



HIV/AIDS PREVENTION: CLEAN WATER FOR A HEALTHIER VILLAGE!

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Learn About African Action on AIDS (AAA)

AAA is a tax exempt non-profit organization registered in the USA and operating under section 501(c) 3 of the IRS code. It is also registered in Cameroon (auth. No00174/A/MINAT/DAP/SD LP/SAC). It has special consultative status with the United Nations ECOSOC and the UN Department of Information.

AAA's work is based on 3 programmes:

"JUST KNOW" Campaign emphasizes" MA YEM, MA BO":

- Knowledge of one's body
- Knowledge that leads to behavior change
- Knowledge that helps to visualize a future without AIDS

"Health before Wealth"

Concept promotes:

- Testing for HIV
- Clean hands (hand washing stations)
- Clean water (drinking stations)
- Dignified toilets
- Fighting against Malaria (treated mosquito bed nets)
- Vaccination
- Anti worms medicin

"Women's economic autonomy"

through our Scholarship Programme. This scholarship enables each teenage orphan girl to complete at least a secondary, general or technical education that will lead to financial and economic autonomy, greatly reducing the risk of being infected with HIV through sexual abuse and violence.

The AAA End of Year Event 2016 created a special environment where young people from central African countries, many of which are displaced by war, were able to brainstorm on their common issues and challenges. There were 2 main objectives: 1) To equip them with Characteristics of Mobilized and Responsible Communities; 2) To provide examples/models of community service they could either initiate or get involved with.

Characteristics of Mobilized and Responsible Communities:

- Members are aware and informed of their individual and collective problems;
- The knowledge acquired by members help them to better understand their world and specific problems;
- Members acquire more wisdom through peaceful debates/conversations;
- Members gain practical knowledge of different options leading to the solution of their problems;
- Members act within their own capacity, applying their own strength and investing their own resources;
- Members understand the importance for each one to play their individual role in decision making, implementation, evaluation, responsibility for the outcome;
- The community seeks outside partnerships, not to totally rely on external support, but to grow, become stronger and more efficient;
- Members of the Community become more creative, less pessimistic;
- Members of the community reject the label of POOR PEOPLE that generates shame on who they are, and in so doing steals the positive energy that could transform them from victims to conquerors.
- Members learn the importance of networking;
- The endurance of members as a group shows.

Models of Community Service:

To find a model of community service, we decided to collectively read a wonderful story titled: MAMBO – The Great Baobabs Reunion, by Gladys T. Kenfack –www. balafun.com Here are few quotes: "...On the first day, the chief opens the reunion with a warm welcome. He wishes everyone a great time... and a rewarding community project. This year, we are going to build a Water Well. He lays the first stone and invites everyone to join in. Mambo admires the village chief, who leads by example. Everyone plays a part in building the well. The men dig a deep hole. The women collect large rocks. The children carry sand. As Mambo dumps more sand around the hole, he realizes that everyone is valuable and that the villagers need one another. Soon, clear water flows from the well. Children bring out small containers and take turns filling them up. "Clean water for a healthier village! Mambo shouts as he waits for his turn to fill up his bowl." The debate that followed led to the following insights: 1) **Community Mobilization around Health** does not only happen through official workshops and seminars. It can also be done by encouraging children to read creative books that focus on local issues and that stimulate responsible behaviors. 2) **Children are not community bystanders**. They are full members and when they have good role models, they easily follow the lead and thrive. **Ruth Bamela Engo, President**



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