

October 2025

Bamenda News



Annual Overview:

The Portsmouth-Bamenda Link had been going for over 50 years and each year on the first Sunday of November we celebrate the link here in the Diocese of Portsmouth and in the Archdiocese of Bamenda – joining together spiritually and praying for each other. At this time, we in Portsmouth also specially offer our wholehearted thanks for the wonderful Bamenda priests we have working here in our Diocese, Fr Emmanuel Bamuh Rinda, Fr Gaston Afah Forbah, Fr Elijah Nde, Fr Benedict Ndikum and Fr Anthony Chiatu.

The Archdiocese of Bamenda, in the Northwest region of Cameroon, currently has 71 parishes, 178 schools, 27 health facilities and over 600,000 Catholics. The people are mainly English-speaking and have had an extremely tough time since the socio-political crisis started in 2016. The root cause of this has complex origins in the relationship between the French and English-speaking provinces and has led to much violence and atrocities. Violence has claimed over 3000 lives, displaced around half a million people and forced thousands more to flee to Nigeria. It has significantly disrupted children's schooling, and left many in the Anglophone regions impoverished.

During this time the Archdiocese has been forthright in condemning the violence on all sides and advocating for peaceful dialogue and settlement. On a practical level, the Archdiocese continues to run its parishes, youth activities, schools and health facilities, as well as engaging in other activities such as supporting displaced people and those psychologically affected by the crisis.

Bamenda visit 2025

We were once again delighted to welcome Archbishop Andrew Nkea and a number of key partners from Bamenda. Their visit was a welcome opportunity for Bishop Philip, members of the Portsmouth Bamenda Committee and the Bamendan priests currently serving in our Diocese to meet, catch up with news and discuss matters of mutual concern. These visits serve to deepen and develop the relationship between the Archdiocese and our Diocese.



Visit from Archbishop Andrew

We were also able to welcome Mr Matt Woods, the British High Commissioner for Cameroon who was keen to learn more about the partnership between the two dioceses.

[Read](#) more about the visit.

Investing in Clergy

This year, a new initiative for investing in the Bamendan Clergy who provide so much for our Diocese was approved. The goal is to provide funding for higher education studies in areas that will help clergy serve their communities in Bamenda when they return.

Funds to support the academic costs can be applied for at a maximum of £5000 per year from the fund. Studies will need to be approved by both Archbishop Andrew and Bishop Philip and have clear benefit for the people in Bamenda.

This is a fantastic opportunity to help develop innovative approaches to issues using cutting edge research that could have long lasting and wide reach in the area.

Pray

Praying for each other is a significant part of the relationship of our dioceses.

Please pray for the intentions of our brothers and sisters in Bamenda; and for the restoration of peace and justice in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

Donate



A focus for this last year has been to support projects applications from the more rural areas of the Archdiocese, where our support can go a long way in terms of practical help. Faced with specific issues, communities not only benefit from the investment but have the encouragement that they are not forgotten about in difficult times.

In assessing project applications a range of factors are considered, including the sustainability and impact of the project, e.g. will it help to bring a lasting improvement to people's daily lives and how are the people engaged with the project development. Where a project involves the construction of, for example school buildings, medical facilities or a church, we look at what facilities are currently available, how far away are, what is their condition and how many people/children use any existing facilities. Given the significant and ongoing impact of the civil unrest across the Archdiocese, we also consider the impact of these events on the communities, e.g. have existing facilities been damaged as a result of the conflict or has the community grown significantly in size or make-up due to the arrival of those internally displaced by the conflict.

Over the last twelve months we have supported delivery of seven projects funded from the generous donations of parishioners from all corners of our diocese, including:

The fitting out and furnishing of apartments within the new home for sick and retired priests in Bamenda.



The construction of a new nursery school in St Felix Parish in Ntenefer that has welcomed large numbers of families displaced by the conflict. **Click** on picture to learn more.



The delivery and installation of medical equipment for use in the operating theatres in St Blaise Hospital, Bamenda City, including an oxygen concentrator, anaesthetic machine and a multi-parameter vital sign monitor.



Training for 30 community health workers across the districts to fill the gap in the delivery of outreach basic and maternal and child health care.



The Bamenda Committee has made the commitment to annually give to the Archbishops Education Fund. This supports children who have been orphaned or displaced due to the conflict and cannot afford their school fees. This year, your donations have supported 292 children of all faiths to attend and stay in school. The fund not only enables the children to have an education but also helps recruit and keep the teachers, who are funded via the school fees.



Strengthening Peaceful Co-existence

One significant project that has been running since August 2024 is led by the Justice and Peace Commission to support the Strengthening Peaceful Co-Existence. The project is to identify and train of 30 frontline outreach community volunteers to lead local Peace Processes in their communities.

Through the year a number of initiatives have been run including workshops with local community leaders, individual counselling for people who have lost homes and livelihoods or who are victims of gender based violence, and sports tournaments that help bring people together.



Training



Sport



Activities at Akum Deanery



Reaching out via radio

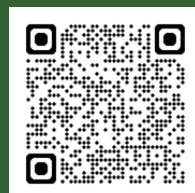
New Projects

Your generous response to our last appeal in November 2024 has allowed us to support a further eleven priority projects identified by the Archdiocese of Bamenda this year. Work on these will begin shortly. All are focused on assisting communities in more remote rural areas, many affected by the conflict, where the archdiocese plays a key role in providing support and services. These include:

- continuing support to the Archbishop's Education Fund helping children of all faiths to attend and stay in school,
- helping single mothers badly affected by the conflict to become more financially self-sufficient,
- providing classrooms in two remote primary schools in Fonfuka and Konene,
- renovating the health centre at Wum, the area's sole facility,
- supporting construction of three new churches in recently established parishes badly affected by the conflict

The Archdiocese in Bamenda will provide a quarterly update on each of these projects during 2026. The Committee will share these updates via Bishop Philip's weekly e-news, our [website](https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/bamenda/) and in our 2026 Bamenda newsletter.

If you have any questions about our link with the Archdiocese of Bamenda or if you are interested in serving on the Portsmouth Bamenda Committee, please email Tim Foy at: tfoy@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or visit our website at <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/bamenda/>



From Our Schools

Three of our Diocesan secondary schools are twinned with Bamendan schools. Bishop Challoner Secondary School has had a long-held link with St. Bede's College in Ashing-Kom. This year the students raised over £6,000 to fund the purchase and installation of solar panels for a renewal, reliable energy source for the College which have now been installed and are providing a reliable and efficient source of electricity.



Lighting at St Bede's College

St. George Catholic College, Southampton was linked with St. Joseph's Mankon, Bamenda in 2024. St Joseph's is a new Secondary School that was created due to a need to educate the many young people who have been displaced by the recent civil conflict in Bamenda. St. George's College raised over £3,000 during their Romero day. In addition, as part of their Faith Day, to help student get to know more about the lives and faith of the students in Bamenda. The UK students wrote messages to their counterparts at St Joseph's.



Visit to St George Catholic College

St. Edmund's Catholic Secondary School, Portsmouth used a cross-curricular approach and worked with their PE department to facilitate a Fun Run to raise funds for their sister school, JOPACC in Wum, Bamenda. This was a Year 8 endeavour which raised over £3,000 to support their sister school.



Fun run at St Edmund's School

We hope that during 2026 more Diocesan schools will establish a formal link with a Bamendan school. For more information contact Jessie Woolgar at jwoolgar@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk. For school resources visit <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/bamenda/resources-for-uk-schools/>

Looking ahead

During his visit Archbishop Andrew's told us about Bamenda's priorities for the next year. The archdiocese would like our help in supporting communities in the more remote disadvantaged communities most affected by the conflict. They have identified four projects which we would like to make the focus of this year's Bamenda Sunday appeal. These are:

- building seven new classrooms at St Agnes College in the rapidly growing town of Mbesa 85km north-east of Bamenda City where the school population has risen rapidly as people have moved from the country into the relative safety of town
- partnering the parishioners of St Lawrence's mission in Wum to build a new church. The current structure is beyond repair and services are taking place in the open
- supporting the parishioners of St. Joseph Parish Bamali and those of St. Ambrose Mission Station's church in Njikwa to complete the church building work that they have in large part self-financed.

The Bamenda Sunday Collection is the main source of income for supporting our brothers and sisters in the Archdiocese of Bamenda. Thank you for your generous donations, they transform lives. There are a number of ways you can donate, including by standing order, the second collection in your parish or online where you can also set up a regular donation. More details can be found at <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/bamenda/donate/>

