



Ministry Updates

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Taste and See ([Psalm 34:8](#))

This week's update offers a different inspiration. The speech below, translated by DEEPL® with grammatical review by Grammarly®, officially opened the university CHE program on Sept. 7th. The unbiased translation captures the hope and direction that CHE strategies bring to Public Health and Community Health projects in Côte d'Ivoire and beyond. It also encapsulates our understanding of how Jesus uses the Church in every generation as the body of Christ-sharing community. Actual disciple-making movements engender the same!

Opening Remarks for the Training Seminar on Health and Community Engagement

Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants, dear partners, and community development stakeholders:

It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of Professor Mahama Ouattara, Dean of the UFR SPB, at the opening of this training seminar on health and community engagement, under the theme: "Participatory Development and Community Empowerment."

*First, allow me to welcome you and acknowledge your presence, which demonstrates your interest in and commitment to the well-being of our communities. **The theme chosen for this seminar is not merely a slogan, but a matter of survival for our communities.***

For far too long, health care has been provided FOR communities. We arrived with ready-made projects—solutions already devised by scientists and donors—to implement in villages and neighborhoods. But the outcome has always been the same in the end... Projects stop when funding runs out. Health centers empty out. Best practices are abandoned.

*Why? Because we forgot a fundamental principle: **You cannot develop someone against their will, nor without their understanding.** Participatory development means changing our approach. It's no longer, "I know what you need." It's, "You know what you're going through; I know what the science says—let us build together," and community empowerment is the ultimate goal.*

A community that is self-reliant in health matters is not a community that no longer needs a doctor. It is a community that knows how to:

- 1. Identify its own health problems,*
- 2. Find its own resources and solutions,*
- 3. Demand quality services for itself when it needs them.*

***It means moving from a passive recipient to an active decision-maker.** This topic is of paramount importance today for three reasons:*

- **First, without participation, there is no trust. And without trust, there is no health.** We've seen this with COVID and with vaccination. Even the most effective medication fails if the community does not trust it.*
- **Second, without empowerment, there is no sustainability.** The true measure of this seminar's success will not be the number of people trained here. It will be the number of initiatives still ongoing a year from now, without us.*
- **Third, it is a matter of dignity.*** A community that participates and empowers itself regains its dignity. It no longer holds out its hand; instead, it reaches out to its neighbors.*

During this seminar, we will have the opportunity to share experiences, gain new knowledge, and reflect together on the most effective strategies for strengthening citizen participation and community empowerment. I invite all of us to demonstrate openness, active listening, and a spirit of collaboration so that these exchanges may serve as a source of learning and concrete action..." (She continued with closing thanks).

Prayer and Praise

- ✠ Praise God for the way applying Biblical principles changes how public health gets done in Côte d'Ivoire! Praise God that churches apply the same truths to let Jesus save souls more effectively in their locales!
- ✠ Verlin plans to return to Bondoukou next weekend. Pray that, before he departs, meetings with CHE-using partners in Abidjan set up a needed lesson-review process and inspire more trainings.

Your partners in the Gospel, Verlin & Debbie



University CHE Expo participants in 2026

Last Week: [3 Spiritual R's-260919.PDF](#)

Prior videos: [El Roi - Simple Servants](#)

2024 Q1-A2 Report: [First Resort](#) –
[2024 Q3 Q4 Report 250906 PDF](#)

'23 Budget: [CHSC-0118 ANDERSON-Budget 2023](#)

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