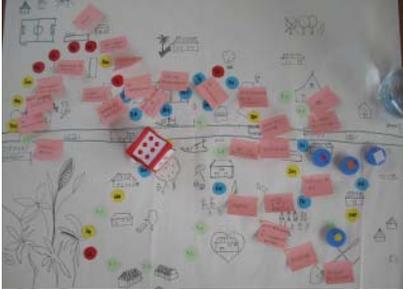


CAMEROON WORKSHOP 2012

PROBLEM ADDRESSED



In August 2012 an ASF-UK team of 14 volunteers and participants went to Bertoua, Eastern Cameroon to assess an ongoing project being conducted in Bambouti, a small village near the border with the Central African Republic (a predominantly French speaking part of the country). The project is being conducted by Cameroon Catalyst who are “an independent, student-led organisation aiming to improve the lives of underdeveloped community in Bambouti” and the Mosame Trust who were set up to “support orphans by providing them with foster parents” and they also “give support to the community of Bambouti to care for the abandoned children by developing micro businesses, health care and schooling”. The organisations’ work together has so far consisted of the construction of a community centre, a school and a mechanics’ workshop, designed in the UK, in collaboration with the village of Bambouti, and then constructed by villagers and completed and checked by a group of Southampton University students each summer.

GOAL ACHIEVED

Cameroon Catalyst and Mosame Trust asked ASF-UK to come and conduct an evaluation of their project in order to help them to critically look at the work that they had done so far and to inform their future plans. True to ASF’s focus as an educational charity on training of built environment students and professionals, it was agreed that this evaluation should be run as a workshop – doing and learning the process of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E). The agreed outcomes were that ASF would produce a report giving an evaluation of the project as well as teaching the organisations, the community and the participants more about the process of, and reasons for, PM&E.

Date: August 2012
Location: Bambouti, Cameroon
ASF Team: C.Dewast, A. Rowett, + E.Spruce
Partners: Mosame Trust, Cameroon Catalyst
Donors: Course Fees & time donated by ASF team
Project type: International Workshop

METHODOLOGY OF WORK



ASF sought to introduce the concept of PM&E and facilitate an environment in which all involved could share their experiences and knowledge, recognising the different backgrounds of those involved. Throughout the workshop participants were learning through doing. The agreed outcomes to be completed during the workshop were: a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis (SWOT), Portfolio of Options, and a list of recommendations for Mosame Trust and Cameroon Catalyst. These were designed to feed into the final report to be produced as a follow up from the workshop. In order to gather relevant information at the field level we divided into different scale groups – government, community and individual. In these groups we worked in the community for 2 days to gather information, utilising different methods of participatory research. This was about trial and error, encouraging participants to learn what does and doesn’t work from some of the tools that were introduced to them. Different methods were also used to encourage participants to process, and reflect on, the huge amounts of information gathered, using reflective diaries and group brainstorming sessions for example. Following 2 days of analysis we then returned to Bambouti to gather any additional information and to feedback what we had learnt to the community themselves; this was done by means of a board game.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

In response to what we found in Bambouti, and in line with current development thinking around good practice, some of the things we have recommended as possibilities for the organisations going forward are broadly around increasing community participation, and building local capacity and self-sufficiency within the community.

We also made some recommendations around organisational development with a focus on adopting the project cycle explicitly in their work, and strengthening organisational structures and management.