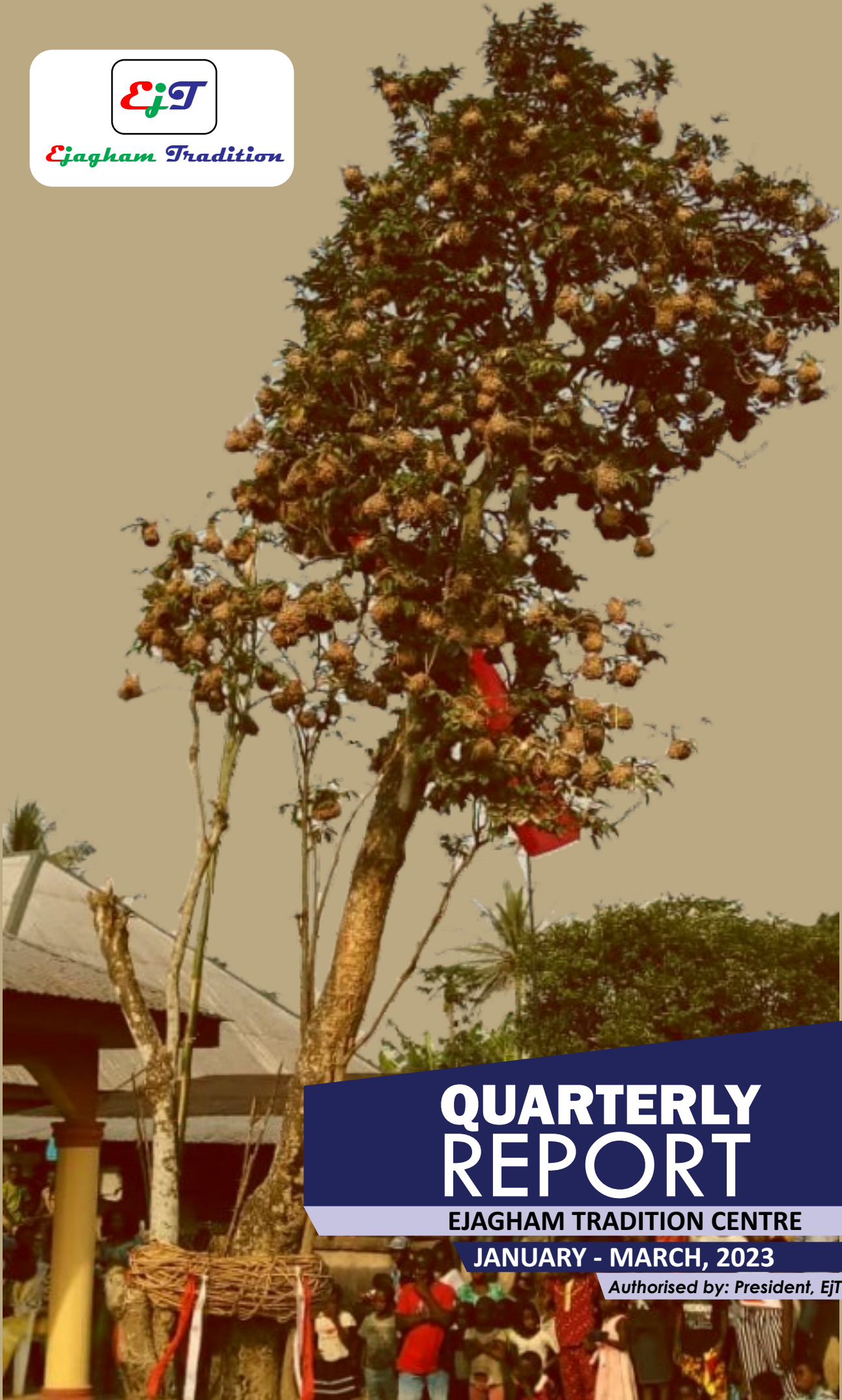




*Ejagham Tradition*



# QUARTERLY REPORT

**EJAGHAM TRADITION CENTRE**

**JANUARY - MARCH, 2023**

*Authorised by: President, EjT*

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## ORGANISATIONAL DIRECTION

### OUR MISSION

*“To Host, Promote, Harness and Update Ejagham Traditional Practices (ETP) and Ejagham Cultural Expressions (ECE) in order to Safeguard and Preserve Ejagham Tradition as a true Legacy of Ejagham People.”*

### OUR VISION

*To be a one-stop-shop for information and data about, relating to and concerning Ejagham Traditional Practices (ETP) and Ejagham Cultural Expressions (ECE)*

### OUR OBJECTIVES

- *Safeguard and preserve the cultural heritage of Ejagham people.*
- *Protect the secret and sacred cultural heritage of Ejagham people.*
- *Encourage Research and Development (R&D) on Ejagham tradition.*
- *Ensure that the none-secret and non-sacred knowledge of Ejagham Traditional Practices (ETP) and Ejagham Cultural Expressions (ECE) are globally available and easily accessible.*
- *Explore the Socio-economic potential of Ejagham tradition for the empowerment of Ejagham People and Local Communities (EPLC).*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### EjT: An Ejagham Identity Organisation

In our first public event, the *Ejagham Tradition Talk Show 2019* held in Calabar, one of the newspapers that covered the event, captioned their report thus:

**“Ejagham People Need an Identity, Group Urges”**

In my discussion of this report with some of our members, there was so much pushback toward the notion that Ejagham people need an identity. But would anyone blame the reporter?

Ordinarily, one would have thought that a people that invented Mgbe governance institution, Nsibidi communications system, Ekad, and developed the skills and technology to produce the Akwanshi monoliths (Atae Akibansi) have had their identity *cast in stone*. I believe that our forebears established our identity before we managed to drop the ball.

In Cross River State, Nigeria, a certain group of people cover its landmass from the North to the South of the State, continuously. By way of migration, these people grouped themselves into four distinct clusters. Hitherto, these people have consciously or unconsciously diminished their identity as a people and instead projected the cluster *identity*, and it cannot be debated that this is to their collective detriment. These people are *Ejagham* people and the clusters are Qua, Akamkpa, Etung, and Bakor.



Engr. Chris Anom *CEng, CMarEng, FIMarEST, FRINA*

Evidently, and as I understand it, the Yorubas, the Igbos and the Hausas etc. also have different clusters but they identify as Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa people. This common identity as a people comes with several blessings including, but not limited to *Unity* and *Progress*. It is a no-brainer therefore why these peoples, Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa are united and indeed progressive.

EjT recognises the deviation of Ejagham people from the principle of common identity, its impact on our communities and potential consequences on future generations if not managed. We have the firm belief that if we come together around our common heritage, it will reset us on the path to our common Ejagham identity as our forebears intended. At EjT, we have started the elevation of Ejagham identity by doing the most basic thing; calling it as it should be: ***Ejagham Qua, Ejagham Akamkpa, Ejagham Etung and Ejagham Bakor***. We are Ejagham first, before the cluster and I encourage Ejagham people to identify themselves as such.

But EjT is doing even more. We organised the first-ever Ejagham nation parade at the 2019 cultural festival in, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The event not only projected *Ejagham identity* but was a show of unity across the Ejagham nation.

EjT have also taken the giant step to codify the Ejagham Language so that it can be part of the educational curriculum in Ejagham nation. We believe that a standard Ejagham Language orthography will promote a common *Ejagham identity*.

Furthermore, EjT has taken steps to create an *Ejagham heritage website* ([www.ejaghamtradition.org](http://www.ejaghamtradition.org)) where we showcase Ejagham traditional practices and cultural expressions. We have also incorporated a social media section on the website, to create an Ejagham nation network of friends.

EjT is working with stakeholders to develop unique outfits that identify an Ejagham person. Again, this is one of the multi-pronged efforts by EjT to promote the *Ejagham identity*.

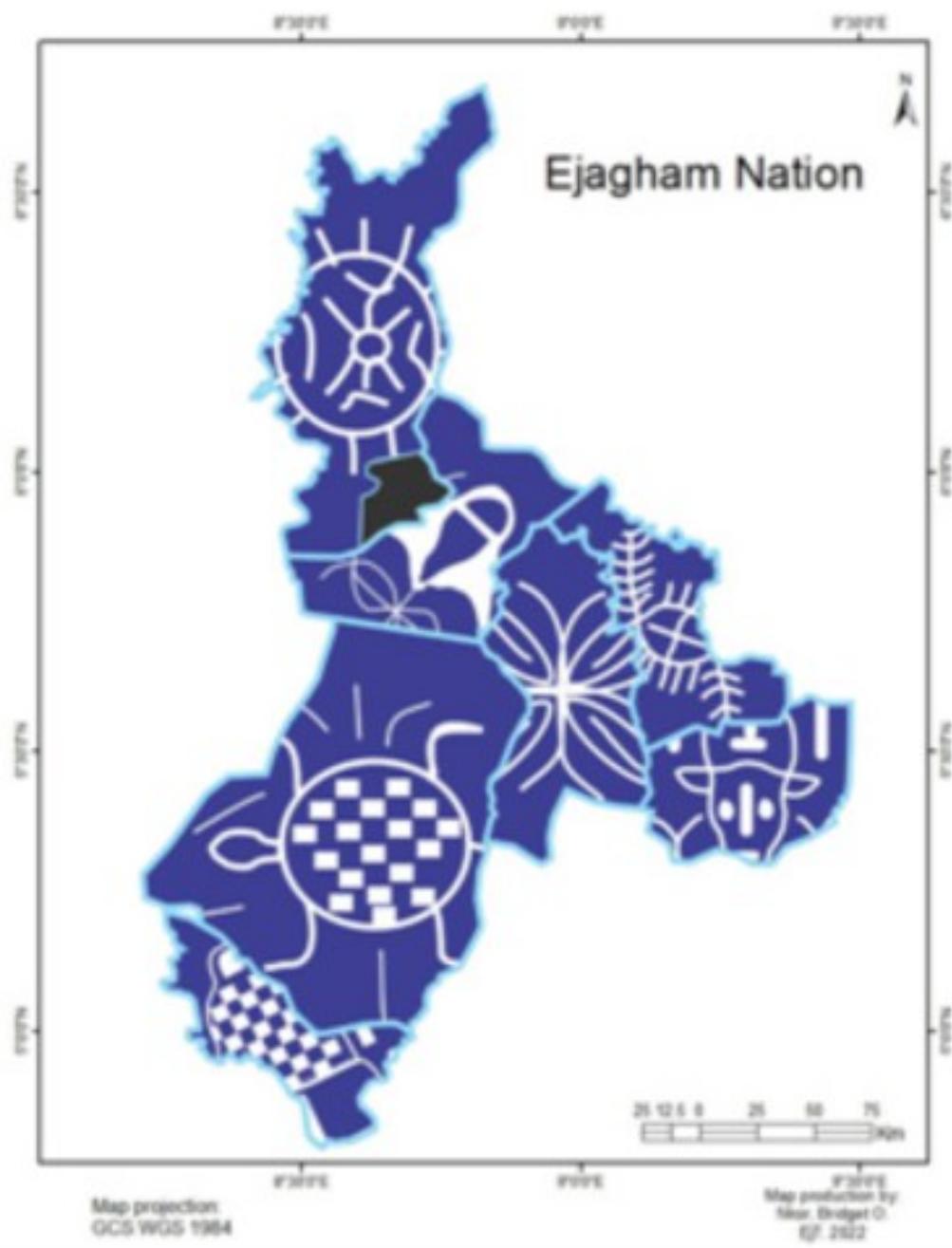
So when I asked '*But would anyone blame the reporter?*', I guess you may have answered the question one way or another. Whichever way you did, I would let you reflect, *honestly*, with your answer.

What I can do is to make a clarion call, as I have done severally. If you really care about *Ejagham Identity*, do not sit on the fence, join and/or partner with EjT - the *Ejagham Global Ocham* and change the narrative.

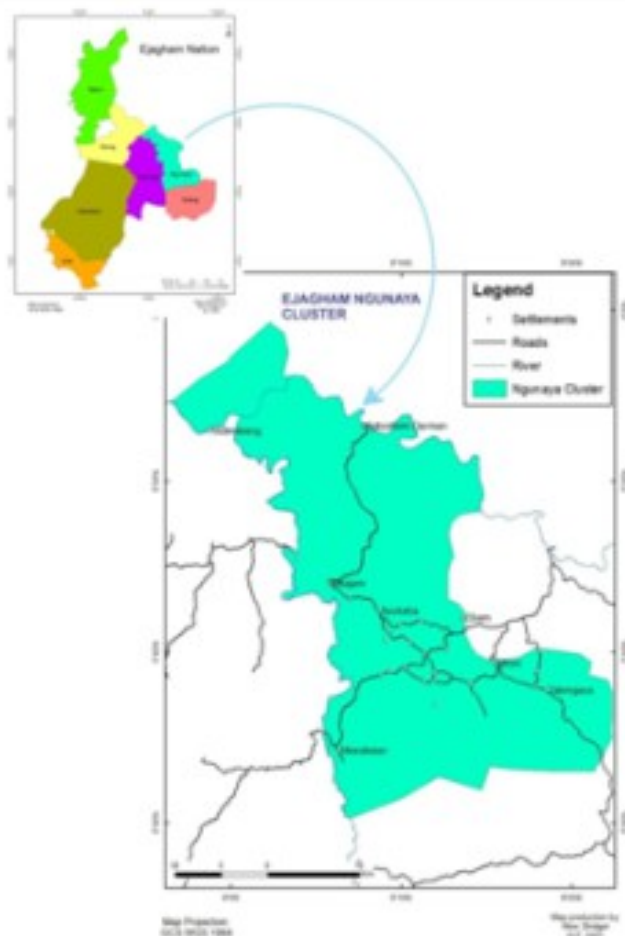
Remember, we are stronger together than we would ever be divided.

*Chris Anom*

Ekup Na Nkad  
**Engr. Chris Anom**



# EJAGHAM NATION COMPOSITION



## Ejagham Ngunaya

Ngunaya, or Ejagham Central is one of the Ejagham Clusters of the Ejagham Nation that now finds itself in the Republic of Cameroon. The other two Clusters being, Ejagham Njemaya and Obang. Ejagham Ngunaya is in Eyumojock Sub Division, of Manyu Division, in the South West Region of Cameroon.

Ejagham Ngunaya is unique in many respects. One of its most favourable and strongest attributes is its density of population; with villages that are naturally arranged to be in close proximity with one another as if they belong to specific blocs that could ease the process of urbanisation. Indeed, in terms of productivity, human capital development and industry, the Ejagham Cluster stands out. That is why this write up will be taking the different villages in groups of that natural arrangement, without prejudice to any village or group of villages.

## Ntenako–Ossing Axis

For purposes of clarity alone, we can say these group of villages are all out of the Mamfe – Ekok highway. They are accessible from an earth road that branches to the left after Bissong-Abang when coming from Mamfe, before reaching Nchang.

After Ntenako, you get to Ndekwai, Ossing and then Talangaye. Ossing is known traditionally as Ebareh Nsih, or Holy Land because that is where Christian missionaries settled in precolonial times when they entered Ejagham land in Cameroon.

Ossing also prides itself today as the village that produced General Tataw Emmanuel, of blessed memory, who served in the Cameroon army until his 80s. Ossing also produced another illustrious son of blessed memory in the sport domain in the person of late Tataw Etta Stephen, who captained the Cameroon national team, the Indomitable Lions during its years of greatest fame. It was during the captainship of Tataw Etta Stephen that the team was crowned with the defeat of defending Champions Argentina, during the World Cup opening match in Italy, Christened, ``Italia'90``.

Indeed, the Member of Parliament representing Eyumojock at the moment in the Cameroon Parliament, in the person of Hon. Teku Tanyi, comes



Late Tataw Etta Stephen, aka Njock Ossing, (The Elephant of Ossing

from Ossing. Ndekwai also produced one of the most prolific politicians in Cameroon in the person of Late Professor Agbor Tabi. He is respected; if not revered for opening many opportunities to youth in Manyu Division when he was Cameroon's Minister of Higher Education in the 90s.

### **Kembong – Mfuni Axis**

Villages along this axis are accessible from a road that branches left from Nchang village on the Mamfe – Ekok road. Less than 10 kilometres from Nchang, one catches Mfuni, which has produced a significant number of top civil servants in Cameroon. As well as academia and businesses persons who are excelling in Europe and the United States of America and other parts of the world.

For Kembong, it remains one of the most populated semi urban settlements in Ejagham Cameroon. It has produced a series of parliamentarians that have represented and are still representing Eyumojock in the Cameroon National Assembly. Those that readily come to mind are Susan Okpu, the last but one MP for Eyumojock and the Ayuk Achalles of yesteryears.

Last but not the least are the villages along Njeghe axis. Njeghe in particular produced outstanding teachers and scholars who are remembered for their contribution to valorising the Ejagham culture both at home and abroad.

### **Ogemoko – Nkimechi – Mbakang Bloc**

Villages along this axis when entering from Kembong include Ogemoko, Afap, Ewelle, (Ewuri); Aya-ayukndep, Nkaw-Nkaw, Nkimechi, Mbatop and Mbakang. Their proximity to each other gives them the image of an emerging semi urban area, with a sizeable population density.

Ewille prides itself as the village in this cluster that produced Chief Ogork Ntui as Minister from Eyumojock in the government of President Paul Biya. Chief Ogork Ntui was a former Minister for Special Duties at the Presidency of the Republic in the forty-year Biya regime and still counting.

Aya-ayukndep, a neighbouring village to Ewelle also produced Jerome Obi Eta, who was Minister of Public Works in President Paul Biya’s government. The current Chief Achalle of Ewelle also retired as a Sub-Director in one of Cameroon’s most prestigious state corporations, the National Hydrocarbons Corporation, SNH.

Afap, looks like the most populated village in this

bloc of villages is prominent for its many sons and daughters who are excelling in the academia and business world, and are doing great exploits both at home and abroad. Above all, Afap will always be remembered for producing Commander Ojong, one of the few Ejagham air force officers in Cameroon who died in active service while flying on surveillance mission in some security risk zones of the country.

### **Ngunaya Villages Along Mamfe-Ekok Road**

Some Ngunaya villages that lie along the Mamfe-Ekok highway include Ebam, Mkpote, Ayukaba-Mfuk, Bakwelle, Ebinsih, and Ayukaba.

With the completion and eventual opening of the Bamenda – Enugu Corridor, which Mamfe-Ekok road forms a part of, economic activities among Ejagham villages on this axis, but especially among the Ngunaya villages have been on the peak. Indeed, given the right socio-political and economic environment, villages along this stretch of road have huge potential for growth and economic prosperity. The current socio-political crisis in Anglophone regions of Cameroon, notwithstanding, Ejagham villages on this axis can hope for a better future, since the crisis is not expected to last forever.

This writer does not claim to be an authority on this subject. So, sons and daughters of Ejagham Central who notice some shortcomings; especially as related to omission of some villages should not take offence but can contact the writer.

***By Nta Ntiamba Obi Ntui***



## Q1 2023 ACTIVITIES

### EJAGHAM LANGUAGE CODIFICATION (ELC)

#### ELC - The Roadmap



#### ***Ejagham Language Intelligibility Test***

*Language is an effective instrument for the development, unity, and promotion of ethno-cultural identity. It is relevant for active participation in the affairs of one's society. It enables people not only to fashion out an identity for themselves but also acts as a means of self-expression and relevance in society. For this reason, language is the most important tool in the process of achieving ethnic identity, prestige, unity, and development. Hence our relentless pursuit of ELC.*

'What was only imagined, is becoming a reality in our lifetime.' These were the concluding words of the narrator in the first part of the [documentary](#) on the development of a Standard Ejagham Language Orthography. A giant stride towards achieving this primary goal was recorded in our last Quarterly Report. A professionally developed Ejagham Language Orthography has been proposed by the project's Technical Team. Nevertheless, in a display of astute professionalism to guarantee infallible proficiency, the Technical Team thus designed a strategic engagement with all Ejagham Traditional Councils/Association in Nigeria and Cameroon, as well as with the public. The key objective of this

engagement was to validate the proposed orthography that has been developed through a systematic analysis of all Ejagham dialects. Four key activities framed the engagement:

1. Exhibition of the proposed orthography
2. Conducting Ejagham language intelligibility test
3. Ejagham Language Ecology and Endangerment survey; and
4. Receipt of overall feedback from key stakeholders and the public.

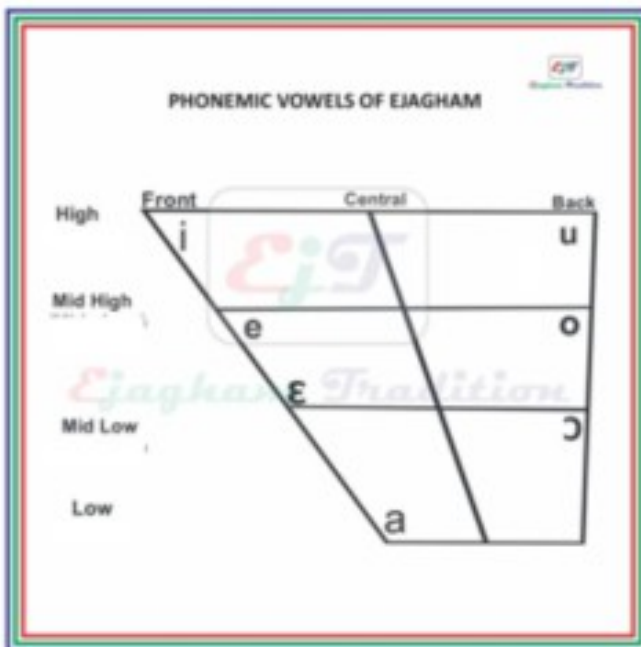
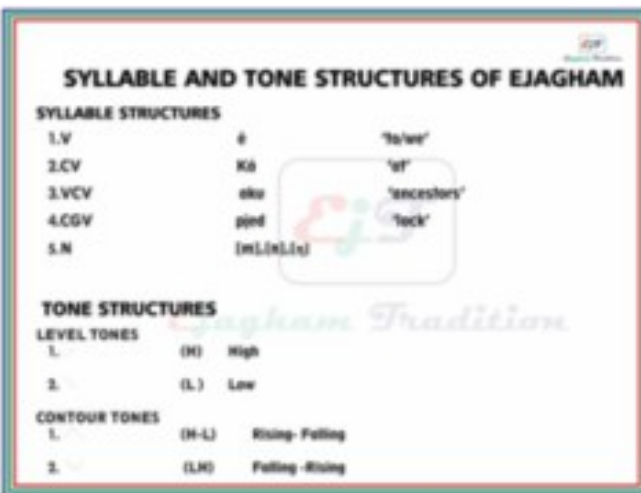
#### **Exhibition of Proposed Orthography**

This activity dealt with the illustration of consonants, vowel charts, syllable structure and tones of the proposed standard Ejagham.

#### **Ejagham Language Ecology and Endangerment survey**

The objective of this survey was to redefine the language ecology and endangerment among the Ejagham of Cross River State, Nigeria, and the Southwest region, Cameroon.





It was designed to extract data to implement a location-aware infrastructure that will function proactively in real-time to show the ecology of the language and precise visualization of their vitality status.

## The Euphoria of a New Dawn for all Ejagham People

One of the many experiences gathered during this project that best captures the euphoria of a new dawn for all Ejagham people was this: during the Ejagham wordlist validation exercise, two colleagues who have worked in the same institution for over 20 years only came to realise that they were both Ejagham people from different clusters when they met at the validation venue. The shock expressed by both could only be imagined. What stunned, even more, was the fact that both individuals are intellectuals, and one would ordinarily expect the intellectuals to know more about their heritage. Such an eye-opening incident explains the level of our general lack of awareness of what Ejagham was, is, and could be. *Wonder less why Ejagham lacks a kindred intellectual frontline that could serve as the think-tank to update, promote, and preserve the Ejagham heritage.*

The stoke to this poor self-recognition – i.e., recognising and collaborating with fellow Ejagham people – is the missing thread of a binding standard Ejagham language for official use, without jeopardizing the survival of all the various Ejagham dialects. Ejagham language has a lot of dialects with varied degrees of intelligibility. Besides the legacies of colonialism and the contemporary subterranean machinations of coloniality, the rising tide of modernity creates a gulf between Ejagham people of different clusters – bearing in mind that the wave of modernity sails the boat of westernisation towards a sustained global hegemony.

On the scene of intercultural relations, the lack of a holistic identity consciousness among the Ejagham people blurs both the local and global visibility of this uniquely rich and vast civilisation. It cannot, therefore, be overstated that size without collaboration remains a mirage with respect to accomplishing anything of substance. Ejagham is large, diverse, and rich. What was left was a common voice. A common voice is now emerging through a standard Ejagham language that will not only relink Ejagham globally but offer a pathway to a consolidated agenda towards the development of all Ejagham people and local communities.

Diversity becomes a blessing when utilised towards harmony.

As a proactive organisation, we initiated and commenced the codification of the Ejagham language in May 2020. Slowly, but steadily, our efficient Technical Team has worked tirelessly to propose a standard Ejagham language orthography. As an organisation that recognises the agency of the indigenous leadership and local participation, the proposed orthography has been exhibited across Ejagham nation. First, in three of the four Ejagham clusters in Nigeria: Akamkpa, Bakor, and Etung and subsequently Qua (Nigeria), Ngunaya, Njemaya, and Obang (Cameroon).

The engagement took place as follows:



*©EjT Media: Technical Team with members of Ejagham Akamkpa Traditional Rulers Council*



*©EjT Media: Technical Team with other participants from Ejagham Akamkpa*



*©EjT Media: Technical Team with members of Ejagham Bakor Traditional Rulers Council*



*©EjT Media: Technical Team with members of Ejagham Etung Traditional Rulers Council*

As expected, participants asked interesting questions to elicit further clarifications from the technical team on how the orthography was developed. They further participated in the intelligibility test and Ejagham language ecology and endangerment survey exercises. To have members of these traditional councils and other participants from these clusters participate in this function greatly displayed the peoples' commitment to helping the Ejagham universe have a standard language for official use. The feedback from the participants clearly showed their satisfaction with the proposed orthography.

It is noteworthy that these engagements were geared towards engendering local acceptability of the proposed orthography, as this shall be a determining factor in the institutionalization of this orthography for use in learning institutions by the relevant government agencies in Nigeria and Cameroon. Once this orthography is authorised for

use in learning institutions, beyond the employment this shall create for Ejagham people in the educational sector, it will usher in a new generation of Ejagham people who will speak a common language (while retaining their various dialects) and would be united to a common purpose of advancing Ejagham people and civilisation beyond time.

### **Ejagham Njemaya, Ngunaya, Obang and Qua in Focus**

Conducting the intelligibility test in Ejagham Cameroon was unique occurrence. This was the first time that a contingent of EjT travelled to Cameroon to meet with their kith and kin. The traveling team from Nigeria consisted of Rev. Fr. Dr. Felix Ojong and DC Ekup-Nse. The moderator of the event was Sesseku (Iyamba) Hon. Dr. Agbornduku Eret (EjT VP, Ejagham in Cameroon), while the lead facilitator was Prof. Magdalene Bakume Nkongho (Project Consultant). The event took place at Trinity



*©EjT Media: Technical Team with members of Eyumojock Traditional Association*

Hotel, Limbe, Cameroon.

This event was nothing short of a glorious reception and rapturous reunion. The chief host was HRH, Chief Moses Obenofunde. Speaking on behalf of Eyumojock Traditional Association, he expressed immense gratitude to EjT for initiating this project and for including all Ejagham Clusters in Cameroon. There was an outpouring of encomiums by other participants as well. Also, there was a unanimous decision by the Association to source for and provide a measure of financial support to the project, a behaviour we have

already experienced from Ejagham Bakor.

On the Ejagham Qua side, delegates from the College of Atoe – the Ndidem's Council – and the Technical Team, led by the Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Calabar, Prof. Stella Ekpe, paid a courtesy visit to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academics, University of Calabar, Prof. Angela Oyo-Ita, and briefed her on the state of the project. In her remarks, the DVC commended the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages for facilitating this project and described it as an exercise that will elevate the status of our



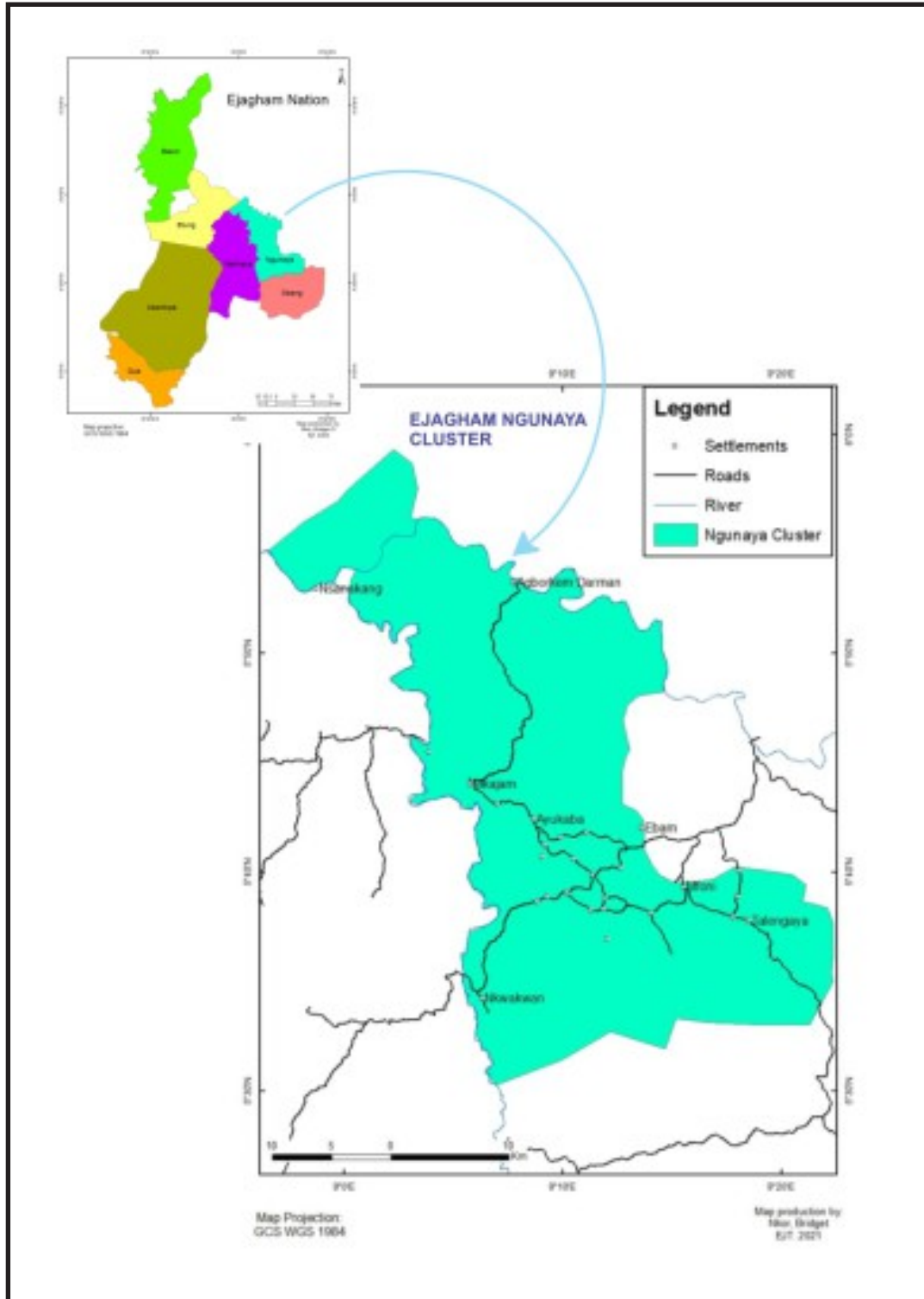
*©EjT Media: Technical Team with delegates from the College of Atoe, DVC and Dean*

indigenous language to become a modern language.

In Nigeria, this timely project has coincided with the recently released National Language Policy which demands, among other things, that henceforth, 'instructions in primary schools; for six years of learning will be in the mother tongue.' It is important to note that the implementation of this policy in schools domiciled in Ejagham areas, depends on the availability of a standard Ejagham language orthography – approved by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) – through which instructional materials for the teaching and learning of/in the Ejagham language can be developed.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Ejagham Ngunaya



**Appendix 2: PHOTO GALLERY**  
**@Ejagham Akamkpa**



*©EjT Media: Prof. Stella Ansa explaining the consonant, vowel charts, syllable structure and tones of the proposed orthography*



*©EjT Media: L-R Mfon Brownson and Mr. Idoreyin Attah offering technical services*



*©EjT Media: L-R Rev. Fr. Dr. Felix Ojong & DC Ekup-Nse coordinating the exercise*



*©EjT Media: L-R Rev. Fr. Dr. Felix Ojong & DC Ekup-Nse coordinating the exercise*



*©EjT Media: Participants filling out the questionnaires*



*©EjT Media: Mrs. Rose Egbe coordinating the exercise*



*©EjT Media: Participants filling out the questionnaires*

**@Ejagham Bakor**



*©EjT Media: Participants seeing the project documentary*



©EjT Media: HRM Ntol Atol Julius Ayate, Paramount Ruler-elect Ogoja LGA -CRS, reading EJT presentation leaflet



©EjT Media: Participants filling out the questionnaires



©EjT Media: Prof. Bassey Okon explaining the consonant, vowel charts, syllable structure and tones of the proposed orthography



©EjT Media: Ugban Ibu Monkrom, EJT-VP Ejagham Bakor, filling the questionnaire



©EjT Media: Members of the Technical Team



©EjT Media: Mr. Mfon Brownson handling the technical services



©EjT Media: DC Ekup-Nse demonstrating to participants



©EjT Media: Sesseku Hon. Dr. Agbornduku Eret, EJT-VP Ejagham Cameroon



*©EjT Media: Ugban Ita Akuku filling out the questionnaire*



*©EjT Media: Dr. Ikani Wogar filling out the questionnaire*



*©EjT Media: DC Ekup-Nse coordinating*



*©EjT Media: DC Ekup-Nse briefing participants*



*©EjT Media: Members of the Technical Team*



*©EjT Media: HRM Ntufam Raphael Ekuri Agbor, Paramount Ruler-elect Etung LGA-CRS, filling out the questionnaire*



*©EjT Media: Participant filling out the questionnaire*



©EjT Media: Participants filling out the questionnaires



©EjT Media: Participants



©EjT Media: Technical Team coordinating participants



©EjT Media: Rev. Fr. Dr. Felix Ojong briefing Participants



©EjT Media: L-R DC Ekup-Nse & Rev. Fr. Dr. Felix Ojong



©EjT Media: Rev. Fr. Dr. Felix Ojong saluting the Royals



©EjT Media: Royal participants



## @Ejagham in Cameroon



*©EjT Media: Participants filling the questionnaires and abridged Ejagham wordlist*



*©EjT Media: Participants filling the questionnaires and abridged Ejagham wordlist*



*©EjT Media: L-R Sesseku (Iyamba) Hon. Dr. Agbornduku Eret presenting EjT Memorabilia to HRH Chief Moses*



*©EjT Media: Prof. Magdalene Bakume Ngongho decorated with EjT materials*



*©EjT Media: On behalf of Eyomojock Traditional Association, Ntufam Arrah Thomas Takang present transportation fare support to EjT contingents*



*©EjT Media: L-R Facilitators: DC Ekup-Nse, Prof. Magdalene Bakume Ngongho & Rev. Fr. Dr. Felix Ojong*



*©EjT Media: M: HRH Chief Moses Obenofunde and other participants*

## @Ejgham Qua



*©EjT Media: Participants with facilitators*



*©EjT Media: Participants savouring their lunch*



*©EjT Media: Participant filling the abridged Ejgham wordlist*



*©EjT Media: Participants watching the Project's documentary*



*©EjT Media: Participant filling the abridged Ejgham wordlist*



*©EjT Media: HRH Chief Moses Obenofunde branding EJT Obenofunde*

