium field to prepare for the march. The new tractors from the School of Energy Farming were brought to accompany the staff during the parade. Everyone was very excited to see the new machinery and the Energy Farming staff spent much of the morning explaining the tractors and the new service program to the groups of people that gathered around.



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HI Cameroon volunteer John Daskovsky tells a group of onlookers about the new tractors. The tractors will be available to the community through a service rental program, which will enable farmers to cultivate more land with greater ease.

After speeches from the mayor and Senior Divisional Officer, the parade got underway. Organizations and businesses took turns marching past the grandstand, holding up signs and banners. A band played music and an announcer named the organizations and their accomplishments as they passed. But not long after the parade began, clouds rolled in and it began to rain. All of the organizations in the parade disbanded and ran to the bandstand to take cover, but the HIC staff kept marching. With big grins on their faces, the proud members of the HIC marched past the grandstand to the cheers of the crowd.



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A Coalition of NGOs



In Cameroon, government funding is in short supply, so it is up to Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to bring health, education, and other important services to communities in need. Some of these NGOs are international organizations, bringing staff in from the US, Canada, Holland, Nepal, etc. But most have been started by Cameroonians to address the problems that they see every day.

These NGOs, like so many non-profit organizations around the world, struggle with funding their projects and keeping them sustainable. That is why they are teaming up and forming a coalition to better share information, resources and supplies. With this new coalition the NGOs hope that the efforts of each group will be more effective and the hardships of one will be lessons well learned for all.

The Himalayan Institute Cameroon is proud to be one of the founding members of this coalition. On Saturday, the group held one of its first meetings at the HIC's center in Kumbo. Over a dozen organizations were represented. Along with the Himalayan Institute Cameroon, these groups included Knowledge for Children, Greencare, Women Empowerment Institute, Star Crusaders Against AIDS, Rural Transformation Centre, and Navti Foundation. As a whole, these organizations are bringing books to rural schools, educating about HIV and AIDS, providing inexpensive computers and internet access, and working to create sustainable jobs for their communities. Their projects and goals harmonize beautifully with the mission of the HIC – *to stimulate rural empowerment through education, healthcare, and vocational training.*



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2010 Outlook

Operations

- Increase training efforts for all staff, to include: greater amount of cross training and administrative training.
- Increase staffing in several core areas such as energy farming, general administration and management, and library/education initiatives.

Total Health Center

- Research and development has begun in order to solve the issue of high product costs due to shipping of the THC products from the USA to CMR. By producing a quality product line in CMR the cost of the product will be reduced making them more accessible for the customer and increasing volume. Also, is sustainable solution will utilize the Energy Farming programs quality herbs.
- This future product line will include
 - i. Capsule Making
 - ii. Salves/Balms
 - iii. Honey Medicine
 - iv. Infusions and Teas
- Expanding the scope of activities in each center will increase the volume into the centers. Expanded options include Internet stations, satellite libraries, furniture display and sales.
- Mobile Units goal is to average 300 consultations per week by visiting three villages each week on regular schedule.
- Its new 4x4 truck is currently undergoing modifications and will be able to double the coverage of the previous vehicle.

School of Carpentry and Construction

- Creating plans to build and wood drying Kiln – This project would revolutionize the lumber industry in Kumbo and would make cured lumber more available & affordable to local construction market.
- Increase workshops, trainings, outreach and internships.
- Focus on driving its microenterprises
 6. Service program
 7. Contractor business
 8. Dried Lumber



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9. Cement Blocks

10. Custom and prebuilt furniture business

Kumbo Public Library

- Kumbo Public Library Grand Opening and Promotion.
- Develop literacy programs focused on reading, language, leadership and social skills.

Educational Activities

- Refine and increase the scholarship program which was piloted in 08 and 09. First created as a benefit package to the children of the HIC staff members, this program could be reformatted to also target local children with leadership qualities. The Library could serve as a great venue to identify, mentor and monitor such students.

Eco Service Excursion 2010

- Allowing HI members and follower to join the HI at its flagship community center in NW Cameroon to experience spirituality in action with PRT.
 - Welcoming by the Fon at his palace with masquerading
 - Volunteer in our humanitarian programs
 - Cultural events and activities
 - Explore rainforests and oceanic black sand beaches
 - Spend time with local children reading in our library