



EmPOWER GIRLS to Overcome their Local Challenges

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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/SDLP/S AC). 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 2017 celebration of the IDG helped showcase the creative and collective desire of AAA girls, to share their understanding of Empowerment. For this group, Empowerment is an individual strength that leads to a collective strength of the community which in turn has an impact on each individual member. A brainstorming session coordinated by Prof. Charly Gabriel Mbock, led to a series of basic conclusions including: 1) One must **first Exist** to be able to participate in the process of overcoming local challenges; 2) Existing involves embracing **who you are**, and in so doing, enhancing Self **esteem**; 3) Recognizing that **NO ONE IS ALONE**, living peacefully with others as part of One's own existence and survival.

The biggest challenge in Cameroon today is the risk of a **DIVIDE** and AAA girls are determined to be part of the **SOLUTION**. They collectively and individually decided to adopt daily behaviors that promote peaceful/respectful/human interactions. We recorded few of them in English or French as follows: a) *I will be the one to greet my students when I enter the classroom instead of waiting for them to greet me*; b) *I will listen to other people's opinions calmly, even when we do not agree*; c) *Je tâcherai aussi de trouver de bonnes choses sur la vie au Cameroun et pas seulement ce qui va mal*; d) *I will make compliments to people when they do well or look smart*; e) *I will greet people I meet on my way with an encouraging smile*; f) *Désormais je parlerai doucement et gentiment à tout le monde*; g) *I will speak in French or English or in local languages to the patients I receive at the hospital and treat them with respect*; h) *Bonjour, Merci, S'il te plait, Excuse-moi feront désormais partie de mon interaction avec les autres!* VERY LOVED young Cameroon Artists RENISS and JOVI were there to encourage their fans, which gave a magic touch to this whole exercise....C'ETAIT DANS LA SAUCE! Ruth Bamela Engo – President, AAA



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