



World Health Day Webinar Report

Theme: Together for Health, Stand with Science

Focus: Autism and Mental Health

Date: 7th April 2026

Organizers: Ready for Development (RfD) & Joint Efforts to Scale Up Impacts (JESUIS)

I- INTRODUCTION

On April 7, 2026, in commemoration of World Health Day, Ready for Development (**RfD**) in collaboration with Joint Efforts to Scale Up ImpactS (**JESUIS**) organized a webinar focused on Autism and Mental Health.

The webinar aimed to raise awareness on autism, promote mental health support, and encourage the use of science-based practices in diagnosis, care, and inclusion within the Cameroonian context.

The event was moderated by **Mr. OBIA MBONI Bryan** and **Mrs. Dominique MIEGUIM**, Executive Directors of RfD and JESUIS respectively.

The guest speakers included:

- **Mr. Didier DEMASSOSSO** – Clinical Psychologist
- **Mrs. NOAH Francine** – Mother and advocate for Autism
- **Mr. Ezéchiel ETOUNDI** – Special educator

The screenshot displays a Zoom webinar interface. At the top, the Zoom Workplace toolbar is visible. The main content area shows the webinar agenda titled "Ordre du jour" with a duration of 1 hour (from 19:00 to 20:00 GMT). The agenda includes the following items:

- 19:05 Mot de Bienvenue** (Bilingual - Accueil des participants suivi des présentations des intervenants)
- 19:20 DIDIER DEMASSOSSO** (Psychologue clinicien et expert en santé mentale. Focus: Soins, diagnostic et traitement)
- 19:35 NOAH FRANCINE** (Maman et Membre Focus: Témoignage, résilience et engagement communautaire)
- 19:50 EZECHIEL ETOUNDI** (Éducateur spécialisé en autisme. Focus: Accompagnement à l'autonomie et soutien des enfants adultes)
- 19:55 Mot de clôture** (Questions additionnelles, mot de clôture et remerciements)

The right sidebar shows the "Webinar chat" and "Participants (15)" list. The chat shows a message from Obia Bryan: "Obia Bryan is my name. I am joining from Yaounde, Cameroon". The participants list includes: Hervé, Marcelle Mbum, Mboh Nadine A., Ngambida Antoinette Nathalie eppie Bakina, Ngono Etoundi, and Sallygina Dieri.

II- SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Each speaker addressed key issues related to autism and mental health from professional, personal, and practical perspectives.

1. Mr. Didier DEMASSOSSO

Focus: Science, Diagnosis, and Advocacy

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Demassosso defined mental health as a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being that influences how individuals think, feel, and behave.

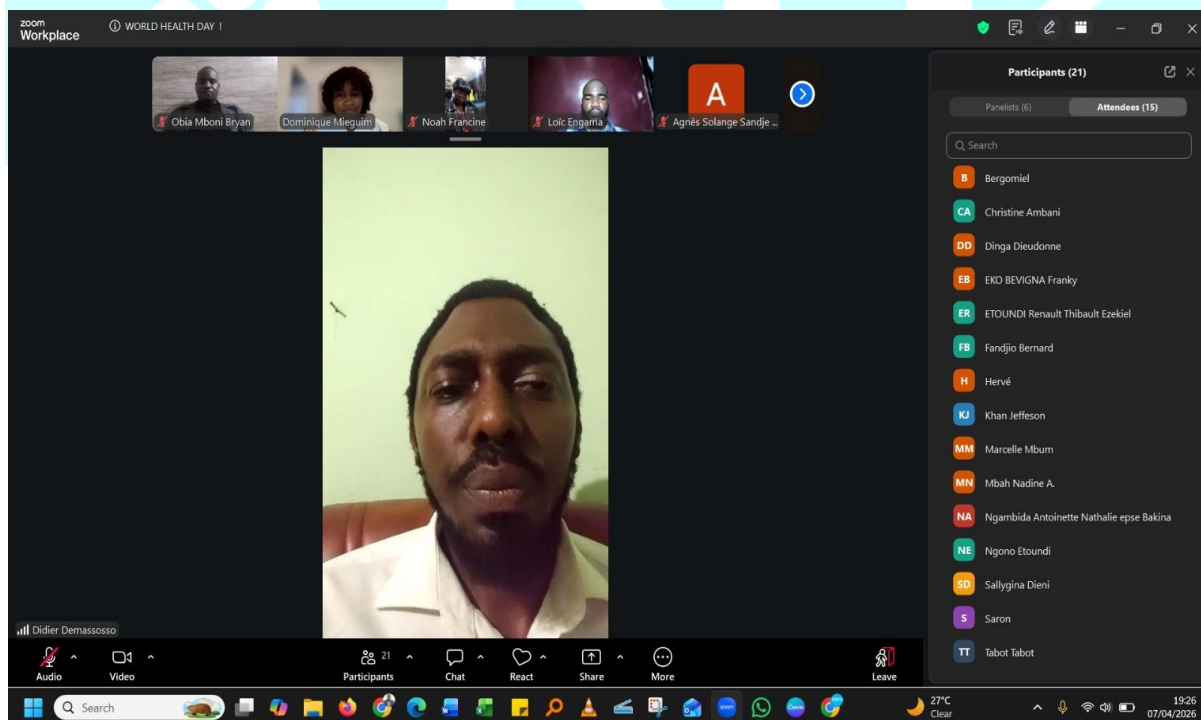
He highlighted key advancements in science and clinical psychology, emphasizing that early diagnosis of autism and mental health conditions can lead to more effective interventions.

Issues related to cultural myths and societal beliefs were also discussed. He noted that certain misconceptions continue to hinder access to appropriate care services.

However, he expressed concern over the lack of adequate diagnostic tools in Cameroon.

Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of providing psychological support to families, noting that mental health care should not focus solely on the child but also on caregivers who face emotional and social challenges.

He concluded by highlighting the importance of advocacy in changing public perceptions. He stressed the need to strengthen local research and ensure that scientific findings inform public health policies.



2. Mrs. NOAH Francine

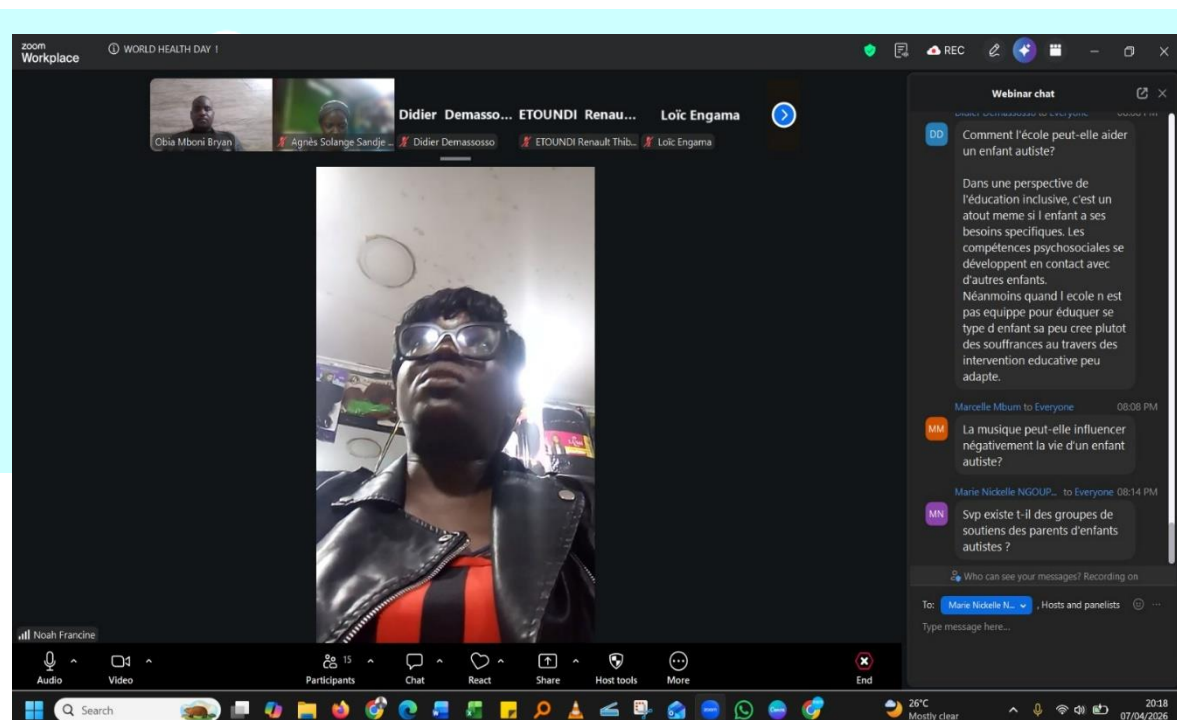
Focus: Testimony, Resilience, and Community Engagement

As a mother of a child with autism, Mrs. Noah Francine shared her personal experience, describing the emotional challenges she faced from recognizing early signs to eventual acceptance. She also highlighted the difficulties caused by limited access to medical support.

Furthermore, she called for improved access to scientific and medical services, including early diagnosis centres, therapy, and specialized care to better support affected families.

Addressing stigma, she encouraged mothers facing similar challenges to remain strong and seek support, emphasizing that they are not alone.

In conclusion, she advocated for increased community awareness, empathy, and compassion.



3. Mr. Ezéchiél Etoundi

Focus: Support, Autonomy, and Field Practice

Mr. Etoundi highlighted the role of special educators in supporting both children with autism and their families. He emphasized that educators can help reduce social isolation by engaging communities and promoting understanding of autism as a condition that requires support rather than stigma.

In addition, he explained how scientific recommendations can be translated into practical strategies, such as structured routines and personalized learning approaches, to enhance a child's independence.

He also identified challenges affecting the creation of inclusive environments, including limited resources, inadequate professional training, and prevailing societal attitudes toward children with special needs.

III- CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED DURING DISCUSSIONS

The following challenges were identified during the discussions:

- Limited access to diagnostic and therapeutic services;
- Persistent cultural misconceptions about autism;
- Shortage of trained professionals in special education;
- Social isolation experienced by affected families;
- Weak integration of research findings into public policy.

IV- KEY TAKEAWAYS

The webinar underscored the following key lessons:

- Early diagnosis significantly improves outcomes for children with autism;
- Mental health support should include families and caregivers;
- Science-based approaches are essential for effective care and intervention;
- Cultural stigma remains a major barrier to inclusion and care;
- Inclusion requires community awareness and systemic support.

V- RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made.

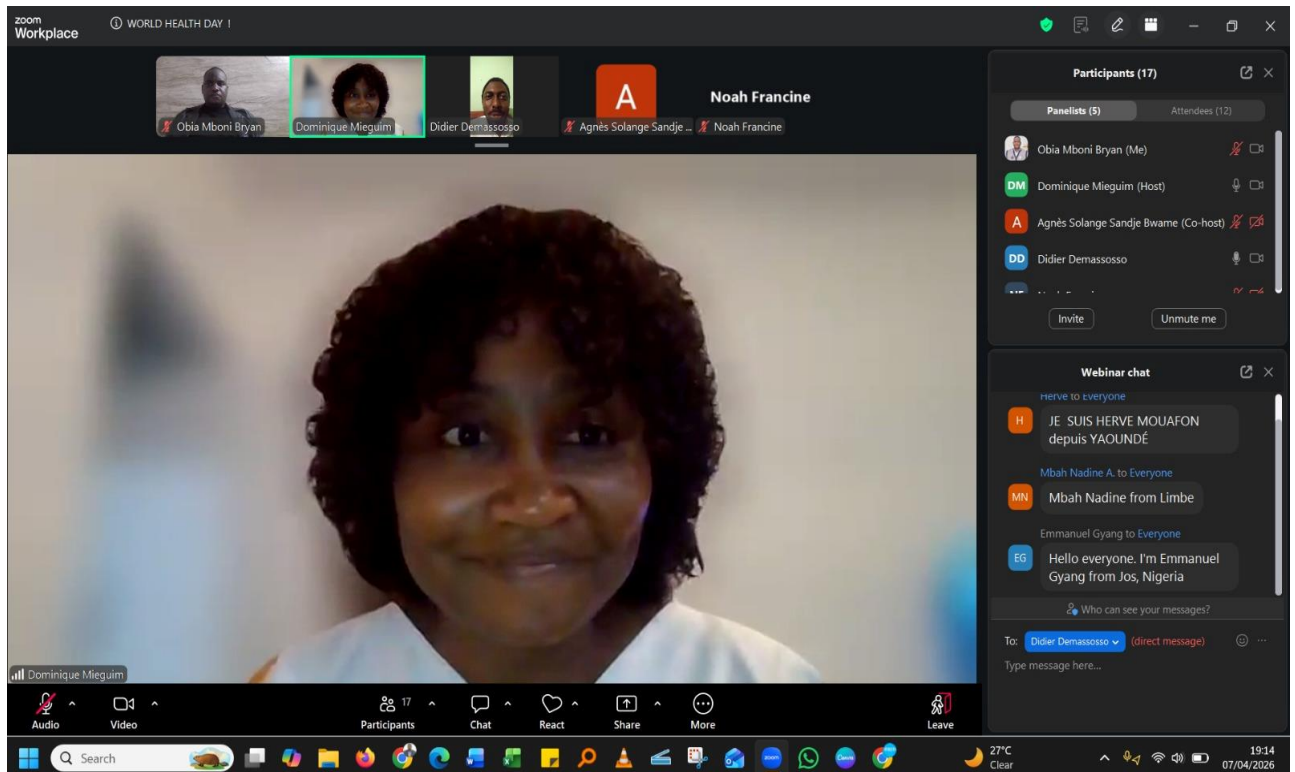
- Encourage public awareness campaigns on autism and mental health;
- Strengthen healthcare systems to support early diagnosis and intervention;
- Expand access to psychological support services for families;
- Promote inclusive education policies and practices;
- Strengthen collaboration between researchers and policymakers.

VI- CONCLUSION

The webinar successfully provided a platform for dialogue on autism and mental health by bringing together scientific, personal, and practical perspectives.

It highlighted the urgent need to embrace science, challenge stigma, and establish inclusive systems that support individuals with autism and their families.

By standing together for health and supporting science, communities can foster understanding, acceptance, and an improved quality of life for all.



Headquarters: Yaounde, Cameroon – P.O BOX. 35184 Yaounde – Tel: (237) 672 59 75 70 | 697 55 70 10
Email: info@readyfordevelopment.org. Website: <http://www.readyfordevelopment.org>