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## ANNUAL REPORT

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# HOFNA ACTIVITIES: JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2016

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## Introduction

HOFNA officially turned 6 in 2016. Since the day of its establishment, HOFNA has focused on empowering disadvantaged women, girls and their communities, promoting socio economic development, peace and stability.

We strive, each day, to foster these tasks by creating a beneficial environment for respect of human dignity, leading initiatives that address the prevention/respond to gender based violence in and around schools/communities and engaging communities in countering violence, radicalization and violent extremism using life skill development, trainings, poetry, spoken word and the unifying power of music.

Working solely with the communities would not have ensured solution of a myriad of problems that had accumulated in the course of many years. We believe that the situation requires an integrated approach and good quality of implementation which can be secured only by bringing in more professional partner organizations. We materialized this belief through deepening collaboration with professional Organizations and businesses, locally and at the international level.

Engaging in the PAPA Project in 2014– a Cameroon Government/European Union partnership initiative to revamp the coffee sector in Cameroon, HOFNA has gained the cooperation and support of several donors especially the U.S Embassy in Yaoundé, the Global Network for Rights and Development and the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund. The positive results of such collaborations are acknowledged by the communities and the donors.

Based on the five-year strategic plan, in 2015 the board of Directors created a Consortium for better coordination of activities. Today we are happy to mention considerable increase in efficiency and effectiveness of our work as well as involvement of new partners in our programs.

In 2016, HOFNA registered great successes just like many huge challenges too especially linked to the uprisings in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon, borne out of various levels of differences and intolerance. It remains a

challenge, on the part of HOFNA, to lead more initiatives that will enhance tolerance and unity in diversity in the various communities we serve.

This Annual Report demonstrates the participation of beneficiaries in the implementation process of our projects and their determination to become a sustainable and vibrant community. This will not only encourage our organization in our everyday work, but also foster new ideas such as integrated community development approach and engagement of families in countering radicalization and violent extremism in making the communities we serve peaceful, stable and self-reliant.

**Christelle Bay,**

*Executive Director*

*(for and on behalf of the BOD)*

## Mission of HOFNA

Empowering the most disadvantaged and susceptible youth and women to achieve lasting positive changes in their lives.

This is achieved by leading initiatives that promote peace building, education, entrepreneurship, leadership development and advocacy on Sexual and reproductive Health/rights and related issues.

## Vision

**" ...peaceful, Healthy and self-reliant communities"**

## Our Target

Our operations serve disadvantaged and vulnerable women and girls, especially those in rural communities in Cameroon. Our work so far covers 18 rural communities in the North-West Region of Cameroon. We equally have led initiatives in the Far North and South West Regions of Cameroon.

## Our Values

1. We believe in empowering women and girls for a just and fair society;
2. We believe that the active participation of youth and women is critical for sustainability;
3. We believe Partnerships with local and international organizations ensures greater impact;
4. We believe capacity building for youth and women will multiply small efforts in many ways;
5. We believe dedicated teamwork requires openness, integrity, commitment and hard work;
6. We believe our team and volunteers and all key actors should actualize these principles in all they do.

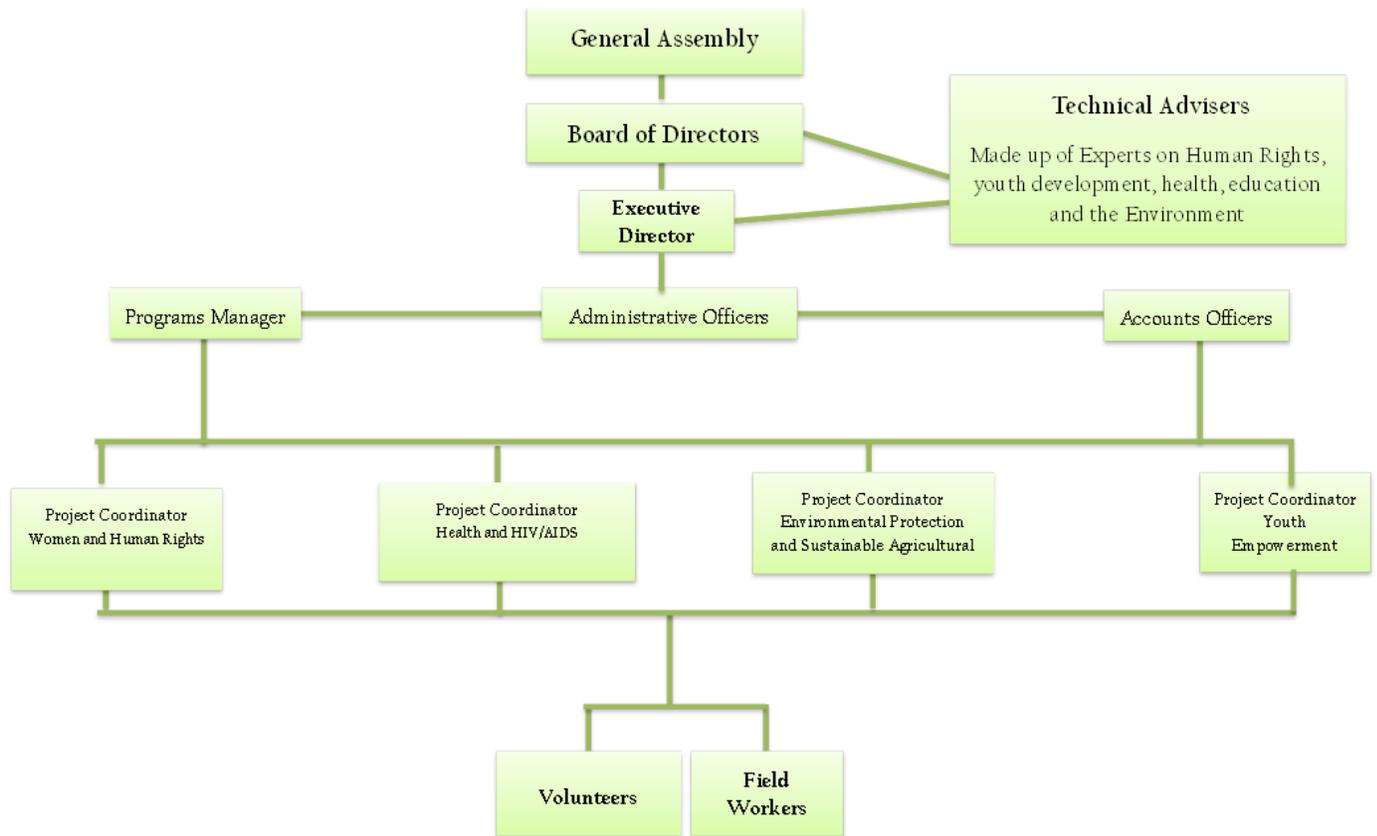
## Organizational Structure

The Annual General Assembly (AGM) of HOFNA's members is its supreme decision making body. Membership is open to all youths who believe in her mission and vision and support her ideas and are willing to foster the mission and vision of the organization. The General Assembly is currently made up of 19 members.

HOFNA is governed by a Board of Directors headed by a President. HOFNA's Board of Directors is responsible for the implementation of all decisions reached at by the AGM. The Board meets once a month to provide strategic orientation to the management team and evaluate outputs. Positions in the BOD are reserved for young people aged between 18 and 35 years old. Board Members are elected by the General Assembly. Three out of the five positions on the BOD is reserved specifically for young women.

HOFNA has a Technical Advisory BOD (of 5 members) that provides technical assistance and expertise to the BOD and Management. The advisers are made up of technocrats in human rights and related issues, gender, youth empowerment, health and environmental initiatives.

HOFNA is run on a daily basis by a team made up of an Executive Director, a Programs Manager, an Administrative Officer as well as an Accounts Officer. All four members of the Management team are aged 18 and 35 years and two are women. There are also four program coordinators for the four main programs run by the organisation.



## Projects

### 1. Creative Arts for Girls Empowerment

#### a. Projection of theatre performance in schools and communities

2016 saw the second phase of our award-winning project - Creative Arts for Girls Empowerment. The first phase involved the training of peer advocates, teacher/community counselors and the development and presentation of HOFNA's first ever Theatre Performance – Of Girls Abused, developed and acted by HOFNA volunteers to raise awareness on child, early and forced marriages and the effects of school related gender based violence on the socioeconomic empowerment of women and girls.

In 2016, the theatre performance was projected to 5 schools and communities during which communities, students, parents and teachers were engaged in frank talks on how best to collaborate to address gender based violence in and around schools.



## b. Caravans with Taxi Drivers and Bike Riders

Taxi drivers and bike riders were involved in mass sensitization events on International Women’s Day and the International Day of the Girl child where they went around town in the North-West Region sharing flyers on prevention and response to school related gender based violence and carrying posters that carried messages on same.



## C. Setting Up of a Gender Violence Survival Support Network

In order to enhance reporting and follow up on cases related to acts of gender based violence in and around schools, in 2016, HOFNA set up a Gender Violence Survival Support Network in Donga Mantung Division of the North-West Region of Cameroon, where the effects of this are most rampant. This has facilitated reporting and a reasonable decrease in these cases.

## 2. One Cameroon Initiative



### a. Production of a manual on for Trainers on Interfaith Peace building in Cameroon

HOFNA worked with consultants and other organizations in the North-West Region to develop a training manual for trainers on interfaith peace building in Cameroon. The Manual outlines clearly various key topics related to inter faith peace building and vital information on becoming an interfaith peace builder in Cameroon

## b. Training of a 100 Civil Society and Youth Leaders on interfaith peace building in Cameroon



With the training manual on interfaith peacebuilding developed for this, HOFNA and seasoned experts from The Center of Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, Community Development volunteers for Technical Assistance, Women for a Change Cameroon, Action Foundation CIG, Sisterspeak237 and others led the training of trainers session. The leaders involved in the training of trainers were mainly from the North-West Region, the South West Region, Center and Littoral.



The diversity of each group trained made the trainings very memorable and worthwhile as the groups were made up of Christians, Muslims, atheists, African traditional religion practitioners etc.



The key topics/issues addressed focused on: *interfaith peace building, understanding the root causes of interfaith conflicts or tensions, dialogue practices, peacebuilding interventions to address interfaith conflicts, becoming an interfaith peacebuilding trainer/facilitator.*

## a. International Youth Day 2016

On international Youth Day 2016, HOFNA Cameroon, WFAC Cameroon and Center of Research, Education, Empowerment and Development (CREED) heath a Youth Dialogue as part of the One Cameroon Initiative. Held under the Theme ‘The Role of Youths in Building Tolerant Communities and Promoting Religious Tolerance in Cameroon’, The youth dialogue aimed at interrogating the role of gender in advancing tolerance and peace and deliberating on the various challenges youths face in consolidating in and out of their communities



The youth dialogue took place at the Franco Alliance Centre in Buea, South West Region of Cameroon, engaging over 35 participants. These young men and women were basically civil society leaders involved with or leading organizations which deal with issues related to peace building, inter faith dialogue and religious extremism.



**Building Lasting Peace in Cameroon**

live simply so that all can simply live  
 write to your leaders  
 educate others  
 aid the starving  
 help those in need  
 mediate a conflict  
 exercise tolerance

**Be Tolerant**  
 create a world for grandchildren  
 stand up against bullying  
 Be open minded  
 Think Positive

**Good Citizenship**  
 don't make others wrong  
 speak up for Peace  
 cultivate inner peace  
 Care for your environment

**Be Patriotic**  
 Campaign for peace  
 learn new ways  
 Be friendly  
 don't fight, forgive  
 teach your children about peace  
 share what you have  
 meditate  
 Be humble

**#Integrity**  
 mutual understanding  
 Avoid Prejudice  
 help others be heard

**Promote mutual understanding**  
 Have a loving attitude  
 Support hunger charities  
 know that your actions matter

**HOFNA** **wfac** Cameroon  
 U.S Embassy, Yaounde - Cameroon  
 Building Hope via Empowerment

**action/2015** **CREED** **You're in ... torching a brighter**

#AStand4PeaceandSecurity hofnacam hofnacameroun www.hofna.org



## a. Development and production of an Animated music on religious tolerance in Cameroon by prominent musicians

The services of 3 prominent musicians in Cameroon were contracted for the production of a music on religious tolerance that is being consumed nationwide. The musicians were selected taking into consideration issues of religion and diversity in Cameroon.

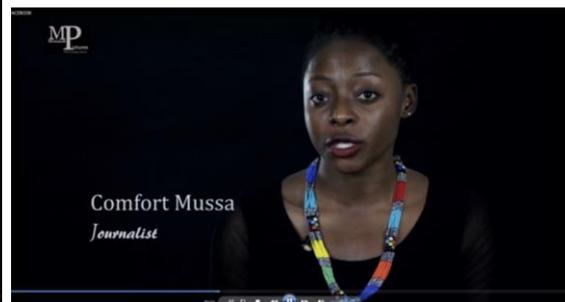
The blend of Annie Anzouer, Ateh Bazore and Isnebu representing Christians, tradition and the Muslim has made the One Cameroon Music the first of its kind in Cameroon.

So far, the music is being passed over community radios and most especially over the national radio (CRTV) especially on key programs such as *Morning Safari, Cameroon Magazine and Luncheon Date*. This enhances outreach to at least a third of the entire population of Cameroon as the national radio is consumed nationwide. Each time the music is being aired, the one Cameroon initiative is always being mentioned. The music has been one of the key sounds that is being aired especially with the current uprisings in Cameroon resulting from unintegrated differences.



The music is sung mainly in English, French and Hausa languages. Some languages of some selected tribes, cutting across the nation were added in some parts of the music.

HOFNA, in partnership with sisterspeak237 also produced tapes to promote religious tolerance in Cameroon.



**National spoken word and poetry contest and Town Hall with the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S Embassy.**

# NATIONAL SPOKEN WORD AND POETRY CONTEST

## Congratulations to our Winners!

**Tata Fabien Kintang**

**1st Position**

Poem: "One God"

**Mbutoh Divine Mpinpin**

**2nd Position**

Poem: "Return of the Disgruntled Sibling"

**Jones Akumbu**

**3rd Position**

Spoken Word: "This is my Camer"



In order to engage youths all over the national territory in addressing religious tolerance, HOFNA launched a National Spoken word and Poetry contest in 2016. The spoken word and poetry contest, being the first of its kind in Cameroon received over 50 entries – poems, spoken word and engaged over 2000 people via the social media (Facebook) on talks on Peace and Religious Tolerance. Participants gave HOFNA and her partners the authorization to use their poems whenever they want to. The entries received were sponsored on HOFNA's Facebook page to maximize outreach and spread messages designed by youth on religious tolerance.



With the assistance of seasoned writers and examiners of the Cameroon general Certificate of Education, the entries were rated and the best three recognized in town hall event that was graced by the presence of the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Public Affairs Officer of the U.S Embassy in Cameroon.



The town hall was attended by over 800 parents, teachers, community members and students from G.B.H.S Bamenda, Progressive Comprehensive College, Nachuo Comprehensive College, Longla Comprehensive College, the University of Bamenda. Also present were leaders of civil society organizations in Cameroon and Mandela Washington Fellows and participants in the Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program



A youth Dance Crew from the University of Bamenda did a Dance presentation – using a blend of culture, dance and traditional melody to preach tolerance, unity in diversity and peaceful coexistence. The Dance featured Muslims, Christians, atheist and African Traditional Religion practitioners in the same space, highlighting religious tolerance and peace.





During the event, the best 3 poems of the National Spoken word and poetry contest were presented to the participants.

Present in this event were 7 Mandela Washington Fellows Hilda Bih, Vumonsi N, Ethel Achoh, Mercy Nkyeng, Conrad Chia, Christelle Bay, Mirabel Ngong,



a. **Town hall with the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S Embassy Yaoundé.**



**HOFNA Awards Poem Writers on Peace**

HOFNA Cameroon has organized a poetry competition for young people in the DCM of the U.S. Embassy. The competition was held on the 15th of October 2016 at the DCM of the U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé. The event was attended by the DCM, HOFNA Cameroon, and other stakeholders. The competition was open to all young people aged 15 and above. The winners of the competition were announced on the 15th of October 2016. The winners were awarded certificates and prizes. The event was a success and was well attended. It provided an opportunity for young people to express their views on peace and tolerance. The DCM encouraged the youth to continue to grow in tolerance to one another, while promoting unity in diversity and peace at all levels. He spoke of the energy in the youths and how the youths can positively transform this energy to promote peace and economic prosperity in Cameroon. Students and participants asked questions to the DCM. He responded to some while Mandela Washington Fellows reacted to some.



HOFNA engaged over 600 young people, teachers and parents in a town hall with the DCM of the U.S Embassy. The DCM encouraged the youth to continue to grow in tolerance to one another, while promoting unity in diversity and peace at all levels. He spoke of the energy in the youths and how the youths can positively transform this energy to promote peace and economic prosperity in Cameroon. Students and participants asked questions to the DCM. He responded to some while Mandela Washington Fellows reacted to some.



### a. HOFNA Farm

The HOFNA Farm is an Agricultural Initiative to empower youth and women farmers and encourage young people to stop looking at Agriculture as dirty or meant for the rural poor and start viewing agriculture as a route out of poverty, unemployment and underemployment. This also serves a tool for deracializing and empowering youth by building the entrepreneurial and employability skills

The program has three dimensions

- i. **Coaching:** Enhancing mindset transformation of young people to believe in agriculture as a means of income generation, climate change control measure and sustainable livelihood
- ii. **Training:** Training youth and women on Agric business best practices for improved livelihoods and income generation.
- iii. **Generating income** for HOFNA so the organization does not rely solely on grants and foreign aid to carry out her mission

In 2016, the farm took two interesting directions – engaging youths in the cultivation of water melon and establishing a coffee nursery with a carrying capacity of 40 000 seedlings in Donga Mantung Division as a way to support the Government of Cameroon’s effort to revamp the coffee sector in Cameroon. The steps are still a little timid but we believe that more impact of this initiative will be felt in 2017.

## b. OTHER INTERFAITH DIALOGUES

In June 2016, HOFNA, in partnership with Mandela Washington Fellows Cameroon held an interfaith dialogue with over 40 youth leaders in the North-West Region.



Participants were mostly youth leaders from around Bamenda, they were made up of muslims, christians and some who had no religious affiliation.



The panelist lead the group of (35 people) to discuss the misconceptions people may have about other people's beliefs and religion. The panelist also guided the participants to discuss on the role religious misconceptions play in fueling violent extremism especially amongst youth. The group kept on talking on this issues and were later asked to provide solutions to this issues.

## Joining the Global Network – Families Against Terrorism and Extremism – FATE.



In 2016, HOFNA became a member of the FATE Network.

Families Against Terrorism and Extremism (FATE) is a grassroots network of organizations, families and individuals at the forefront of Countering Violent Extremism across Europe and Africa.

FATE members believe that Violent extremism is not a problem confined to any one continent, religion or people, but a global issue. We all play a role in preventing future tragedy.



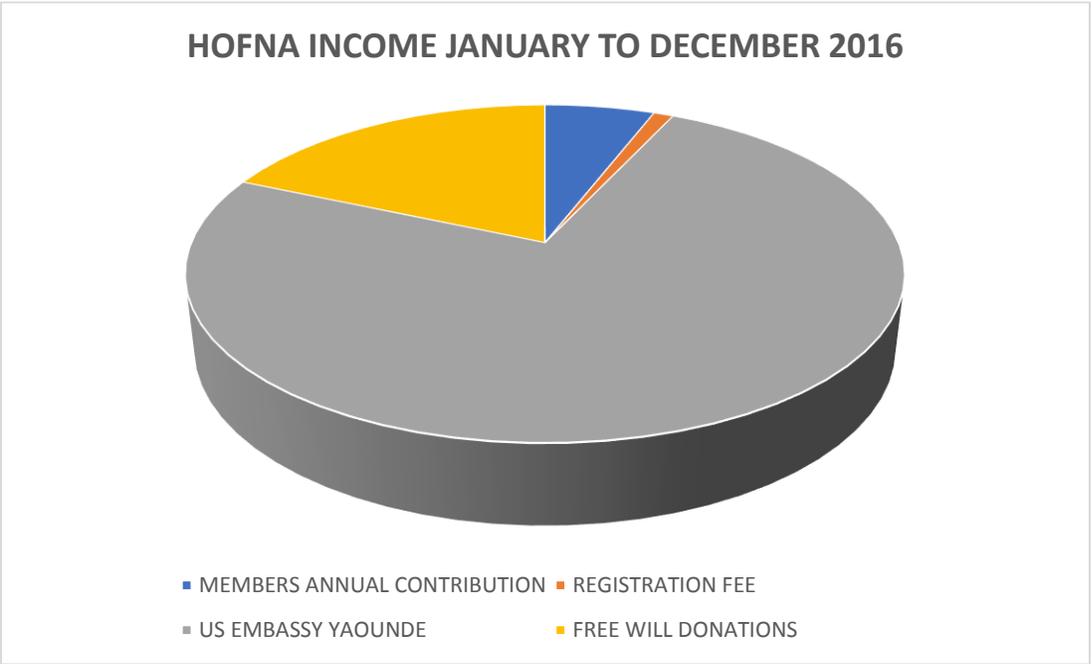
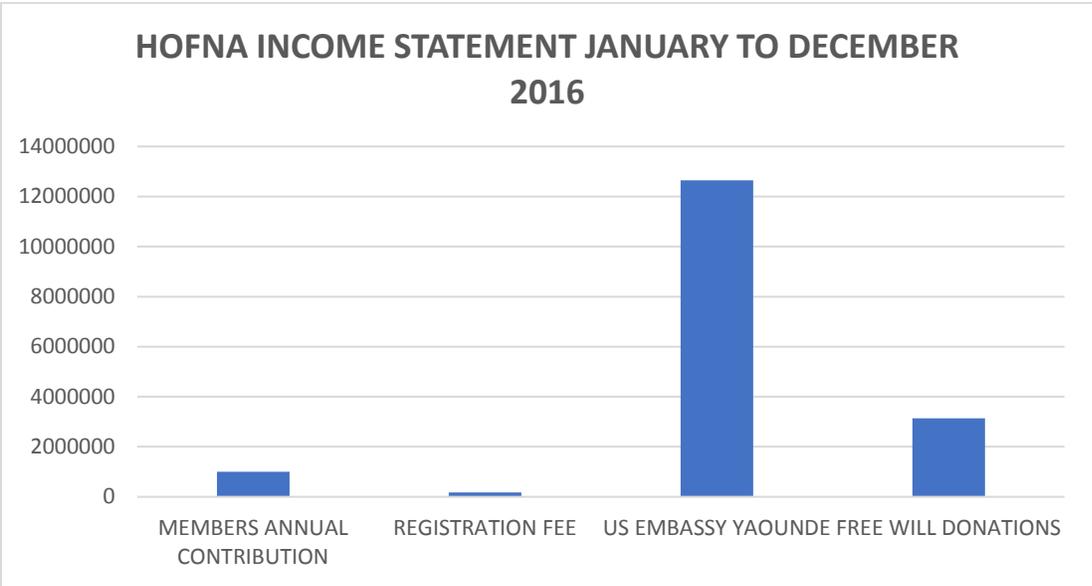
HOFNA took part in the second Annual FATE Summit in Tunisia in November 2016. Key lessons learnt were best strategies to Engage Families in Countering Radicalization and Violent extremism. This include, among others

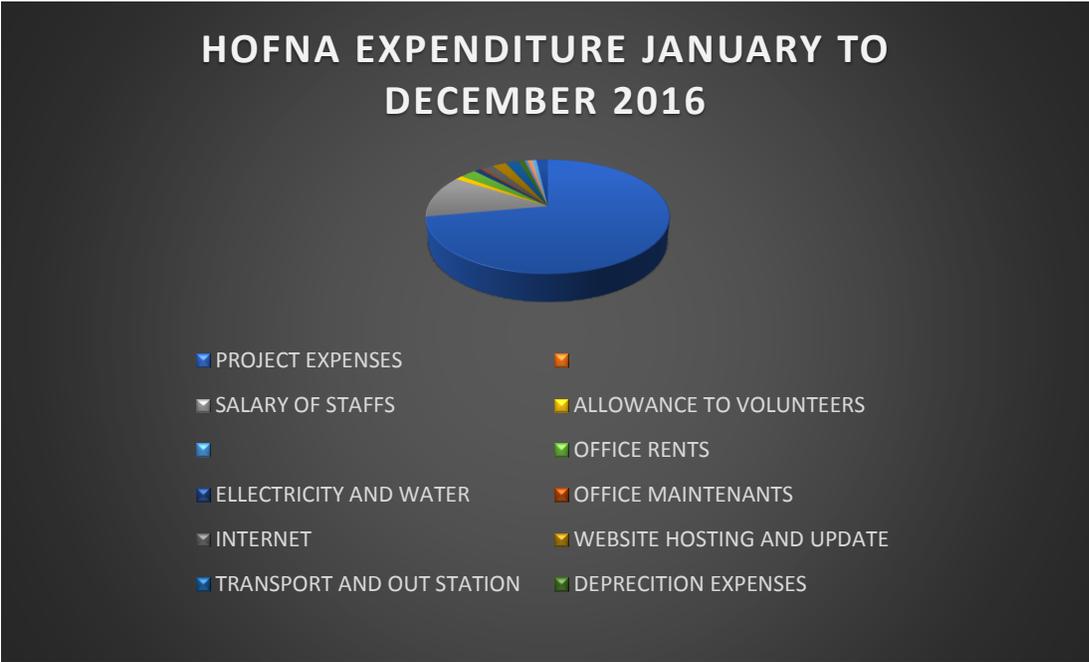
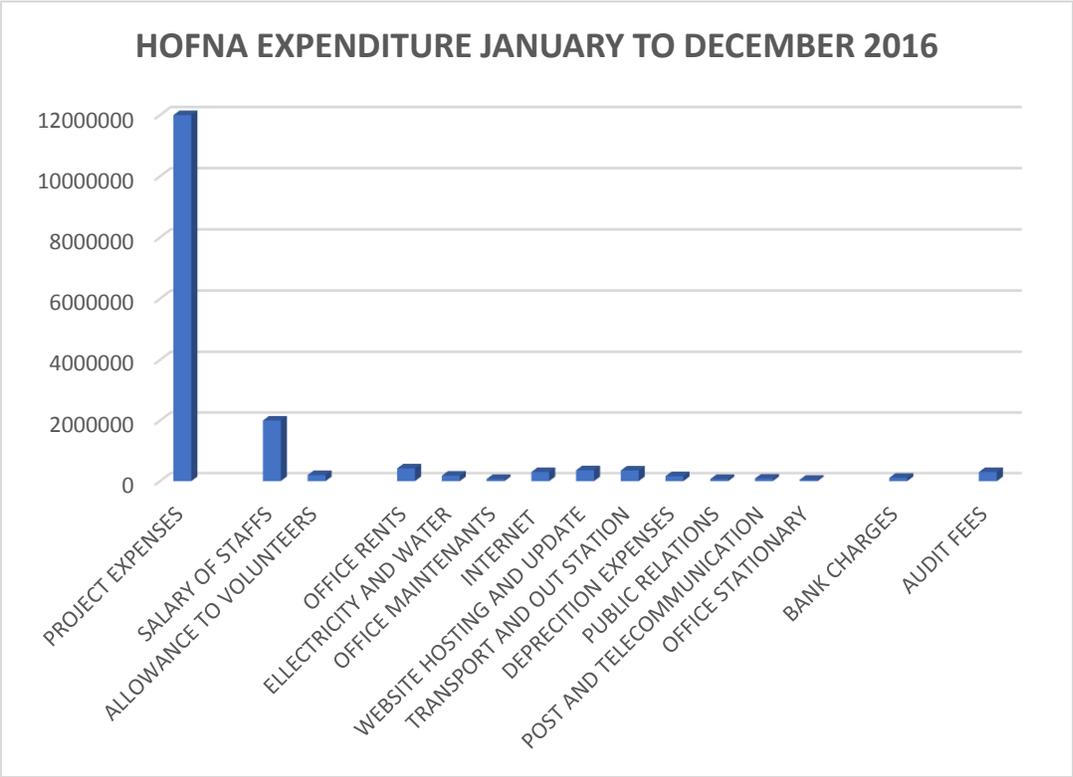
- Promoting cooperation between families & other stakeholders
- Educating families on radicalization processes & prevention/intervention approaches
- Amplifying family counter speech projects and local outreach activities
- Coordinating efforts between different CSOs
- Engaging families in developing more effective counter – extremism policies at local and national levels.

These will be our main areas of intervention in 2017 and later years.

FATE involves online communications campaign, hub, and network of organizations committed to supporting families in countering violent extremism.

# HOFNA Finances – January to December 2016





## Major Difficulties encountered in the course of the year

- a. With the numerous uprisings and violence in the north west and south west regions since the month of November, 2016 remains the most challenging year ever experienced in the life of HOFNA Cameroon. Schools remain closed from November; every other activity was slowed down. Even the melon farm meant to generate income for the organization could not function due to the ‘Ghost towns’ and other strikes. Overall, 2016 met HOFNA with a deficit overall. This equally made mobilizing for resources to carry out other meaningful/impactful initiatives very difficult.
- b. Poor internet connectivity in Cameroon made outreach via social media and other online tools limited; It further affected our mobilizing for resources to foster outreach and sustain other activities of the organization.
- c. Funds budgeted for the payment of training consultants, production of music’s and other resource materials during the implementation of key projects were inadequate
- d. In 2016, just like 2015, HOFNA focused more in leading initiatives that address radicalization and violent extremism. The topics addressed, as we realized, raised a lot of Mistrust and suspicion from some Government officials who mistook the positive objectives of the initiative for a political agenda. This made Obtaining authorizations to host workshops very challenging especially when authorities identified that sensitive issues related to peace/security and tolerance were to be addressed.
- e. Through the trainings sessions carried out in 2016, HOFNA had challenges addressing very serious cases of Religious/cultural differences and other pertinent issues of intolerance especially amongst some of the youth leaders

## Key Lessons learnt

1. Our country's greatest challenges are the Absence of constructive dialogue and mutual understanding amongst youths, leaders and communities, Inadequate knowledge on peace and conflict resolution by community leaders, High level of unemployment among youths, Stigmatization, Extremism and radicalization on the rise
2. Boko Haram's attack in the North was only one of the visible aspects of violence/radicalization in Cameroon. There exists Other aspects of radicalization and extremism in Cameroon whose effects cut really deep and can be more devastating if concrete and immediate action is not taken. These include Religious conflicts, Language discrimination, Cultural/tribal conflicts and intolerance
3. Key Factors contributing to these aspects of violence/radicalization and violent extremism include: cultural/religious intolerance, high level of Unemployment among youths, Negative political/religious/other propaganda, Discriminatory distribution of resources, Low level of formal education
4. The most violent and easily radicalized are youths 10 – 30 years
5. Most of these radicalized/violent youths are school dropouts, bike riders etc. and an overwhelming majority of them are educated and/or unemployed and do not have the necessary skills to be employed.

## Recommendations

Based on the various components of our various activities, the achievements registered as well as the various challenges encountered, HOFNA has the following recommendations/suggestions that will create greater impact in 2017 and maximize outreach/sustainability.

- i. There is a lack of basic understanding of the fundamental beliefs of every religion, hence to stop this, there is a need to develop/implement more sensitization programs and activities that address stigmatization and ethnocentrism
- ii. The most vulnerable and most affected by religious/cultural conflicts and issues of intolerance are the poor and less educated community members. Developing/implementing economic empowerment programs that will improve on their economic situations will yield more positive impact. This can be done by Training youths and women on the essentials of starting and running a business and on sustainable Agriculture best practices for income generation. The Establishment of Youth Empowerment Centers that will build the skills of radicalized youths on ICT, sewing and embroidery and other marketable income generating activities for sustainable livelihoods will also be of added advantage to the families and communities.
- iii. More inter-religious/enhancing multicultural dialogue programs should be led all over the national territory, especially in rural communities where the effects of intolerance are more devastating. Leading other initiatives that focus on tolerance at all levels, not only on religious tolerance is urgent and of utmost importance to Cameroon at this point with numerous uprisings that spring out of intolerance at various levels and the challenges

that come with diversity and differences in language, culture and religion. Engaging families in this shall remain a key to ensure success and sustainability. In the year ahead, HOFNA intends to Initiate and run interactive youth community radio programs all over the National Territory that will address youth leadership, CVE and gender, while promoting civic education, peace and tolerance, de-stigmatization/de-radicalization through workshops and other sensitization programs/encounters with community leaders and policy makers as well as Training Traditional, Religious/Community leaders on Peace and alternative methods of conflict resolution

- iv. Lead sensitization/empowerment programs that build bridges between the Government and Civil society in Preventing Violent Extremism

## APPRECIATIONS

*HOFNA remains grateful to the government of Cameroon for the support received in 2016. Our partners have remained a real source of strength to HOFNA and we remain grateful as we look forward to further avenues for greater collaboration in 2017 and in the years ahead.*

*Our deep appreciations go to the various communities we serve for their active involvement and ensuring that the positive impact of each initiative is always being replicated for enhanced sustainability.*

# OUR PARTNERS/FUNDERS



MANDELA  
WASHINGTON  
FELLOWSHIP  
FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS



... torching a brighter future



Families Against Terrorism & Extremism



U.S. Embassy, Yaounde - Cameroon



CREED  
Building Hope via Empowerment

