



A Look Back

2019 Annual Report

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, we began a partnership with rural communities in Northwest Cameroon to fight poverty, illiteracy, and inequality through health services, public libraries, and sustainable employment opportunities. During this time, we have established long-standing and meaningful relationships with the community as a whole, which allowed us to continue to provide our essential services during a time of uncertainty over the last year. Through our dedicated, hardworking staff, and your generous support, we were able to sustain and grow our network of public libraries, mobile health units, and independent health consultants to continue serving the Northwest Region.



OUR MISSION

The Himalayan Institute's Global Humanitarian Projects are yoga in action—offering spiritually grounded healing and transformation to the world. Our humanitarian projects serve impoverished communities through rural empowerment and environmental regeneration. By putting yoga philosophy into practice, our programs are empowering communities globally with the knowledge and tools needed for lasting social transformation at the grassroots level. As members of the Himalayan Institute humanitarian community, we perform our actions based on the core tenants of our mission's goals: to engage globally, empower locally, and enrich lives. Working toward meeting these communities where they are and understanding that standalone projects rarely deliver lasting impact, we have incorporated a holistic approach that tackles a broader spectrum of community needs. We strive to have a greater, more sustainable impact, and to ultimately eradicate poverty, disease, and illiteracy. By training leaders to be resourceful and efficient in their economic and educational initiatives, these grassroots pioneers become the ushers of new generations of healthy, more knowledgeable, and proactive citizens. This holistic, education-based model is one of the only ways in which communities in need can eventually become completely self-sufficient.



OUR VALUES:



RESPECTFUL PARTNERSHIP

Every community has unique priorities, challenges, assets, and opportunities. We are guided by the experience and wisdom of grassroots leaders. Our projects are models of participatory and collaborative development. In each community we employ local talent and leadership to design, implement, and evaluate innovative projects that tackle chronic problems.



EMPOWERMENT

Grassroots leadership development is central to our work, so that local community members gain the skills and confidence to become effective agents of change.



ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Our projects strive to create livelihoods that offer stability and dignity to people and their families. This drives sustainable change and generational impact in the communities where we work.



LASTING PARTNERSHIP

Our global humanitarian mission is the transformation of rural communities. Working with strong local partners, our multifaceted programs address root problems with integrated sustainable solutions in key areas of education, health care, and economic progression.

2019 PROGRAM SUMMARY

Our flagship humanitarian venture, and program model in Cameroon, West Africa, has been designed as an integrated hub for a range of rural empowerment projects, all supporting these goals: to fight poverty, illiteracy, and inequality through education, health care, and job creation. Through the strengthening, maintenance, and expansion of the following four initiatives, the Himalayan Institute Cameroon Community Center Model is now the main vehicle for the Institute's humanitarian efforts abroad.



Total Health Program



Our Community Health Initiatives started as part of our flagship community center in Kumbo. Since then, we have grown from one health center to six centers spread throughout the Northwest Region of Cameroon. At these health centers, we provide lifestyle counseling, health education on common illnesses and diseases, and the best preventive practices to combat them. We also offer herbal health products, which are produced through a fully self-sustaining supply chain. 100 percent of the herbs used to make the products that we sell in our health centers are locally grown, harvested, dried, and processed.

Additionally, we began an independent health consultant training course for members of the community that were interested in becoming Certified Consultant Affiliates (local health agents). Since the program's inception, we have trained over 100 individuals who now serve as a trusted source of health information in their communities. They then return to their home villages to independently offer consultation and pharmacy services.

Finally, we expanded our community health initiatives to include a fleet of three mobile health units. These mobile units encompass all the benefits of our physical health centers (private consultations, public health education, and herbal products) but in a condensed mobile form that can now operate in the most rural areas of the country that otherwise would not have access to health services.

NEW: Updates - Total Health Program

Over the last year, we made a concerted effort to focus on addressing the mental health struggles that come with the trauma of living through civil unrest. Through breathing and meditation practices, we were able to give people the tools they needed to manage stress and anxiety, and create peace within themselves, their families, and their communities.

Health services, breathing practices, and meditation are crucial components for sustaining lasting peace in communities not only in Cameroon but all around the world. These essential tools helped thousands of people find stillness within and project that sense of calm outward. Our independent health consultants have the training and mobility to travel to villages and cities all around the Northwest Region of Cameroon, making these services available and easy to access for all. Personal health and well-being are essential pillars of a peaceful and healthy society, and our total health programs contribute to these goals every single day. Through breathing and mindfulness techniques, women, men, and children received the tools to help them cope and create peace of mind during this volatile time in their lives.



Total Health Program



Health classes focused on **stress and emotional health** were carried out in Bamenda and Kumbo, Cameroon. Participants of our Total Health Program seminars specifically requested this topic be addressed, and **we received countless testimonies** detailing how helpful, desired, and necessary these programs were. In a single workshop, we addressed **786 attendees**.

Total Health Program Leader Eucharia partnered with the Women's Empowerment Center Bamenda to **give health classes to hundreds of women and girls** (PIC #33, 34)

Total amount of people reached through our **Total Health Program in 2019: 4,734**





Public Library Program

Our System of Public Libraries also started with our flagship community center in Kumbo. We began with one large room, one library employee, and 10,000 books we gathered from around the U.S. and Cameroon. That center grew to include educational tutoring and mentorship, and other programs including a computer literacy training course, reading programs, and children's after-school programs. We have since expanded our reach to five new communities throughout the Northwest Region, all offering the same resources and a combined collection of over 50,000 books now available to communities across the province.

NEW: Updates - Public Library Program

Over the last year, we focused on remote/mobile outreach to children all over the Northwest Region of Cameroon. We expanded the program to include children's outdoor teamwork activities, while we continued to bolster our computer basics courses and tutoring and mentoring initiatives. Thanks to the flexibility and the mobility of our staff, we served exponentially more children who had been displaced by the unrest.

Children's education and safety are vital to a healthy society. When children's senses of curiosity are nurtured and supported through education, they become more informed citizens and change-makers within their communities.



Public Library Program



Our Public Library Program partnered with a variety of local youth camps to **counsel children on the culture and importance of reading**. These workshops included songs, group reading sessions, and question and answer sessions. The program was so well-received that the **children requested more of them be organized in the future**

Our Public Library youth programs expanded to include methods of **keeping children focused and active during a period of school closings** with various activities; outdoor **games, drawing and painting, singing** and dancing, story-telling, talent shows, question and answer sessions, **word and object identification from Highlights magazines**, and basic computer courses.

Total amount of people reached through our Public Library Program in 2019: **10,622**





Center for Carpentry and Construction

The Center for Carpentry and Construction began as a vocational training center for woodworking and electrical trade skills. Over the last 13 years, it has expanded to include an apprenticeship program and direct school-to-job placement for program graduates. Through time and dedication, the center became a hub for excellent craftsmanship and instruction in Cameroon. Our training center is equipped with modern woodworking equipment and accomplished teachers who provide instruction and training for students, community members, and carpenters of all skill levels. Our services have improved the overall quality of construction in the region and widened the skill set of carpenters. We have also achieved a 90% employment success rate for the graduates of our program.

Center for carpentry and construction initiatives include:

Vocational training

The Center of Carpentry & Construction offers vocational training courses on advanced woodworking techniques and furniture making. The course includes training in structural design, furniture design and upholstery, detailed 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. Graduates can use their certificates of completion to help them get better jobs throughout

Cameroon, and select students have the opportunity to join the Furniture Production Center and Specialty Wood Service Program.

Specialty Wood Service Program

The School of Carpentry & Construction is equipped with a modern set of woodworking machines: table saw, mortising machine, drill press, lathe, plunge routers, handheld belt sanders, and random-orbit hand sanders. Many of these machines are the first of their kind in the area, helping to make the local carpentry industry more efficient, productive, and safe. The Service Program makes these modern power tools available to the Kumbo professional carpenters. Staffed by select graduates from the center's 10-week training program, the center provides on-demand custom cuts and joinery for established carpenters. The staff completes many of the orders in minutes with stationary power tools, which would otherwise take days of manual labor. The Service Program ensures high-quality products for consumers and broadens the product base for the 250+ carpenters in the region!

Furniture Production Center

The Center of Carpentry & Construction fills challenging orders from the local community for furniture that otherwise could not be completed through traditional methods. By doing this, the center raises awareness of the potential of local materials, while creating demand for locally produced, high-quality furniture.

2019

Achievements

Center for Carpentry and Construction



The Center for Carpentry and Construction executed many projects throughout 2019, some of which included: **kitchen cabinets for a private customer in Bamenda**; high quality caskets for local funeral services; reconditioning of office furniture for the Kumbo East District Hospital; closets, bookshelves, and an **office table for a local doctor's office**; **additional church pews for the Sister's Chapel at Shisong**; and kitchen cabinets and bed frames for a private customer. Church Pews for Sister's Chapel Shisong Casket design at C & C





Women and Family Enrichment Program (WFEP)

Our Women's and Family Enrichment Program began with our traditional jewelry-making program. This program taught jewelry-making as a vocational trade to local women. Since its inception, our WFEP has evolved into a multi-faceted program that includes small business finance, marketing strategy, family finance and budgeting strategy, and family-focused health services. After 13 years of growth and development, we have created a strong foundation to serve women and provide the skills, financial training, and health services they need to become self-reliant entrepreneurs and support themselves and their families. WFEP initiatives include:

Sacred Link Jewelry and small business finance and marketing training

Sacred Link Jewelry incorporates designs and materials from all around the world and brings the beauty of the village market to the global market. For 13 years we've worked with schools, women's empowerment groups, government ministries, local nonprofits, and other development clubs throughout Cameroon to teach jewelry-making as a vocational trade. For the women in these communities, having a skill that enables them to earn an income is a matter of great pride as it allows them to be self-reliant. Most recently, we have added small business finance and marketing skills training to our already robust jewelry making program. This addition to

the program allows women to add additional skills to their repertoire and become a successful entrepreneur.

Women's and family-focused health

To uplift the women of the Kumbo community, we started offering a women's and family-focused health services program. The program utilizes the infrastructure and resources of our existing health centers but focuses specifically on women's health issues—prenatal and postnatal care, family planning, and reproductive health, as well as children's health. This new format has created a safe space for women to talk with other women about health struggles and get care for themselves and their children.

Home family finance management

In Cameroon, women are still the primary managers of the household, and this includes family finances. We started an in-depth course covering the basics of family finance management so that women can take charge of their financial future. Throughout the course, women learn the basics of budgeting, saving, and income management. Over the last two years, this program has proven successful, with women taking on more leadership roles within their communities and families.

2019

Achievements

WFEP



In December 2019, we carried out a **seminar on gender-based violence with over 350 teenage mothers and young girls attending**. We organized this seminar with Bansa Baptist Hospital (BBH) Social Services in partnership with UNICEF.

We were invited to present our Women's and Family Enrichment Program (WFEP) to a variety of local women's groups throughout the year. In November, **we trained 132 women in household financial management, small business finance and marketing skills, and jewelry designing** as a vocational trade

Total amount of **people reached through our WFEP in 2019: 3,846**



Future 2020 Program Development



The ongoing unrest in Cameroon has left critical gaps in the health and education sectors in the communities that we serve. Hospitals are closed, and hundreds of thousands of children lack access to formal education, with children throughout the Northwest region entering their fourth year without school.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses additional challenges to Cameroon. From March 6 to May 18, 2020, there have been a reported 3,047 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country (Source: <https://bit.ly/2Z5r9aW>), an increase from 2,800 cases four days ago. As the number of confirmed cases rises, a lack of financial and health resources poses considerable risk to the regions we serve.

This year, our goal in Cameroon is to expand our programs into five more regions of the country by leveraging the social infrastructure of our long-established education and health programs. We aim to provide meaningful support to families dealing with the realities of the unrest and COVID-19 pandemic. Rooted in respectful partnership

with grassroots leaders, our efforts to empower women, children, and remote villagers, who are among the most vulnerable populations, are needed more than ever.

The amazing Himalayan Institute Cameroon staff have more than a decade of experience coping in adverse conditions and serve as a trusted source of health information in the region. In response to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team provided educational materials and communicated best practices on COVID-19 prevention and symptom identification to groups, institutions, and influential leaders throughout the region.

They continue to serve communities remotely as our main campus, in accordance with best safety practices, remains closed.

We are eager to open up our campus again when it becomes safe to do so. We're hopeful for the future, and we look forward to providing you with further updates as they unfold.



In Loving Memory of Marten Nyar

Dec 8, 1947 – May 29, 2019

This past year, the Himalayan Institute community suffered a great loss. Marten Nyar was a beloved friend, father, husband, community leader, and master carpenter. He dedicated his life to the upliftment of others, and we feel so lucky to have known such a beautiful soul.

Marten – From all of those whose lives you've touched: thank you, we love you, and we miss you. Marten Nyar was born in Tulsa, OK to Herbert and Melba Curry. He grew up on the Oregon Coast. After serving in Vietnam, he found a spiritual framework in the writings of Carlos Castenadas, which inspired him to look for a creative and challenging purpose for his life. He met his first wife Noel, and together they worked on farms in the Wallowa Valley and Halfway, OR. In Halfway, he learned how to shoe horses and became a well-respected Ferrier in the community. In the early 90's, he moved to Santa Fe, NM and learned the trade of fine furniture building at Dell Woodworks. There he met his second wife, Nema.

In 2000, he moved to Ridgecrest, CA and began volunteering for the Boys and Girls Club. He served as CEO at the first Boys and Girls Club in Ridgecrest, and at a second Club in Montrose, CO in 2005. But he had always wanted to be in Africa, and that was where he finally found a calling that satisfied his quest for a purpose.

His opportunity came in 2007 when the Himalayan Institute started a humanitarian project in Cameroon, in the town of Kumbo. He often said, "I came here [to Cameroon] with the expectation that I'd never leave." In 2008, he was the founding trainer of HIC's School of Carpentry and Construction in Kumbo. This was the region's first fine woodworking center designed to raise the standards of carpentry in the region. In an effort to break the cycle of poverty, he encouraged carpenters to charge adequate fees for quality work. In 2016, he was appointed Program Director for all of HIC's programs and was loved by his staff for his authoritative, compassionate leadership style. The entire Kumbo community called Marten "Dad" because he was always there as a father figure for anyone who needed guidance. He was also a proud father to the children of Manjo Mary, his third wife.

Marten was also known for his windy, wise and funny stories, and his love of nature and a good beer.

He is survived by his wife, Manjo Mary Fikake and her 5 children, Clarise, Noberta, Pethra, Rose and Curry; his ex-wife, Nema Nyar, and his nephew, Limbe