

About us

Mission Statement

A Common Future seeks to propose alternative models of masculinity that are not necessary in opposition to models of femininity and that allow men and women to share love, reproductive health and decision making responsibilities.

We seek to end men's violent and aggressive behaviour towards women, children and other men. Apart from encouraging men to develop alternative ways of dealing with conflict, we advance women's well-being and promote gender equity by conducting research to inform policies and practices that promote discrimination against women and domestic violence. We also work with hard-to-reach and underserved segments of the Population.

Our Vision

Our vision is that of a world in which men's contribution to women's objectives move to the top of the agenda and men recognize the real value of women and girls in society as they become part of the solution not part of the problem. Ours is to create a society where men play an active part in the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and children.

Our Beliefs

We believe that ending violence against women is primarily the responsibility of men. Although women are at the forefront of addressing this issue, we think it is essential that men play a primary role in the solution to end it, as recommended by Ban ki Moon, U.N Secretary General during the launch of the Network of Men Leaders. To do that, well meaning men ...men who do not see themselves as part of the problem...need to get involved. By strategizing with men across Cameroon, we hope to shift social norms that define manhood in our culture and produce a national movement of men committed to ending violence against women. A Common Future is unique in its abilities to be affirming and respectful to the experiences of women while expressing genuine care and hope for men.

Our Objectives

Being a leading grassroots organization addressing men's violence against women and the eradication of sexism, while maintaining strong coalitions with women's organizations already doing this important work, we help to organize communities in order to raise awareness and get men involved in ending violence against women.

Specifically, we help;

- To increase men's understanding of the root causes of violence in the home and in society.
- To create healing circles for men.
- To make men understand that both men and women have a common future.
- To develop intervention programmes that focus largely on preventing the violence from occurring.
- To undertake restorative practices.

What We Do

Through seminars, workshops and other educational vehicles like books, music, radio and film documentary, A Common Future challenges men to reconsider their long held beliefs about women in an effort to create a more just society. We achieve this by encouraging change in the behaviour of men through a re-education and training process. By working with boys and men in colleges, corporations, government agencies, non-profit as well as grassroots women organizations across Cameroon, we bring them to be accountable and responsible for their actions. Specifically we offer:

- Counseling and support services for men
- Gender-sensitivity training for men.
- Trauma counseling for men.
- Mentorship for boys in local schools and youth groups by positive role models.
- Training for coaches and men involved in athletics and mentoring.
- Chemical dependency and human services, creating models that include a social justice perspective.
- Engaging men in community development issues, especially the enhancing of the quality of life through the improvement of water quality and indigenous approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Gender Sensitive/RH training for men

Our Reputation

A Common Future aspires to be the first port of call for organizations and women's movements and policy makers seeking credible advice and solutions on how men can be valuable partners in ending violence against women. By emphasizing that violence is never okay is a key step in creating a world free of violence. As a non-profit organization with the goal of promoting a non-violent and conflict-sensitive society, co-founders, Gwain Colbert Fulai and Dountio Saadeo Relindis see the impact of women in society to be greater than mere statistics can convey. Conscious and well meaning men need to explain it, succinctly and powerfully, in order for people to understand.

Yes Men Can.

Partnerships

A Common Future forges meaningful and constructive partnerships with the following structures MenEngage, Center for Women Global Leadership, USA, A Call To Men, USA; Whole Women's World, South Africa; SWEET Africa, Liberia, WAcameroon, GeED, UN SG's Network of Men Leaders, and many other grassroots organizations in this domain.

Withdrawal and Reinsertion of Female Child Workers from Cocoa/Coffee Farms in Kom-Boyo Division

Summary

Kom is still a hard-to-reach and under-served segment of the population of the North West Region of Cameroon when it comes to attaining the universal goal of access to primary education. This MDG becomes the more unattainable when one thinks of the fact that the girl child in this community of over 80,000 inhabitants has very little chances of completing a six grade school, a thing people elsewhere take for granted. Over 75 % of children in this community, especially the girl child never have an opportunity to complete a sixth grade school as poverty, ignorance on the side of the parents, and malnutrition force them to drop out of school and go work as female child laborers in Cocoa and coffee farms not only to support their poor parents but also to enable their younger ones continue schooling. Some end up as baby sitters in city centers. Ignorance from parents make them see no problem in girls dropping out of school as society continues to see them as property good enough only for marriage. This condition forced girls into early pregnancies, forced marriages, prostitution and infections like HIV and STIs. A Common Future helps this children by not only withdrawing them from cocoa/coffee farms and sending them back to school as well as providing them with school fees, text books, uniforms and nutrition to keep them through their education. We equally equip the parents and schools to support these children

What is the issue, problem, or challenge?

In Kom, Boyo Division of the Northwest Region, people live on less than \$1 a day. Over 60 % of the parents are uneducated and do not see the necessity of sending children to school, especially the girl child instead of preparing her for marriage. Community leaders and churches do their best to encourage parents to send children to school but when parents are faced with the slightest difficulty, they withdraw the children. The unaffordable school fees, text books and uniforms, and hunger come to complicate matters. This makes children drop out from school before the 4th grade to go and work in coffee and cocoa farms as child laborers. Some end up as baby sitters in the cities. A 2005 U.S State Department Cameroon Report on trafficking states that the North West is 'source, transit and destination' for child laborers. Government agencies, community organizations and churches lack support services for these kinds of situations that are now alarming. The result is an endless cycle of female-child workers, an increase in school drop-out ratio, poverty, illness, early and forced marriages and the unfulfillment of MDGs.

How will this project Solve the Problem?

This project conducts education, withdrawal and reinsertion workshops and services in this community. We do this by easing their financial burdens through provision of school fees, texts books, uniforms and food to enable the children stay in school. A Common Future also trains both parents and school administrators on livelihood skills to be able to support these children through school. In our efforts to introduce education that pays for itself, we set up poultry farms for schools and parents so they can sell the produce and support children in school. Our workshops enable parents acquire family planning information while the children receive training on sexual and reproductive health issues so as to curb the rate of realy pregnancies, HIV and STIs.

Potential Long Term Impact

The programme will support and provide an environmentally-friendly setting for children, especially the girl-child to be excited about going to school beyond the primary level. By providing the parents and community leaders with training and counseling alongside the withdrawal and reinsertion process, they will be equipped to continue to take care of these children even after the program must have ended. By providing food and nutrition as well as sexual and reproductive health information to the children, they would be capable of making informed choices, of staying in school and of avoiding early sex that can lead to pregnancies, infections, early marriages and the rubbing of the MDGs by 2015.

Project Message

'My child had grown stunted and sickly at a tender age of 8 as she worked in the coffee farm after dropping out of school for lack of school fees, and she went to work and support her junior brother in class two. Now, I am happy as I see her smiling back to school with this program'.
-Nawain Futela Nabain, Withdrawal and Reinsertion Workshop participant.

Funding Information

Total Budget Goal: \$10 000

-\$10 provides school fees and three nutritious meals for one girl for one year

-\$20 can keep a girl in school for a year by providing school fees and text books

-\$40 provides a girl with one year school fees, text books, and two pairs of uniforms

-\$80 provides training materials and feeding for two workshops for parents and school authorities

-\$100 provides nutritious snacks for a year for one child

-\$500 provides a poultry farm to a community school with a capacity of 100 chicks to support education that pays for itself.