



*Yaoundé (Nkomkana) 's Youth integration centre*

The fight against youth unemployment is one of the priorities of the roadmap assigned to Government by the Head of State within the framework of accomplishment of its great ambitions programme. Such is the context that informs, on the one hand, the profound reform of certain social development framework documents such as the Social Sector Development Strategy (SSDS), the Urban Sector Development Strategy (USDS), and the PRSP that has become the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESp) and, on the other hand, implementation of many MINDUH projects, including the construction of infrastructure and facilities for youths. Under this category we can cite the construction of Centres for the empowerment of Youths in difficulty, pursuant to MINDUH's organic mission of social development and provision of social guidance and assistance to disfavoured urban population segments.



Governed by service Note No. 0017/E/2/MINDUH of 30 October 2008 to lay down the rules pertaining to the management and functioning of centres, the activities of the youth empowerment centres are essentially geared towards assistance and guidance to youths in difficulty with a view to ensuring their socio-professional and economic integration, especially as the youths constitute the majority of the active population. Accordingly, ensuring youth employment is important not only to increase national production and create wealth, but also to revive growth and combat social exclusion and segregation phenomena that engender social strife. In this respect, we can cite the following activities already carried out: the organization in 2007 in the Nkomkana Centre of a seminar-workshop to build the capacity of council officials and social development urban stakeholders on projects development, the search for financing and urban social animation; training and support for the integration of 80 youths in difficulty in 2008 at the Nkomkana Youth Empowerment Centre (YEC) in petit urban trades (production and laying of cobblestones, urban horticulture, cable broadcasting); the integration project for 60 young producer-craftsmen in Fouban through the promotion of their handicraft works and building their creative and productive capacity; the integration of 16 youths in the chain of

production of local building materials with the support of the Koutaba monastery in the Noun Division; the project to train 121 youths in difficulty in the development and maintenance of green spaces in Fouban, a project that is ongoing and requiring other outside assistance; the organization of educative talks and sensitization campaigns on school dropout, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the practice of sexual abstinence until marriage; the second session of training of 100 youths in difficulty in the production and laying of cobblestones and production of local building materials; the theoretical and practical phase was completed last 23 October and participants in the training are awaiting just their certificates to start contributing through their work to nation building.

Seen from this standpoint, Youth Empowerment Centres constitute choice instruments for achieving MINDUH's social integrity goals. They thus stand tall among the structures set up by our Ministry to facilitate the realization of its organic missions. Similarly, in light of their liabilities and the specific prospects of the fledgling structures, Youth Empowerment Centres appear as young wolves with long fangs.

#### *Nanga-Eboko 's Youth integration centre*

However, it is important to underscore that the already existing centres of Yaounde, Fouban and Nanga-Eboko are pilot structures set up beginning in 2007. Their commissioning was subject to much caution and it is within such framework that the first session of the Steering Committee for the management of these centres was held on Tuesday, 18 August 2009 in Nkomkana, in the presence of representatives of Ministries in charge of youth affairs and training, representatives of local and regional authorities and CSOs working with youths. During this experience-sharing meeting, many recommendations were made to improve the operational conditions of the centres and to facilitate integration of youths into the economic and socio-professional fabric. In the same vein, the following actions were retained as imperative: constitution of a statistical databank of youths trained in MINDUH's YECs; sensitize youths to register with MINJEUN so that they can eventually access the National Youth Council; grant YECs real administrative and financial autonomy; upgrade the status of YEC management officials through adjustment of MINDUHs organization chart; harmonize the activities of YECs taking account of the specificities of each region where such centres exist; strengthen

partnership with local and regional authorities and other proximity social stakeholders in the management of centres.