INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organisation, every year globally, ten million people are diagnosed with cancer and over six million die from cancer. Every community is affected by cancer but there are significant regional differences.

Growing in sub-Saharan Africa due to the increase in life expectancy and the change in the life styles of the populations, the disease calls for the provision of a medical environment adapted to the issue of public health, still poorly considered. The Sylvia Bongo Ondimba Foundation for the Family, with its programme for the reduction of maternal and child mortality, commits itself to prevent, treat, and provide support to people who suffer from the two main forms of female cancer in Gabon: the cervical and breast cancers.

As part of this commitment, the Foundation developed partnerships with national and international players for a shared ambition: defeat cancer.

Sylvia Bongo Ondimba
Founder
Since 2013, the Sylvia Bongo Ondimba Foundation for the Family has taken part in the fight against cancer in Gabon, and especially against breast and cervical cancers.

The objective is to reduce the incidence and mortality of the most frequent female cancers.

This vision materialises into a strategy for fighting cancers based on three pillars: prevention, treatment, and support. Actively involved through local actions among the populations, the Foundation also makes use of its leadership to actively advocate to public authorities for the free provision of screening and support of the people affected by cancer as well as the access to treatment for all.

In Gabon, the probability of developing a cancer before the age 75 is of 9.7% (GLOBOCAN 2012). As for the most frequent female cancers, the incidence rate is of 16.1/100,000 women for breast cancer and 19.9/100,000 women for cervical cancer (Cancer Atlas, WHO, 2014).

Our vision is to turn Gabon into a pole of excellence in the support and fight against cancers in Central Africa with the reduction of the incidence and mortality of the most frequent female cancers as an overall objective.

Our commitments:

- Tailor our action in close link with the needs and expectations of the people suffering from cancer, the population and health professionals.
- Organise support and spread innovation for the population and people suffering from cancer.
- Reduce the inequalities when faced with cancer.
- Contribute to a better access to oncological care and services.
- Consolidate by operating as much as possible in partnership with other concerned national and international players.
A GLOBAL APPROACH

**Prevent**
- Inform, educate and raise people's awareness
- Vaccinate
- Detect early

**Treat**
- Diagnose every type of cancer
- Use every advanced technical and therapeutic tool: radiotherapy, chemotherapy, surgery...
- Make anti-cancer drugs affordable and available to all

**Support**
- Assist patients during the treatment
- Improve the quality of life of people affected by cancer during and after the disease
Prevention is one of the most efficient means to fight cancer.

Studies show that early detection of breast and cervical cancers may reduce by 25% their mortality rates. Early detection includes screening and large-scale diagnosis in maternal and childcare units.

As part of the programme for the Early Detection of Breast and Cervical Cancers, the Foundation is involved in the establishment of screening units in local health centres through the training of personnel, the donation of equipment, the rehabilitation and fitting out of premises, as well as the monitoring-assessment of structures in place.

The Foundation also supports regional hospitals, who provide diagnosis, by providing them with the necessary equipment. This equipment enables on-the-post treatment of precancerous lesions and to significantly reduce the risk of getting a cervical cancer.

Raising awareness among people is essential. With Pink October, the Foundation fully invests itself so as to reassert the stakes and benefits of early screening and to answer women’s enquiries about the steps to undertake. It is also the opportunity to assist and mobilise health care providers with the sharing of information and guidance to their patients. Every year, during the month of October, early detection activities are intensified and awareness campaigns on the importance of screening are organised, including the distribution of flyers and posters. Events are initiated and large-scale communication, through local and national media as well as social networks, is implemented.

The Marathon of Gabon is the final step of the campaign. The Foundation encourages women to participate in the marathon alongside its President and to join her in the fight against female cancers.

In 2015, the Foundation initiated a feasibility and acceptability study for the implementation of a national campaign for anti-HPV vaccination. This is required to prevent cervical cancer, especially for girls who have not yet become sexually active.

47 centres of early detection already established in 3 provinces of Gabon.
Providing support to people with signs of or affected by cancer is an essential part of our strategy.

In order to improve the quality of the management of patients, the Foundation supports the LIC by providing training for their personnel, of which some benefited of continuous training in Morocco thanks to the partnership of the Foundation with the Lalla Salma Foundation – Cancer Prevention and Treatment. The Foundation also assists with the availability of anti-cancer drugs so as to allow patients to follow their treatments uninterruptedly.

Finally, in order to improve the collection of statistical data on the disease, the Foundation participated in the development of a cancer registry in the towns of Libreville and Owendo.

According to the data collected from the LIC in 2013, nearly 20% of the patients give up their treatments due to lack of accommodation in Libreville. Besides, some patients based in the capital cannot follow the course of their treatments regularly because they live too far away from the Institute.

In order to overcome this constraint, the Foundation committed itself to provide patients with free accommodation so as to allow them to follow their treatment in the best conditions possible.

The premises called The “House of Alice”, the main project of the Foundation is designed to accommodate patients affected by cancer from remote areas of the country who cannot find accommodation locally or reliable means of transport to follow their treatments.

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OUR FUTURE ACTIONS

To prepare the setup of a vaccination program against HPV for the prevention of cervical cancer

To contribute to cancer research development, both nationally and internationally

To develop psychological and social support structures as well as treatment within Alice House: onco-aesthetics, acupuncture, nutrition and musical therapy

To run a study on knowledge levels, attitudes and practices of the Gabonese population in the face of cancer

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

51 Early detection units for breast and cervical cancers were set up across 6 provinces

1 Completion of an acceptability and feasibility study for a program of vaccination against human papilloma virus (HPV)

2,708 Patients treated at The Cancer Institute of Libreville

1 New legislation for free cervical cancer screening

3 Pink October awareness campaigns run – almost 30,000 women screened

1 Mobile screening and diagnostics unit opened

1 Early detection guide for cervical and breast cancers designed and published, and sent out to over 500 healthcare providers

249 Healthcare providers trained

1 Launch of Alice House: psychological and social support and activities such as physiotherapy, physical re-education, tailored nutritional support, onco-aesthetics

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The Lalla Salma Foundation – Cancer Prevention and Treatment: created on the initiative of Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Salma, the Foundation works since 2005 towards an improved patients care system, the promotion of preventive actions. The Foundation also works to make the fight against cancer a public health priority in Morocco. The partnership between both organisations provides for a plan of long-term actions in terms of prevention, development of human resources, access to medicines as well as the care and support provided to patients.

TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS:

- Airtel Gabon
- Azur Gabon
- Industrial and Commercial Insurance Company
- International Bank for Commerce and Industry
- Consignments and Loans Fund
- National Health and Social Security Insurance Fund
- Company of African Commercial Operations
- General Company of Distribution
- EGCA Construction
- GAUFF Foundation
- United Nations Fund for Population
- Gabon Meca
- Gabon Oil Company
- Gabon Special Economic Zone
- Gabon Télécom
- Groupe OGar
- World Health Organisation
- Offices des Ports et Rades du Gabon
- Commercial Company of Reinsurance
- Company of Breweries in Gabon
- Gabonese Company for Petroleum Products Storage

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS:

- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Gabon
- Libreville’s Institute of Cancerology
- National Health and Social Security Insurance Fund
- French-African Association of Cancerology
- National Programme for the Prevention and Treatment of Cancers

For further information, please visit our website: www.fondationylsylvianbongoondimba.org

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