

# Activity Report

## Building Income generating skills of People Living with Disabilities in Njinikom



# Sii-UK

**Self-reliance Initiative International**

*realising potentials... improving lives*

**July 9<sup>th</sup> 2020, Njinikom, Boyo Division, NWR Cameroon**

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## Introduction

For the past over three years, the Anglophone regions of Cameroon have remained embroiled in a cycle of deadly violence which according to the UNHCR has claimed over one hundred and three thousand lives and have left over half a million people internally displaced. For people living with disability (PLWD), this has been even more challenging with the increasing attacks and abuse on them and the inability of those living with physical disability to flee for safety. Most of them have been left homeless and those who manage to flee the violence are caught up in need for humanitarian assistance in the areas where they are displaced to.

Motivated by these increasing challenges faced by PLWD and their growing need for humanitarian assistance to enable them deal with the realities of their disability, the ongoing crisis and the even devastating challenges brought by COVID-19, SII-UK held a capacity building program to build their income generating skills by training them on Soap and Vaseline Production and on the fundamentals of starting and running a business. At the end of the program, the 10 participants were given basic start up materials to enable them put skills gained into practice as well as food stuff for improved livelihoods.

The program has further built on SII-UK's motivation to remain of outstanding service to these PLWD and other vulnerable populations, building on their self-reliance through socioeconomic and psychological empowerment and enabling them realize their full potentials despite the numerous challenges they have to deal with.

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## A word of appreciation from the Founder of SII-UK

On behalf of these disadvantaged and vulnerable people living with disabilities, I want to express my deep appreciations to you for the support you gave that brought this program to reality. The smiles on their faces, as you would see in this report, is a clear testament of how much you have touched their lives, nurturing hope, and enabling them to regain their self-esteem. But most especially, your support is guiding them as they make their way out of poverty, abuse, and underdevelopment. We are truly grateful to you for your kind generosity. SII-UK is just a baby that has been born. We hope to continue to work with you, to nurture this dream and bring lasting positive social change to the lives of these people living with disabilities. We welcome and continue to count on your kindheartedness, generosity, and support.

We are because you are. Thank you.



Emmanuel P. Chiati,

Founder | Board Chair, SII-UK

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## About SII-UK



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SII-UK is a UK registered charity that works to ensure that people living with disabilities (PLWDs) and in poverty realize their full potentials and live more fulfilling lives, by promoting their economic empowerment, education, physical and psychosocial support. SII-UK envisions a world where PLWDs are aware of their rights and have the required skills to keep them self-reliant and active members of their communities

SII-UK is made up of a dynamic, committed, and renowned group of social workers with over 8 years of experience in leading ground-breaking empowerment initiatives for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations both locally and internationally. From expertise in education, human rights, social entrepreneurship, and various aspects of social work, we are grounded in genuine service to humanity and deliberate about bringing lasting positive social change to the communities of people living with disabilities that we serve.

We focus on a community-driven and grassroots approach. We understand that people living with disabilities are the most affected by human rights abuses, poverty, and other inequalities and that they best understand the solutions to the challenges they face. Our programs engage them in identifying their needs, priorities and concerns and working with them in addressing same.

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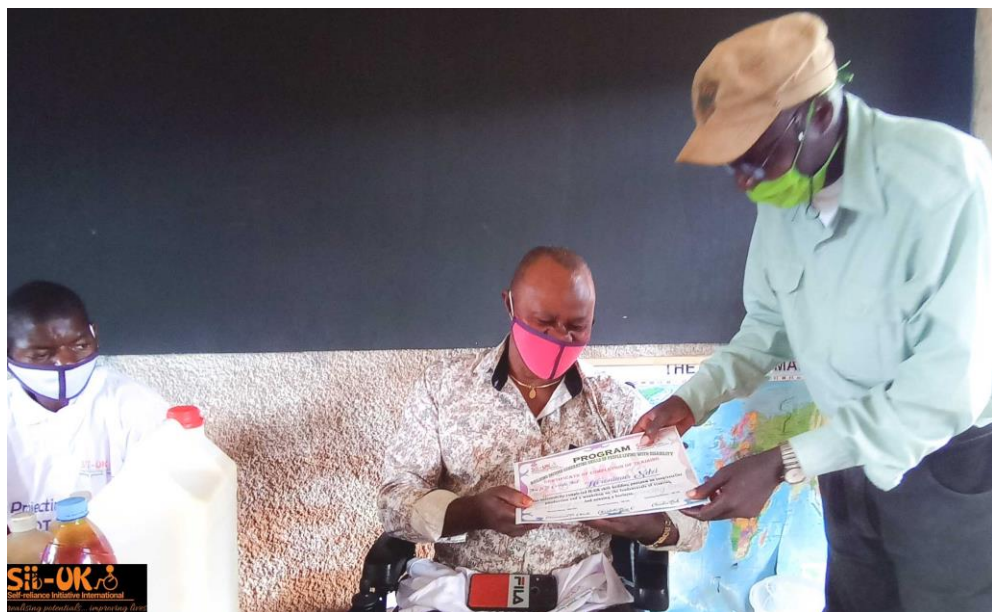
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## The Skill Building Workshop

The workshop took place in Njinikom subdivision in Boyo Division and brought together ten PLWD, selected from various parts of the Subdivision. They were trained on Soap and Vaseline production and on the fundamentals of starting and running a business.

For Ndzi, one of the participants, the workshop was a timely intervention and was exactly the kind of intervention they needed. To him, such efforts needed to be replicated in various communities to reduce the challenges of PLWDs.



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Their enthusiasm and desire to improve on themselves could be read from their prompt attendance. Despite the challenges they had to face to move themselves to the training ground, 30 minutes before the start of the workshop, they were all seated and anxiously waiting for the SII-UK team.



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In Bih's words *"my only challenge could be to carry myself to the training ground. But I could not miss out on this program for anything in the world"*.

Bih is living with a physical disability and is a mother of 6 children. Her leg was amputated after an accident she had on the farm. She has been struggling with the physical pain this brings and the related trauma. Moving with locally made clutches, she took it upon herself to ensure she was at the training and on time.



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After the program, for Bih *“I will now use this knowledge to start up a business for myself. I need to be strong to take care of myself and my six children. I cannot do any farm work again because of my disability. But this soap production is good for me as I do not need to move or strain myself”*



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The participants remained fully involved, participating actively, and interacting with each other and the SII-UK team to gain the required skills. For SII-Uk, these interaction between participants help build a strong sense of community amongst them as well as a growing sense of belonging. This builds on their self-esteem and hope.



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Despite the malfunctions on both legs, all fingers and the face, Akoni's motivation and strong commitment to improve on himself could be felt even by the other participants. He participated in pouring kernel oil into dissolved caustic soda, putting Vaseline into containers and trying as much as possible to identify the ingredients, reciting and memorizing methods of preparations since he can neither read nor write.



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Akoni is the fifth child in a family of 6 children all living with disabilities. To him, he will use the training to build on himself in order to support his siblings to live more fulfilled and happy lives. The hope in a beautiful future for him and his siblings could be read from the smiles on his face, each time he struggled and successfully completed one task like pouring kernel oil into dissolved caustic



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Participants were provided with basic start up materials to ensure they put skills gained into practice and also improve on their livelihoods. They were also provided with food stuff (Rice and Palm oil) to support their feeding.



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In Nain's words – *"I used to select coffee in one organization where I was paid little resources that helped me take care of myself. I lost this job because of the crisis and since then I have been struggling to get another job for myself. But people refuse to take me to work for them because of my disability. Even when I tell them that I can do the job well, they still refuse and refuse to give me a chance...This is something that has been killing me slowly, besides the poverty and hunger..."*.





To Nain, thanks to this program, she will use the skills gained and the basic start up materials provided to start producing soap and savon and selling in her community and will not need to move around in search of jobs where she will get looked down on and abused because of her disability. Bih was born physically challenged.

For 17 years old Chiamoh who is also physically challenged and uses locally made clutches as walking aid, the program will help her have something to do for herself. She hopes to generate income for herself and return to school as she has never had the opportunity to go to school because she and her parents have been unable to pay her school fees.

She shares a similar dream with Yoh, who was unable to continue school due to the challenges he continuously faced due to his disability and now moves around doing minimal jobs to have what to eat. This, to him was that love changing opportunity he needed and was set to improve on himself.



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## Certificates of Participation...

At the end of the training, participants received their certificates of completion with a lot of enthusiasm.



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The Soap and Vaseline produced during the training session was shared amongst participants. This will first of all improve on their hygiene conditions and support them in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in their communities. The soap will also be used for laundry and other household needs in their homes as they use the basic start up materials to start a petit business for themselves.



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## Finances

Thanks to people of good will, such an amazing service was taken to a community in need and at a time when the service does not only keep them safe from COVID-19 but also renews their enthusiasm and hope despite the numerous and devastating challenges they have to live with. Worth noting is that the intervention remains very timely as such efforts hardly get to such communities especially because of the ongoing sociopolitical upheavals.

## Our Hope and Dream...

SII-UK hopes to see them put these skills into practice and has established a follow-up mechanism to remain a part of their empowerment journey and ensure they make the most out of the opportunity. The SII-Uk team will remain in close communication with them and their helpers, understanding their needs and

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challenges and supporting them to ensure they go into production and improve on their livelihoods. SII-UK hopes to ensure accessibility to the required chemicals and requirements for production of soap and Vaseline in the days ahead to ensure their business runs smoothly. With this, one of them could run such a retail shop that provides these materials.

## Challenges:

Despite the huge success recorded, there were a couple of challenges registered.

- ✚ News about a planned ghost town affected activity effective planning. With this, an earlier date was reconsidered to ensure the event took place.
- ✚ Over 70 percent of the participants could neither read nor write. With this, the training took place 95% in the local language and ingredients had to be labelled with all diligence to ease identification.

*In subsequent workshops, a comic booklet in colors that will help them identify the ingredients and methods or stages of production should be produced and handed to participants to facilitate understanding.*

- ✚ SII-UK identified over 40 people living with disabilities in Njinikom whose realities have become even more devastating with the ongoing crisis and COVID-19. But due to limited resources, only ten were engaged in this part of the program. SII-UK looks forward to bringing such service and much more in the days ahead, to these vulnerable people.

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## Appreciations

SII-UK remains grateful to you for your kindness and generosity. It is a seed that has been sowed in the lives of those most in need and we believe that the seed will continue to yield more fruits of empowerment, and self-realization.

The participants too have remained particularly thankful for the empowering and life changing workshop that has boosted their confidence and given them hope for a better tomorrow.

# WE APPRECIATE YOU!



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

~ Margaret Mead

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Thinking of supporting our works? Yayyy...



At SII-UK, our passion is working towards the holistic empowerment of people living with disability in communities, ensuring that they

realize their full potentials and live more fulfilled and fun filled lives.

***You could support any of our activities:***

- We host workshops on self-esteem, leadership, finding inner purpose, setting, and achieving goals and civic engagement for PLWD
- We build income generating skills of PLWDs and other vulnerable populations and support them to start and run businesses for themselves
- We engage PLWD and other vulnerable populations in sustainable agriculture best practices for income generation and sustainable livelihoods
- We provide basic needs such as food, hygiene, sanitation products, and other support services to PLWD and other vulnerable populations.

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