

EDUCATION+ and African Action on AIDS (AAA) Community Action

1- The NGO African Action on AIDS was created in July 1991 in the United States of America, mostly by African women working at the United Nations in New York, and whose goal it was to support the education of AIDS orphans in sub-Saharan Africa. It was legalized in Cameroon in May 2002 by the Ministry of Territorial Administration (**Auth. No 00174/A/MINAT/DAP/SDLP/SAC**), in accordance with decree **No 90/053 of December 19, 1990** on freedom of association. In addition, AAA gained a consultative status with the United Nations in 2003.

2- Since its creation, African Action on AIDS has benefited from the support of international institutions, particularly from UNAIDS with which it had similar interests. The concept of EDUCATION+ brought them together once more in Abem and Ndamba villages. For more information, see: www.africanactiononids.org

3- Abem and Ndamba are villages not far from Akonolinga, in the Centre region of Cameroon. Abem is a large crossroads village. It is one of the villages of the Yelinda Group ruled by a 1st degree Chief and managed locally by a 3rd degree female Chief. It is equipped with a Health Center covering more than 8,000 people, a public school and a C.E.S meaning College of Secondary Education. As for Ndamba, it is a village located in the suburbs of Akonolinga, in the Yengono group, covering 12,000 souls, and managed by a 3rd degree Chief. Its demographics and location in a suburban area have favored the creation of a bilingual high school with more than 1,500 students. Around this large high school, there are 2 primary and 2 nursery schools, all needing the same kind of support! These are very important public investments... and it is on this solid foundation that AAA has clung for several years to gradually equip the Preventive Health infrastructures in Abem. These include: **a)** covered water wells with hand pumps, **b)** OAPI approved hands washing stations and **c)** 4 toilet blocks with one dedicated to girls to ensure they do not miss school during the occurrence menstruation!

4- The last two contributions from UNAIDS clearly contribute to the strengthening of AAA's community health facilities allowing AAA to ADOPT the concept of EDUCATION+ with no difficulty under the working theme: **"Initiative Education+, Impact of gender sensitive spaces in schools "**. These were on display at the public school of Abem (March - May 2022) and at the bilingual high school of Ndamba (July - September 2022). The results of this new partnership include the construction of two blocks of 4 toilets and training in preventive health for the communities concerned.

This new concept transforms the community into real ACTORS of their own development. Indeed, digging wells, building toilets especially for girls, installing hand washing stations allow the entire population to a larger form of EDUCATION leading to a healthier and improved life for all, without solely relying on book aspects and diplomas.

Education + ensures total immersion in more practical knowledge with a huge impact on the Environment and Health of communities. That is why, on the handwashing stations manufactured and installed by AAA in schools, it is written: "IN MY SCHOOL, EXCELLENCE STARTS WITH WATER AND CLEAN HANDS...EDUCATION +".

The other side of Education+ is to enable young girls to remain in good health for their full development, leading to academic success, economic and financial autonomy that can reduce or eliminate HIV infections due to sexual abuse and violence against women, including prostitution, on the basis of economic needs.

5- Apart from Education+, AAA uses the traditional BETI concept of "NGÔMOTÔ" which places heavy emphasis on PREVENTIVE ACTIONS requiring constant planning for the future based on needs not only at individual , but also at collective/community levels.

To be "NGÔMOTÔ" is to be at the foundation of Education+ for the present and the future. It is the choice of a healthy life and environment from generation to generation.