
FECA/FAKO UK SURVEY REPORT

FECA/FAKO UK

A Survey Report on the Rehabilitation of Bakweri Village Names

(Survey and Report)

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Contents

Overview	1
Background.....	1
Survey Scope and Format	1
Outline of Report	2
The Mayors' Response	4
Daniel Lyonga Matute, Lord Mayor of Limbe.....	4
Johannes Mokoto Njie, Lord Mayor of Muyuka	4
Charles Mbella Moki, Lord Mayor of Buea.....	4
Richard Fombon, Lord Mayor of Tiko.....	5
The Chiefs' Response	6
Chief David Molingé of Muea, President of Fako Chiefs Conference.....	6
Chief Fenda Ngeke of Likoko-Membea	7
Chief Eko Nganje Isaac of Wokoko.....	7
Chief Robert Mbella Efungani of Wova I.....	8
Chief Isume Nyoki of Wova II	8
Chief Molua Messe of Wokwaongo.....	8
Chief Findi William Elome of Ekona Mbenge, Muyuka	9
Chief ETINA MONONO of Great Soppo.....	9
The Notables' Response	10
Andrew Monjimba Motanga, Government Delegate, Limbe I.....	10
Rebecca Eposi Ngeve of Wokwai Village, Senior Lecturer, Sociology and Anthropology Department, University of Buea.....	10
Mola Abel Njoh, Retired Secondary School Principal and Divisional Delegate for Secondary Education in Muyuka.....	11
Matute Menyoli, Deputy Station Manager, CRTV/MCFM Buea	11
Rev. Pastor Eyole Genty Ndely, Cameroon Baptist Convention	12
Tata Kinge of Wonakanda Village, Artist/Musician and Promoter of the Bakweri Culture.....	12
Christiana Eposi Ikome, Cameroon Miss Tourism 2008/2009.....	13
Prince George Mokosa of Gbwitingi (Bwitingi) Village	13
Pecos Mafany, Teacher of History, Bilingual Grammar School, Molyko, Buea.....	14
Prince Elinge Kange of SOWEDA, native of Wovilla village	14
The Bakweri Older Generation's (Aged 50 plus) Response	15
The Bakweri Middle Generation's (Aged Between 30 and 49) Response	16
The Bakweri Younger Generation's (Aged below 30) Response	17
The Non-Bakwerians' (Resident in Fako Division) Response	18
Feca/Fako UK Response: A Letter to Mola Mbua Ndoko	19

Sign off	24
Amendment History	24

Overview

Background

In July 2009, Mola Thomas Mbuu Ndoko, a Bakweri native in Buea, appealed to the Bakweri Community in the United Kingdom (Fako UK) to write to the mayors of Fako Division towns about changing the distorted names of some Bakweri villages back to their original forms. In his letter, he wrote that he had written to the said mayors some months before but had not received a single reply.

Mola Ndeley Molulu, President of FECA/FAKO UK, convened a meeting of the executive to look into the matter. During the meeting, the executive decided that rather than just contact mayors, FECA/FAKO UK would carry out a wide survey across Fako Division where mayors, chiefs, Bakwerians, and non-Bakwerians alike would be interviewed. FECA/FAKO UK believed that getting the views of people resident in Fako division, especially those of Bakwerians from all walks of life and different age groups, would present a strong case for or against reverting the distorted village names back to their original forms. Mola Ndeley Molulu, Mola Ngoina Elive and Mola Lifambe Ewoma from the FECA/FAKO UK executive were appointed to lead the enquiry.

The enquiry team set up another enquiry team in Buea to be headed by Mola Stephen Mokondo Moki with responsibility to carry out the survey in Fako Division. Some people who could not be interviewed by this Buea survey team were contacted directly from Britain by telephone or email.

Survey Scope and Format

There were three main groups of individuals interviewed: mayors, chiefs, and Bakweri notables. The mayors included:

Daniel Lyonga Matute, Lord Mayor of Limbe I;
Johannes Mokoto Njie, Lord Mayor of Muyuka;
Charles Mbella Moki, Lord Mayor of Buea; and
Richard Fombon, Lord Mayor of Tiko.

The mayors of Bimbia and Idenau were not available for interview.

The chiefs included:

Chief David Molingé of Muea and President of Fako Chiefs Conference;

Chief Fenda Ngeke of Likoko-Membea;

Chief Eko Nganje Isaac of Wokoko (Woh-koh-koh) I;

Chief Mbella Efungani of Wova I;

Chief Isume Nyoki of Wova II;

Chief Molua Messe of Wokwaongo;

Chief Findi William Elome of Ekona Mbenge; and

Chief Emmanuel Etina Monono of Great Soppo.

Bakweri notables included:

Andrew Motanga Monjimba, Government Delegate of Limbe I Council;

Rebecca Eposi Ngeve, Senior Lecturer, Sociology and Anthropology Department, University of Buea;

Abel Njoh, retired Principal and former Divisional Delegate for Secondary Education, Muyuka;

Matute Menyoli, Deputy Station Manager, CRTV/MCFM;

Pastor Genty Eyole Ndely of the Cameroon Baptist Convention;

Tata Kinge, artist and promoter of Bakweri culture;

Christiana Eposi Ikome, Miss Tourism Cameroon 2008/2009;

Prince Elinge Kange of SOWEDA, and native of Small Soppo Wovilla;

Prince George Mokosa of Gbwitingi village; and

Pecos Mafany, History teacher, Bilingual Grammar School, Buea.

Many other Bakwerians across Fako Division were interviewed, especially in Buea, Tiko, Muyuka and Limbe. Also interviewed were select non-Bakwerians resident in Fako Division.

Outline of Report

There are eight more sections in this report, the first seven of which represent the feedback from these groups:

Mayors;

Chiefs;

Bakweri notables;

Bakwerians aged 50 and over (the older generation);

Bakwerians aged 30 to 49 (the middle generation);

Bakwerians aged under 30 (the younger generation); and

Non-Bakwerians.

The final section of this report contains a letter written by FECA/FAKO UK by way of response to Mola Mbua Ndoko.

The Mayors' Response

Daniel Lyonga Matute, Lord Mayor of Limbe

(Spoken to directly from the UK, he admitted he received the letter from Mola Mbua Ndoko)

“I am very aware that the traditional names of some of our villages have been distorted. The distortion happened during the colonial era, and it is unfortunate that these strange names have stayed ever since. The names can be changed, and should be changed. All we need is Bakweri people working together to do it. Our tribe is facing many challenges and if these problems are not tackled straight away, this tribe might disappear in future. The tribe has been divided for too long. I have written books on Bakweri history and culture, and I will keep writing.

I am also glad that you have also mentioned performances of schools in Fako division, and the performances of Bakweri children. I know that many Bakweri children are underperforming in national exams. My council has awarded scholarships to many students in Limbe, and that is something we would keep doing. When you do your results analysis, send me a copy. I will study it, and then try and visit schools in Limbe to discuss achievement of pupils.”

Johannes Mokoto Njie, Lord Mayor of Muyuka

(Interviewed by the Buea survey team, he admitted he received the letter from Mola Mbua Ndoko)

“It is a good idea that the names should be changed to reflect the traditional pronunciations and meanings. I do not know exactly how it should be done, but I think the authorities of the Ministry of Territorial Administration have to be informed. We the Bakweri people would have to work with them to make the change effective so that they are going to be changed even on official documents. Not only have the traditional names changed but I also hear some strange names from other cultures that have been given to settlements in Fako Division. If a name has to be given to a settlement, it should be a traditional name.”

Charles Mbella Moki, Lord Mayor of Buea

(Spoken to directly from the UK, he admitted he received the letter from Mola Mbua Ndoko)

“I am very much aware that the names of many Bakweri villages are not pronounced and written the way they are pronounced in Bakweri. The chiefs of those villages (the villages with distorted names) should take a lead in changing them back to their original Bakweri forms. Of course, other Bakwerians will work with them, but they (chiefs) should also play a leading role. There is a lot of disunity in the Bakweri tribe, and anything that will require collective action by Bakweri people will be good for the tribe.”

Richard Fombon, Lord Mayor of Tiko

(Spoken to directly from the UK, he said he did not receive any letter from Mola Mbua Ndoko)

“I am not aware that some names of Bakweri villages have been distorted, but it is possible. If Bakweri people have identified distorted names of some of their villages, then those names should be changed immediately. When you change traditional names, you also change their meaning, and such a thing should not be allowed. In most places all over the world, names of towns and villages have meanings that are very important to the indigenes of those areas. You have my one hundred per cent support. If there is any role you think I can play, please do not hesitate to contact me.”

The Chiefs' Response

Chief David Molineg of Muea, President of Fako Chiefs Conference

(Interviewed both by the Buea survey team and by the UK team)

“I know that some of the names of our villages are mispronounced and misspelt, and that it comes from the whites who wrote the names. If Mola Mbua Ndoko and some of our sons and daughters have realised that there is a need to change the names of Bakweri villages to reflect their indigenusness, then it a good idea. I like the idea that the names be changed to spellings that will give the original pronunciations. The problem is that the names have gone into official documents and if we want the change of the names to be effective, we need to inform state authorities that we want that our names be changed for this or that reason, and I think it will not be a problem.

I am planning to call a conference of traditional leaders in Fako Division; some elites and politicians are going to be present in that meeting. I will raise this issue and from there we see the next step. I will also invite Mola Mbua Ndoko and some elites of the division, study the situation and then see what it will take. I cannot give precise answers on what will be done now, but I think that we would have no problems changing them.

We also have many other problems in Fako division that need to be addressed. We have indigenous names from villages out of Fako that are gaining ground in Fako Division, for example Towe in Limbe. Settlers use names of their villages to name settlements in Fako division. Their fons and chiefs go as far as installing chiefs in those settlements within Fako division. It appears they have conquered Fako division and they have the right to do whatever they wish in the region. Some have even threatened to operate as indigenous traditional leaders in Bakweri villages.

We have not been conquered and chiefdoms do not operate within chiefdoms. They should install their tribal heads *and not chiefs* within Fako division. They use the advantage that they have the population to dominate the indigenous people of Fako. I think that we should come together and see how we could influence government to implement its policy of minority rights so that we the minorities can be protected in all aspects.

Take the case of employment in SONARA, and other state institutions in Cameroon. We are not considered. When I tried that we should come together with other chiefs to hit the issue, some of them shied away. After making some noise about it, I finally

realised that I was almost standing alone. We needed Bakwerians abroad to also react to put the state on its feet, but no reaction came.

So, I like what they have brought up this time to make sure that the names of our villages take the spelling that would reflect traditional appellation.”

Chief Fenda Ngeke of Likoko-Membea

(Interviewed both by the Buea survey team and by the UK team)

“I am very aware that some of the names of Bakweri villages are mispronounced and written differently from the way they are pronounced in *Mopkwe*. I know that the *ba* originates from the Duala tongue. Well, the whites were those who could read and write in the early days. So, they wrote them in their own ways. If Mola Ndoko wants to work with our children abroad and at home for the misspelt village names to be re-written to reflect the way we pronounce them in *Mopkwe*, I have no objection. It is a good idea. We all should work with them to carry out this massive project.

It is not only the Bakweri names that are in trouble. Our children do not even speak *Mopkwe* right in the villages; our traditional folk tales and songs that carried a lot of educative messages have gone. The chiefs and the elites need to sit and talk about all of these things. Our children abroad should help sponsor Bakweri classes during holidays where the young ones would be taught how to read and write *Mopkwe*; they would be taught our traditional songs, poems and how to prepare our traditional dishes. If we do not do these, our culture would be gone in the nearest future.

If our children learn to read and write the language, they will also learn how they are supposed to be pronouncing names of places in our own traditional way. Signboards can help if they are placed in strategic places. But we need to organise young smart guys to produce charts, and small books and run TV programmes that can be used to educate people in *Mopkwe*.”

Chief Eko Nganje Isaac of Wokoko

(Interviewed by the Buea survey team)

“I know that the names have been misspelt and mispronounced. I have no objection if others have raised the issue that the names need to be re-written to reflect their traditional pronunciations. I think signboards are a good idea, so they can start implementing the change of the names from there. They can also use radio announcements to inform and tell the public how they are expected to pronounce the names. If you take note, we have Bakweri villages here in Buea with two names pronounced in *Mopkwe* differently but have the same spelling. That is the name of my village called *Wokokoh* and the village of Chief Mbua Emerson called *Wokoko*. They are being written as *Bokoko*. They have different meanings. But if we pronounce and spell them as *Bokoko*, the meanings of the names get lost. So it is important that such names be re-written to reflect the original pronunciations in *Mopkwe*.”

Chief Robert Mbella Efungani of Wova I

(Interviewed by the Buea survey team)

“I am very happy that the idea of changing Bakweri village names to their original forms has come up. Mola Mbua Ndoko and our sons and daughters have my total support, and we the chiefs, mayors and the rest of Bakweri people should work together to change the names. The whites wrote down the names using the Duala language instead of the Bakweri language, and this has caused embarrassment because we say Wova when we speak Bakweri but the government and non-Bakwerians call it Bova. We need to change it immediately.”

Chief Isume Nyoki of Wova II

(Interviewed by the Buea survey team)

It is true that names of some of our villages are misspelt and mispronounced. These names were written down by the whites the way they could pronounce them. The idea to change the names is a good one. For instance, if a white comes to Cameroon and uses the maps and official documents to get to a village called *Bova*, he or she will get confused that the people in the village pronounce it *Wova*. He or she may think that they are lost. Let the names be harmonised so that we are going to have a common way of writing and pronouncing the names which of course should be the *Mopkwe* way.

The chiefs can follow up on the idea for the names to be changed. We are going to have a conference soon of Fako chiefs. The issue should be raised at the conference. We will make sure that we debate it, then we see what it requires for the names to be changed.

Chief Molua Messe of Wokwaongo

(Interviewed by the Buea survey team)

“Many of us are much aware that the names of many of our villages are not written correctly and as such give them a different pronunciation. That is why even the paramount chief addresses me as the Chief of Wokwaongo and not the Chief of Bokwaongo. Whenever he sends a letter to me, he always writes behind it that the Chief of Wokwaongo. This means that he too is aware that the names are not correctly spelt out.

I support the idea that the names be rehabilitated as they have proposed. The problem is that, who are those who are going to sacrifice the time to do it? Even if those abroad send money for it to be followed up, are we sure that those to manage it will get things done as we want? I am happy that you met Chief Molinege who is our president and he talks of bringing up the issue in our forthcoming meeting. Even if he forgets, I pray that I do not forget too. Try and be reminding us about the matter. Do not give up, make sure that you spread this message from Mola Mbua Ndoko and your brothers to other chiefs as you say you are doing.

The truth is that the Bakweriman hasn't got the spirit of always pulling things together. They are mostly focused on personal interests, and not on issues that affect the entire Bakweri tribe. The problem I want you to put to them would be identifying the person

who would be ready to sacrifice for the Bakweri people so that this project they want to carry out should be a success. So tell them that I support the idea. They have my support so they should go ahead.

Again there are many issues that I will like them to follow up here. Persons in villages are now selling land to strangers within Bakweri settlements. These strangers are very disrespectful; they go as far as trying to destroy traditional shrines we need to protect, just because they have bought the land around these places. I have a case here in Wokwaongo where somebody bought land on a location within the village that we see is not good for a stranger to occupy. Our village council has raised the money and asked the person to collect and leave the village but he has refused. He has taken me to court that he only needs but the land. Instead of the villagers to scare him and ask him to collect his money, they go behind and encourage him to resist taking the money. You can see the opposite sides of Bakweri people: they would pretend to go along with what the village has agreed upon, then the next minute they would side with the enemy of the villagers for selfish interests.”

Chief Findi William Elome of Ekona Mbenge, Muyuka

(Interviewed by the Buea survey team)

“The distorted names of Bakweri villages should be changed immediately. It is a shame that the names have stayed for that long. Bakweri people have to speak with one voice and act collectively to implement the change. We Bakwerians have to learn to work together, and I thank Mola Mbua Ndoko and our sons and daughters for raising the issue.”

Chief ETINA MONONO of Great Soppo

(Interviewed in the UK)

“The problem with the spelling of the names of Bakweri villages has been with us since the days of colonialism. The whites couldn’t spell some of the names the way Bakwerians pronounced them, hence used the Duala language to spell them. Unfortunately, this changed their meanings. These distorted names have gone on official documents, and we the Bakweri people have got to inform the Ministry of Territorial Administration to replace the wrongly-spelt names with the correct ones. This is an opportunity for Bakweri people to work together.”

The Notables' Response

Andrew Monjimba Motanga, Government Delegate, Limbe I

“I am aware that the names of some Bakweri villages are not pronounced and written the way they are pronounced in Bakweri. For example, some people say ‘Bomana’ village instead of ‘Womana’ village. It will be very good if the traditional Bakweri names are brought back. We should not allow History to be destroyed. Whoever is leading this good cause should be praised and given the support that they need. Bakwerians should work together on an important issue like this.”

Rebecca Eposi Ngeve of Wokwai Village, Senior Lecturer, Sociology and Anthropology Department, University of Buea

“I am aware that not only are the names of Bakweri villages being misspelt and mispronounced, even the way the name of the tribe is documented is not the way the people traditionally pronounced it. In books it is spelt *Bakweri* whereas it is traditionally *Mopkwe or Wapkwe* (in plural). Names of many Bakweri villages like *Wonakanda, Wokwai, Wonduma* are misspelt which makes the names not to reflect their traditional meanings. This is the same with names given to persons like Efvosi, Eposi and so on. This is because we allow strangers to tell us about our own culture.

It is a good idea that the names be changed to the traditional Bakweri names so that they should not lose their meanings in future. This can be done by Bakwerians at home and abroad sitting together, then presenting their problem to the authorities with reasons. If the government could change the appellation of Provinces into Regions, they can also help to change the names to the original traditional forms. The government has the power to change the names since they are already documented. Bakwerians have to sit, then study the situation, find the steps they would follow, the right quarters to go to and how to go about it all.

The Bakwerians abroad should support projects to carry research on the Bakweri culture so that the Bakweris would teach the world realities about themselves. They should not allow others to research about them and teach them and the world things which are not realities of the Bakweri people. This is what has caused the misspelling

of many Bakweri names. Bakweris should look for their own vowels and letters to represent pronunciations that are not found in the English language but found in Mopkwe. It is very difficult to hear *ba* in Mopkwe. We have but *wa*. When Bakweris start writing about themselves, it will help to preserve the culture. There are letters in the English alphabet that the Bakweris do not use. They just need to do some research with linguists then look at how some of the letters could be adjusted to suit the way Bakweri people pronounce.”

Mola Abel Njoh, Retired Secondary School Principal and Divisional Delegate for Secondary Education in Muyuka

“I am aware that the original names of some Bakweri villages have been changed and that this is as a result of the Europeans (Germans and English) not being able to use the alphabet to represent certain Bakweri pronunciations. This is the problem of using diphthongs. Since it was difficult for them to use the letters of the alphabet to represent all the Bakweri words, they looked for the nearest possible letters that could give the sounds of certain Bakweri words and names.

I know that Mola Mbua Ndoko has a Bakweri-English dictionary. It can be used to work on the names of villages. I don’t know the procedures to go about changing the names, but if we find out, then it would be good.”

Matute Menyoli, Deputy Station Manager, CRTV/MCFM Buea

“It is true that the names of some Bakweri villages are not spelt the way they are pronounced in *Mopkwe*. This problem is not only in Fako Division. Take for example: the traditional name of Yaoundé is *Ongola*. How the whites changed it to Yaoundé, one cannot tell. It is the same case with Edea in the Littoral Region. The traditional name is *Adie*. I learnt this when working in this region as a journalist. When I went out for coverage there I realised that the indigene called it a different name from the one in the official documents.

I support that the names of the Bakweri villages be changed to the traditional names so that the *Ba* and *Bo* be replaced with the traditional *Wa* and *Wo* in Bakweri. It is going to be a gradual process because the names cannot change overnight. Authorities need to be informed because the names already exist in official documents and maps of the country. The idea of using signboards is good but the names also need to change in official documents to avoid strangers getting lost. Imagine that a foreign researcher gets to Cameroon and has to carry out research in Wonakanda, and on his travelling map and documents the name appears as Bonakanda. This could lead him into confusion when he gets there. If the names have to be changed, let’s look for the proper means to change them without being in a hurry.”

Rev. Pastor Eyole Genty Ndely, Cameroon Baptist Convention

“I know that some names of Bakweri villages are wrongly pronounced and misspelt. This is not only the problem of names of Bakweri villages, we also realise this when it comes to the names of individuals like Eposi, Eveti and so on. If you realise, some persons spell them with an “f” as in Efosi and Efeti. It is better to spell Eposi with an “p” because it is near the way the Bakweri pronounces it. If you spell it Eposi, it becomes a Duala name and no longer Bakweri.

I am among those who are presently working to translate the Holy Bible from English to *Mopkwe*. If you take a look at the calendar of events for the churches, you will see that I write the names the way they are to be pronounced in *Mopkwe* like *wo* and not *bo*. People can attest that they always hear me even in the church or radio call the names of villages and people the way they are supposed to be pronounced in *Mopkwe*. This is because I know the right way they are to be pronounced and that we are those who wish that our language gets a standard for all to use. If, for example, now that we are translating the bible and I was to write my name *Eyole*, it is wrong. But that is the way it is generally spelt by all now. From our classes, I came to understand that the right way to write the name is *Eyoleh*. To spell *Efosi*, we spell it like this: *Evhorsi*.

That is, we are looking for a combination of letters in the alphabet that can produce the sounds in Bakweri words and names.

It is a good idea that the names be changed. For this to be effective people need to be schooled on it and how the Bakweri pronounce their words and names. This can only be done effectively if classes are organised and the younger generations are taught to acquire the skills of reading and writing *Mopkwe* properly. If they acquire this they can transmit to future generations and the meanings of the names we have in *Mopkwe* will not get lost.

If they want to use signboards, good, but the people need to be taught how to pronounce it. It is going to be a process that needs planning. They can also support our [Bible translation] project because we have financial problems to finish the project. I am working with the GCE Board Registrar, Mola Humphrey Monono, on the project.”

Tata Kinge of Wonakanda Village, Artist/Musician and Promoter of the Bakweri Culture

“I am aware that names of Bakweri villages are wrongly spelt and pronounced because when I listen to parents and relatives speak, they usually pronounce the names with *wa* not *ba* as it is written. I think that the names were spelt this way because the Europeans found it difficult to twist their tongues the way the traditional Bakweris do. So they wrote the names the way they could easily call them.

I like that the names should take their traditional pronunciation and spelling because if the names are not protected now, we are going to lose everything. I like the idea because I am facing problems writing the scripts for my music. I am always afraid that I will not spell the wordings the right way. I need to transcribe my music in *Mopkwe* and other languages, but I am afraid that I may do it in a way that other Bakweris will not

accept. It is a good idea so you should not only limit yourselves on names of villages but to the language in general.

I as an artist have a probability of distorting the language and giving a format that others can follow to write and call many Bakweri names and words. You know that music goes across the borders of Bakweri. The moment I start writing the language the wrong way, the possibility is that it can spread and remain as the whites have already done with our names and those of villages. Those abroad should set up a committee of persons who are willing to sacrifice so that they can find out what it will take to change the names to reflect the traditional way. I do not know those who have the power to change the names, but we need to find out.”

Christiana Eposi Ikome, Cameroon Miss Tourism 2008/2009

I did not grow up around Fako Division because my father was a military man and so worked in the Francophone regions of Cameroon. After his retirement, we returned to our Bwiteva Village in Fako Division, and there, the first thing I realised was how my grandmother and the people around pronounced my name, *Efvosi*, in a manner that I have not been able to write down myself. The accent was strange and with time I came to understand that, that is how it is pronounced in *Mopkwe*. Another thing I discovered was about the names of villages that start with *bo*. The *bo* is replaced with *wo* even though books and other official documents carry the names with *ba and bo* at the beginning. I like that the names be changed to the traditional pronunciation so that from there, I will also learn how to write my name in *Mopkwe*.

For the names to be changed, they should teach the children and make them to like pronouncing the names in *Mopkwe*. They are the ones to transmit the names to the next generation. So, if they are not taught to like to pronounce the names correctly, they may not influence the change of the names. They can use signboards but it would make no difference if sensitisation is not done on how to pronounce the names correctly.”

Prince George Mokosa of Gbwitingi (Bwitingi) Village

“I first need to acknowledge the fact that many names of villages have been distorted in addition to those of people. If it is possible to change the names now, well. It will need a lot of sensitisation to show the need for the names to be changed. Not many (non Bakwerians) would see the need to change the names. So, it would require a debate between the Bakweris and non-Bakweris in the media on the issue. In such debates we should explain the meaning of the names to us if they are spelt and pronounced in the *Mopkwe* style. I support the change of the names because it helps to identify us better if they are spelt and pronounced as in *Mopkwe*. Those abroad should help spread the message and make sure that they react when the issue is raised here at home. They should not sit quiet because with their reaction, the public and the government will know that we are serious about the issue.”

Pecos Mafany, Teacher of History, Bilingual Grammar School, Molyko, Buea.

“I know that some names of Bakweri villages are not written the way the Bakweris pronounce them. It is a problem of civilisation. When people of different cultures meet, they produce another culture that has some elements that are not original. Take the name of CAMEROON. It has evolved from *Reo-Dos Cameros*, with the Portuguese, *Camerones* with the Spanish, *Kamerun* with the Germans, *Cameroun* with the French and *Cameroon* with the British. All this is a function of our backgrounds. I think the idea of changing the names is not very important.

What should be done is initiating a topic in Civics, in the school curriculum on names of villages, their origin and meaning. There, pupils and students would be sensitised about the names. The idea of changing names would be waste of time, money and resources. If we take the case of changing the names from provinces to regions in Cameroon, and think of the money all the delegations under ministries would spend only to change the signboards, you will then see what I am talking about. We should not waste money in this direction.”

Prince Elinge Kange of SOWEDA, native of Wovilla village

“Every name is supposed to carry a meaning or some significance. This may have been derived from history or from an event. To better understand this, it is absolutely necessary to determine how the names of the villages were given – that is, the origin of the names. If we begin with Cameroon, the name was given by the Portuguese who called it *Cameros* which related to the prawns they found on our shores. This name has evolved over time to be what it is today. In the case of Buea, it was named and called *gbweye-ye* by its founder, Njiya Tama Lifanje, in signifying a great harvest. Over time, this name has been modified to Buea. Take the case of Ebolowa in the South Region of Cameroon. It was named in reference to rotten chimpanzees that some hunters discovered in the locality. This goes for several other towns and villages.

In modifying or changing the name of a village or town (villages grow and are transformed to towns) care should be taken not to distort history or the significance that brought about the name of the village or town. Certain names may be modified for ease of spelling or pronunciation. But it is important that the name or at least part of it should be maintained. It is an obligation to preserve historical facts as they are so that this can be passed down from one generation to the other. Thanks so far. With time we should be able to develop this with in-depth research.”

The Bakweri Older Generation's (Aged 50 plus) Response

Almost all the Bakwerians (men and women) from Limbe, Buea, Tiko and Muyuka in this age group who participated in the survey advocated the return of Bakweri traditional names and spellings, and most said that the change should be done immediately. About 70 per cent of them said that what has hindered the Bakweri tribe from maintaining their culture is lack of collective action and selfishness.

Many were extremely worried about the future of the Bakweri tribe as a whole, as more and more Bakweri children refuse to speak Bakweri even to their own grandparents. About 60 per cent of them have the fear that in thirty years' time, some Bakweri chiefs would not be able to communicate fluently in Bakweri. More than 90 per cent of those from Limbe say that Bakwerians would lose the whole of Limbe completely in the next twenty years because of the influx of non-Bakwerians into Bakweri villages. A lot of them praised the people of Womboko, Wosumbu, Ewonda, Wova and Wonakanda as examples of people whose Bakweri villages were still very traditional.

The Bakweri Middle Generation's (Aged Between 30 and 49) Response

About 95 per cent of the people in this age group favour the change of distorted Bakweri village names back to their original forms. Most people in their thirties blamed the earlier generation of those aged 60 plus for failing to preserve Bakweri culture.

Many women in this age group regarded Bakweri men as failures. They said that Bakweri men had failed to protect their women and their tribe. Many women in this age group said Bakweri men should be ashamed of themselves for destroying the dignity of the tribe with respect to tradition and culture. They gave as an example, the 2009 mountain race: Bakwerians had done nothing about it despite Bakweri men moaning repeatedly about the poor organisation of last year's mountain race when even the owners (Bakwerians) were not part of the organising committee. They (women) said that men take the lead on tribal issues and women follow, and that the change of names should have been done straight after independence. They (women) said that since independence, Bakweri people have spent all their time advancing themselves as individuals and never bothered about advancing the tribe. The women in this group were very pessimistic about the future of the tribe.

The men, especially those in their forties, admitted that they had failed in teaching their children Bakweri culture. They blamed the influx of non-Bakwerians into Fako Division especially in Bakweri villages, which has created a situation whereby every Bakweri child is surrounded by many non-Bakweri children and so will end up speaking pidgin English or English with their friends.

The Bakweri Younger Generation's (Aged below 30) Response

If Bakweri culture is to disappear completely, it would most likely do so when the people of this age group become the elders of the tribe. The majority of those interviewed said there was no need to bother about learning Bakweri culture which, according to them, was disappearing very fast and could not be revived. 90 per cent of those interviewed said that they were more worried about getting jobs than thinking about reviving Bakweri culture. They said that if Bakweri people were that passionate about their culture, they should also be passionate about Bakwerians getting jobs.

Many in this age group blamed Bakweri men for their woes, and did not care whether village names changed or not as long as many young Bakweri people remained unemployed. Many in this group admitted not being very fluent in the Bakweri language and pointed the finger of blame at their parents, the environment they lived in, television, mobile phones and pressure to do well at school. However, 95 per cent of the men and 80 per cent of the women in this age group said that if they got jobs, they would co-operate fully with the rest of the tribe in reviving Bakweri culture.

The Non-Bakwerians' (Resident in Fako Division) Response

It was quite interesting to get the views of the non-Bakweri residents of Fako division, who make up 80 per cent of the population of Fako division. Overall, 78 per cent of non-Bakwerians interviewed in Fako division did not know that Bakwerians are the indigenes of Limbe, 94 per cent did not know that Bakwerians are the indigenes of some villages in Tiko, 97 per cent did not know that Bakwerians are the indigenes of some villages in Muyuka, and 18 per cent did not know that Bakwerians are the indigenes of Buea.

In Limbe, 98 per cent of non Bakwerians did not know that *Bakingili and Batoke* are not the tribal spellings of the villages. The remaining 2 per cent said they knew because they lived in either Wvakingili or Wvatoke and had heard the Bakwerians of those villages pronounce the names the Bakweri way. In Buea, 18 per cent of non Bakwerians said they were aware that some Bakweri village names were not written as they are pronounced.

All non-Bakwerians (100 per cent) interviewed said it was a good idea for Bakwerians to change distorted village names back to their original forms. They all said it was the responsibility of the Bakweri people to educate everybody about the way their names are pronounced and spelt. The majority said their own tribes did not face the problem of distorted village names, and that they would have changed them as far back as the days of colonialism had the problem existed in their native villages. They all wished the Bakweri tribe good luck in their endeavours.

Feca/Fako UK Response: A Letter to Mola Mbua Ndoko

Dear Mola Mbua Ndoko,

FECA/FAKO UK PROPOSALS

We at FECA/FAKO UK thank you for trusting us to be able to work together with other Bakwerians and bring positive change to our tribe. We thank you for all the efforts you have made all these years to educate as many Bakwerians as possible about our culture. You can see from the responses that an overwhelming majority of Bakweri people want the distorted Bakweri village names to revert to their original forms. All the mayors and chiefs interviewed favour the change, and this should act as a motivating factor to all Bakwerians.

Fako division is a coastal division with very good climate, tourist centres and hospitable people. Its population is increasing every year and as a result, it attracts some of the best as well as some of the most dangerous and selfish people from other parts of Cameroon. As the Bakweri birth rate is decreasing and at the same time the non-Bakweri population in Fako division is increasing, the culture and language of the tribe face enormous challenges which become tougher year-by-year. If these challenges are not tackled now, Bakweri culture will disappear.

Mola Ndoko, every Bakweri person interviewed is calling for Bakweri people to work in unity always. They believe that working together would send a signal to all non-Bakwerians that if they tamper with what belongs to the Bakweri people, or do things that would cause pain in the hearts of Bakweri people, they should be prepared to fight against the whole tribe.

On reverting distorted village names to their original forms, a few concessions have to be made. Buea, as an English-speaking town, will inevitably have some village names that are a mixture of English and Bakweri such as Lower Wolifamba and Lower Wokova. The most important point here for Bakwerians is that the **Bo** ought to change to **Wo**. Changing the prefix **Bo** to **Wo** (as in Bokwaongo to Wokwaongo) will cause no pronunciation problems. Also, changing the prefix **Bona** to **Wonya** (as in BonaLyonga to WonyaLyonga) will cause no pronunciation problems. In order to change the prefix **Ba** and overcome pronunciation problems, FECA UK carried out some research work in Fako division and in Britain on the best prefix to replace **Ba** with. We used the villages now written as Bakingili and Batoke and presented 3 options: changing 'Ba' to **Va** to form **Vakingili and Vatoke**; changing 'Ba' to **Wa** to form **Wakingili and Watoke**; or changing 'Ba' to **Wva** to form **Wvakingili and Wvatoke**. In Buea, Tiko, Limbe and Muyuka, Bakwerians and non-Bakwerians were shown the three pairs of words and then asked to pronounce them. All of them pronounced the Va prefix in

Vakingili and Vatoke the way it is pronounced in English as in the word **vandals** – nowhere near the Bakweri tongue. All pronounced the Wa prefix in Wakingili and Vatoke the way it sounds in English as in the word **wanted** - again, nowhere near the Bakweri tongue. However, when those same people were asked to pronounce **Wvakingili and Wvatoke**, their pronunciations were very close to the Bakweri tongue. When the experiment was repeated in Britain where some thirty British people (men and women) and twenty people of Cameroonian origin were interviewed, the results were very similar to the ones from Fako division. These results show that using the English alphabet, the best prefix to replace ‘**Ba**’ with is ‘**Wva**’. This also means that the names Vakpwé and Wakpwé should change to **Wvawkpwé**.

At the 2009 FECA/FAKO UK convention in Leicester on the 22nd of August, delegates were presented with the results of the survey. Delegates were very pleased with the results, and after discussing every point in the report, arrived at some conclusions, taking into account all the responses by our chiefs, mayors, other Bakwerians and non Bakwerians. **FECA/FAKO UK will fund part of the project.**

(1) **All** the Bakweri villages (villages where the Bakweri people are the indigenes) in Buea, Limbe, Tiko and Muyuka will have signboards **bearing their original Bakweri names** at the main entrance points of the villages. The advantages of writing the Bakweri village names on sign boards include: **people will most likely only remember the names they see on sign boards and consequently, that is what they would use when communicating; if people were to give somebody directions to a particular place, they will quote but the names written on sign boards.** All the Bakweri village names written on signboards will have the word village written next to them. For example, Wonganjo Village, Wonduma Village, Ewonji Village, and Lower Wolifamba Village. **THE ‘SIGN-BOARDING’ OF VILLAGES WILL START IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2010 (JUST A FEW MONTHS FROM NOW).**

Buea:-

- All the villages that have been distorted (those that start with **Bo, Ba, Di , Bona, Bu and Mu**) will revert to their original Bakweri names. **The prefixes will change as follows: Bo will be relaced with Wo, Ba will be replaced with Wva (see research results above), Di will be replaced with Li, Bona will be replaced with Wonya.**

Some villages in Buea will have two names written on their sign boards with the Bakweri version written first (except Great Soppo), and the other written underneath it in brackets (any name written in brackets is an alternative version of the name written above it). The villages that will have two names on their sign boards are **Great Soppo** with **Sofa Mokongo** (moh-koh-ngoh) written underneath it in brackets, **Lower Wolifamba** with **Mile 16** written underneath it in brackets, **Lower Wokova** with **Mile 15** written underneath it in brackets, **Livanda** with **Mile 14** written underneath it in brackets, **Mokeli** will have **Saxenhof** written underneath it in brackets, and **Wulu** with **Bulu** written underneath it in brackets. Bulu will be the only distorted village name in Buea that will be given one year of grace, after which it will be deleted. Saxenhof should stay alongside Mokeli.

Some villages in Buea have now been classed by the Divisional Office as neighbourhoods of other villages. Although these neighbourhoods have campaigned for full village status, their requests have not yet been granted. **Wvetonde** and **Mokili** neighbourhoods of **Wova I village** will each have a sign board, with the name **Wova I Village** written underneath each one (not in brackets) to show that they each belong to Wova I village. **Wonduka’a, Wonjimba’a, Wonjoku** and **Liongo**(not the Liongo village that is near Muea) neighbourhoods of **Wova II Village** will each have a sign board, with the name **Wova II Village** written underneath each one (not in brackets) to show that they each belong to **Wova II Village**.

Small Soppo is an area in Buea with five villages, namely **Wonganga, Woteke, Wovilla, Wolikawo and Likoko**. These villages are independent of each other. Each of these villages will have stand-alone names on their sign boards without **Sofa** written in front of them. However, the name Small Soppo will be written underneath each one (not in brackets) to show that they are part of Small Soppo.

Bakwerians are the indigenes of all the villages of Buea. Hence, all the villages of Buea will be ‘sign-boarded’.

Limbe:-

The name **Bona Dikombo**, perhaps the most irritating of all Bakweri distorted village names, will disappear. It will be replaced with **Wonya Likombo**, with **Mile 4** written underneath it in brackets. The Bakweri villages that are now called **Bakingili and Batoke** will be replaced with **Wvakingili and Wvatoke** respectively. **New Town** will have **Liengu Mboke** written underneath it, in brackets. We know it would be very hard to replace **Bota** with **Ewota**, as Bota is like a town within a town. However, in the Bakweri area of Bota, the name **Ewota** will be written, with Bota written underneath in brackets. **Idenau** is now classed as a town, and only a presidential decree would change the name. However, the Bakweri version of Idenau, **Vewonde**, will be written on signboards in the areas that are predominantly occupied by Bakwerians. The rest of the villages in Limbe and the West Coast will have only their Bakweri versions written on their sign boards.

Tiko:-

The Bakweri villages of Tiko Sub-division will be sign-boarded without problems. Villages that belong to the Mungo clan will not be sign-boarded. There will be a campaign to replace the u in Mutengene with an o, to make Motengene.

Muyuka:-

Ekona Lelu and Ekona Mbenge will retain their original Bakweri names. The other Bakweri villages (a small number) will be sign-boarded without problems.

(2) Mola Mbua Ndoko should form a team of people (2 to 4 people) and come up with a final list of villages in each town in Fako division, highlighting the Bakweri ones. Mola Ndoko and his team should consult with Chief Molua of Wokwaongo/Wokpwaongo about the correct Bakweri spelling of that village, the Chief of Na’anga’a about the correct Bakweri spelling of that village, and Mola Evell’a Kange of the USA (heir to the Wovilla chieftaincy throne) to confirm whether the correct spelling is Wovilla or Wovila.

(3) The final list of villages from Mola Mbua Ndoko and his team will be given to a cartographer to draw the maps of Buea, Limbe, Tiko and Muyuka. Each map will be drawn on A3 paper, and will contain all the villages and quarters of each town, with Bakweri village names highlighted. Copies of the maps will be sent to hotels, tourist centres, government and private offices, churches, schools and bookshops to be given to the general public for free.

(4) The list of villages from Mola Mbua Ndoko and his team (signed by the President of Fako Chiefs Conference and the six Mayors of Fako division) will be sent to the Ministry of Territorial Administration in Yaounde for them to amend official documents, after which copies will be sent to all the Divisional Offices in Fako

Division so that distorted names of Bakweri villages will be changed to their original Bakweri forms using the list.

(5) The official list of villages will be sent to all newspapers and magazines operating in Fako Division (the Post, Entrepreneur, Sun, Eden, and so on). The list will also be sent to all the radio stations in Fako division. All of these media organisations will be asked to use the new list of villages when reporting events in Fako Division. Persistent use of the distorted names of Bakweri villages will be seen as provocation, and this might lead to their proprietors being summoned before Fako Chiefs and Mayors, and might even lead to a court summons. Deliberately misleading the general public about the pronunciation and writing of Bakweri village names will be an offence.

(6) All existing signboards (of schools, businesses and so on) that contain distorted names of Bakweri villages in Buea will have to change, except for Great Soppo in Buea, New Town in Limbe and Bota in Limbe. If businesses cannot afford to change their signboards, a Bakwerian will be asked to go round and erase from the sign boards the distorted Bakweri names and replace them with the correct Bakweri names. This will be done at the risk of the business owner as there will be no guarantee of uniformity on the sign board. For example, the signboard '**Government Secondary School Buea Rural, Bokova**' will change to '**Government Secondary School, Buea Rural, Wokova**'. Similarly, **Government High School Bonjongo** will change to **Government High School, Wonjongo, Buea**; **St Paul's Technical High School, Bonjongo** will change to **St Paul's Technical High School, Wonjongo, Buea**.

(7) A letter would be drafted by Mola Mbua Ndoko and his team, signed by the President of Fako Chiefs Conference, to be sent to all Principals and Headteachers of schools in Fako Division to amend any official documents and letterheads that contain distorted names of Bakweri villages.

Mola Ndoko, we hope that this report will play a part towards bringing Bakweri people together in changing the names back to their original forms. We are going to send copies to Chief David Moline, the President of Fako Chiefs Conference, for him to make copies and give to other chiefs. We will also send a copy each to every mayor in Fako division. We will also send this report to our Bakweri brothers and sisters in the USA, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and all across the rest of Europe. We will also put this report on Fakonet, the largest Bakweri email forum, for our other brothers and sisters from all over the world to read. We believe that the changing of Bakweri village names should be done collectively by Bakweri people. Every Bakweri man and woman should have a role to play: some will contribute financially what they can afford, some will be there physically to supervise the work, the role of others might be to correct people when names of Bakweri villages are mispronounced. If every Bakweri person made a resolution that they will from now onwards pronounce and spell Bakweri village names the Bakweri way only, it would help solve the problem of the names of Bakweri villages.

Mola Ndoko, we hope to receive a response from you.

Signed, for FECA/FAKO UK: Mola Ndeley Molulu, Mola Lifambe Ewoma, Mola Ngoina Elive.
LONDON, 12 October 2009

Sign off

AUTHORISED ON BEHALF OF FECA/FAKO UK
SIGNED : Mola Ngoina Elive **DATE: 01 / 09 / 2009**
POSITION :

AUTHORISED ON BEHALF OF FECA/FAKO UK
SIGNED : Mola Lifambe Ewoma **DATE: 01 / 09 / 2009**
POSITION :

AUTHORISED ON BEHALF OF FECA/FAKO UK
SIGNED : Mola Ndeley Molulu **DATE: 01 / 09 / 2009**
POSITION :

Relates to Rehabilitation of Bakweri Village Names – A Survey Report document Version 1.0 created 10/24/2009

Amendment History

Version Date	Date	Initials	Sections	Reason