



Value Health Africa (VAHA)Cameroon

Entrance to SIMBOCK

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VALUE HEALTH AFRICA ACTIVITY/MISSION REPORT

VAHA ACTIVITY REPORT CENTER

SUBMITTED BY: DJOMATCHOUA Synthia

DATE: Monday, July 03rd 2023

MONTH: July

MISSION TEAM: DJOMATCHOUA Synthia

ACTIVITY TITLE: Activity report for the Workshop on building public awareness and support for front of package labels in Cameroon.

Report Control by: Mme ONGLA Diane

OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITY:

- 1- Objectives I:** Present results of the process of development of Contextualized FOP Warning labels for Cameroon and Recommendations that were made to the Ministry of Public Health
- 2- Objectives II:** Discuss the strategic importance of FOP Labeling legislation and the role of each stakeholder in realizing it through awareness and advocacy.
- 3- Objective III:** Exchange on effective advocacy strategies and specific actions by the government and each stakeholder to facilitate the next steps towards the achievement of FOP Labeling legislation in Cameroon.

BACKGROUND:

VAHA is a non-profit non-governmental organisation with its mission being to alleviate suffering and improve overall wellbeing.

KEY ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

- 1- Activity 1:** Presentation on the strategic relevance of Front of package (FOPs) labeling legislation in Cameroon: An overview of the development and testing process and ways forward.
- 2- Activity 2:** How warning labels work

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3- **Activity 3:** Question and answer session

4- **Activity 4:** Closing and photo session

BREF DESCRIPTION OF EACH ACTIVITY

Activity 1 Presentation on the strategic relevance of Front of package (FOPs) labeling legislation in Cameroon

Front-of-Package (FOP) labelling is a vital tool for putting decision making about what people eat in their hands. It is a WHO recommended tool for empowering consumers to make informed choices about the food they consume and the Global Compact 2030, set to accelerate progress on NCD Prevention and control. All stakeholders are urged to support the adoption of mandatory FOP labelling legislation in Cameroon as a high-level strategy to mitigate the rising burden of Cancers, Cardiac problems, diabetes, obesity and other growing chronic non communicable disease in Cameroon. This is also an action that Cameroon will be proud of, as a country that lives up to its commitments on the world stage, to reduce the burden of NCDs based on its explicit commandments in the health sector strategy and integrated strategic plan for NCDs.

FOPs labelling are a bunch of signs and symbols written on processed products showing the amount of every component found in the product which helps the consumer make better choices on what they consume. They are of 5 different types but for this study, warning signs are then ones used.

It was realized that, 71% of global deaths are due to NCDs. Each year, 74.000 people die from NCDs in Cameroon a reason why people need to be educated on the importance of FOPs as a strategic tool for the fight against NCDs. In this way, we could better act on the burden of NCDs by pushing industries to effectively implement FOPs on their packaging.

For a better understanding of this, the study took as example salt on which a bunch of tests was performed on the different brands of salt sold in Cameroon using a special instrument. From that study, it was discovered that, 44% of the salt found on Cameroon markets were imported and 56% were homemade. Furthermore, it was found that some manufacturers faked false amounts of products inn food stuffs which really has important consequences on the health of the population and most specifically those living with NCDs and the government because it puts astray the workforce of the country thereby reducing productivity and retarding the attainment of the SDGs.

Activity 2 How warning labels work

Once a product exceeds the number of nutrient contents recommended by the WHO, the manufacturer is called upon to mention it on the packaging of the product. In Cameroon, the food that we consume are not save for the health of the population although a law was voted and passed manufactures. After the testing, the public was consulted to know what they do when buying their packaged stuffs. It was found that, people generally focus mostly and on expiring dates and almost never on its content.

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It was also discovered that, most participants will not buy a product having warning labels and most especially for those which are educated making them more alerted on those signs as compared to those which weren't.

Activity 3: Question and answer session

A multitude of questions were asked after the presentation of the analysis results with some going out of the subject matter which the animator had to restructure and put them into the direction of the study. Some of the questions are as follows:

- Why is the color of the warning signs Black instead of red as conventionally?

To this, the presenter answered by saying that for more contrast and to be easily seen, it is preferable to use Black and white because if not, the manufacturers will knowingly put the warning signs same color as the packaging which will not be easily noticed by the consumers.

- Why focus only on the final processed food instead of also involving farmers who grow those food stuffs and the type of pesticides they use in growing their products?

It was reminded here that, we are dealing with processed and hyper processed foods and not the raw materials and for that, they are not the ones in charge of controlling the pesticides used by farmers but instead the ministry of agriculture and the ministry of small and medium size enterprises.

- How could we really make manufacturers adhere to the laws regarding FOPs labelling continuously and effectively?

For this, manufacturers have to be constantly educated and reminded of the importance of this law on the health of the consumers. Most importantly, there exist an entity, ANOR (Agence des Normes et de la Qualité) whose primary role is to make companies to obey to the laws, norms and implementation of the rules and regulations regarding the manufacturing processes.

Activity 4: closing and photo session

To end our session, we concluded by saying that more emphasis should be laid on FOP labelling as a strategy in the fight against NCDs with most of the work being placed upon manufacturers to effectively use FOP labelling and that the population should be educated on the subject matter and for this, the government, SCOs and all stakeholders should join hands together to make this work as a way to build a more powerful, healthy and strong nation. After this closing words, we proceeded with the photo session as a way to mark the end of our meeting and to seal our collaboration.

OUTCOME OF EACH ACTIVITY



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We call upon all stakeholders including the government, WHO Cameroon Offices, UNESCO, relevant ministries such as Mines, Commerce and not health alone, and all relevant Civil Society organizations to unite in supporting this mandatory legislation for 2023, as it will contribute to a healthier future for the nation as a whole and the economy. As studies have shown, massive education will support our efforts and this is the responsibility of everyone.

KEY PERSONS MET:

Organization	Name	Contact/ Email

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mandatory Front-of-Package Labelling Legislation in Cameroon is a crucial step towards promoting public health, combating NCDs, and empowering consumers. It is a step-in line with WHO recommendations in the WHO Action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs. It is also in line with exception of the population for their health to be protected and in line with government 2018 law on Food safety which mandates produces to protect consumers. Again, the government should put in place a legislation and guidelines addressed to manufacturers on proper food labelling. Furthermore, with education being an important tool in the attainment of the SDGs, the population needs to be educated on FOP labeling as a way to reduce the consumption of risk products and thereby reduce the development of NCDs and also encourage the practice of physical activity.

BUDGET / Expenses LINE

ITEM	UNIT COST	FREQUENCY	TOTAL
Transportation	2500	1	2500

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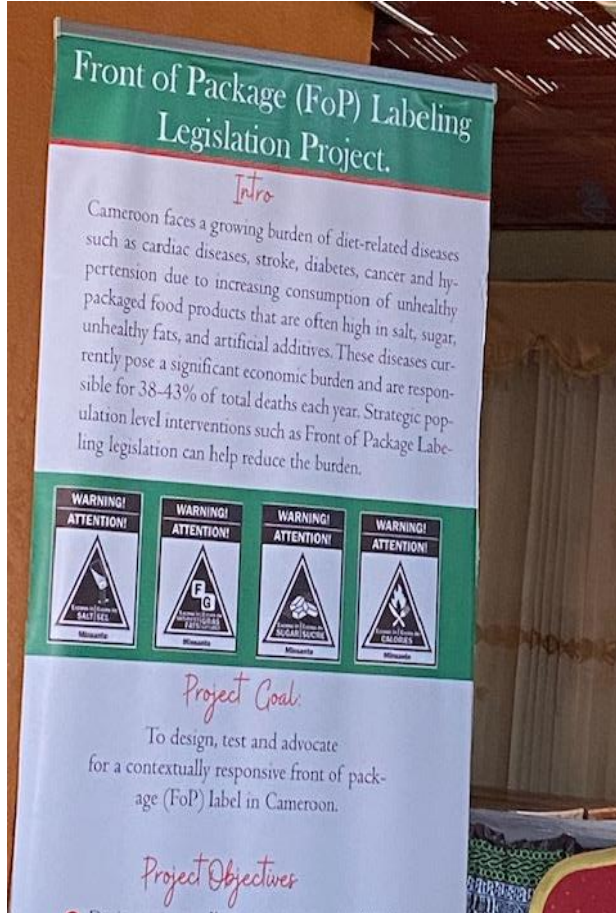
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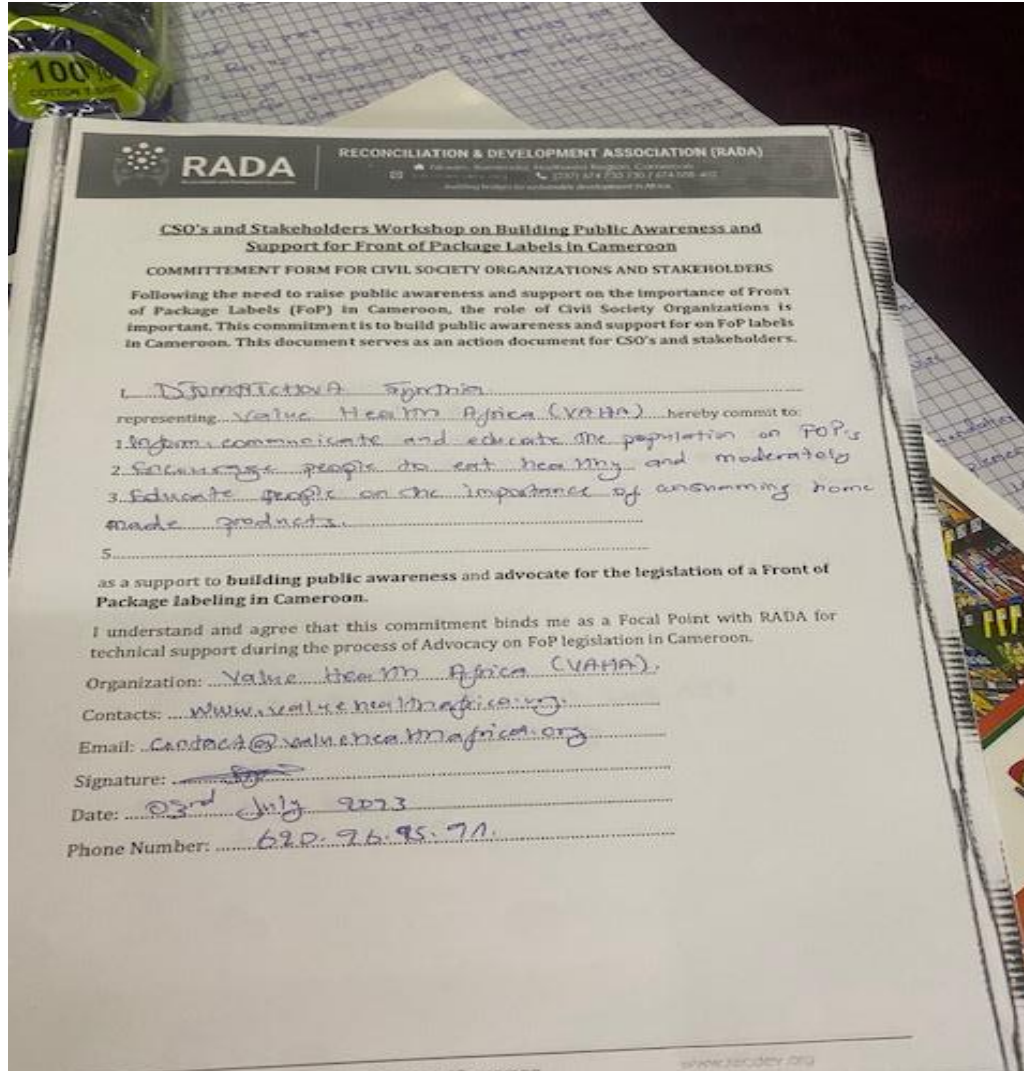
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 Building blocks for sustainable development in Africa

CSO's and Stakeholders Workshop on Building Public Awareness and Support for Front of Package Labels in Cameroon

COMMITMENT FORM FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Following the need to raise public awareness and support on the importance of Front of Package Labels (FoP) in Cameroon, the role of Civil Society Organizations is important. This commitment is to build public awareness and support for on FoP labels in Cameroon. This document serves as an action document for CSO's and stakeholders.

I, Dominique A. Njindou
 representing Value Health Africa (VAHA) hereby commit to:

- Inform, communicate and educate the population on FoP's
- Encourage people to eat healthy and moderately
- Educate people on the importance of consuming home made products.

5. _____

as a support to building public awareness and advocate for the legislation of a Front of Package labeling in Cameroon.

I understand and agree that this commitment binds me as a Focal Point with RADA for technical support during the process of Advocacy on FoP legislation in Cameroon.

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