**Focus on Girls Education**

**Innovative ways of bringing Girls back into the school system in Cameroon.**

IRCCA Foundation is a non profit organization located in Kumbo (Geographic coordinates 60 12’ 0” North and 100 40’ 0” East) Cameroon. Amongst our prior concerns is “Focus on Girls’ Education in Cameroon and the various innovative ways girls can be incorporated into the school system”.

In Cameroon like all Sub Saharan African countries, too many girls are out of school.

In the Northern part of the country, 40 percent of girls who start primary school drop out and fewer than 30 percent of students then go on to attend secondary school.

Unlike boys, they’re given very few opportunities to further their studies. As a result many girls in local communities in Cameroon are illiterate.

Unfortunately, girls who are not in school are more likely to be exposed to sexual exploitation, trafficking, and unwanted pregnancies, which can harm their chances to lift themselves out of poverty and can be having lasting negative effects on their health.

And studies have shown that girls generally perform better in school than boys, especially given the enormous challenges they go through. If they are given the opportunity and time they need to concentrate on school work, the benefits to their communities – and even countries – could be huge.

***The problem is clear. So, what we are doing to solve this pervasive problem!***
We have been working on *literacy, affordability, inclusion, and technology* in communities in Cameroon. We hope to give girls the chance to learn, and in turn inspire other young girls to follow their path in the future.

**Our lofty goal**: ***80% of girls receive a primary education by 2018.***

**And our innovation is simple**: Including parents in on important conversations about how education can transform the lives of their daughters and their communities. Educating parents about how keeping girls out of schools hurts both the girls and the family has been a key component in ensuring that girls can – and do – attend school. We also want to carry out *massive advocacy campaigns, capacity building measures, orientation exercises, and one to one discussion forums* with young girls and their parents to identify and sort out ways of effectively incorporating these young girls into the school system.

In order to make schooling affordable, which is one of the greatest barriers for girls to attend school; scholarships are given to girls excelling in academics. More than 99% of drop outs have resumed studies to the high school level when offered a scholarship. This shows that financial constraints besides other causes are equally responsible for hindering academic progress for these children.

In addition, IRCCA focuses on opportunities that matter most to the students. For example, they can study *development issues, social sciences*, or anything else they are interested in as a way to keep them engaged and to keep them coming back to the classroom.

With academic counseling the opportunity to do student exchanges, young girls are encouraged to participate in society and stay in school.

***One unique way IRCCA hopes to combat illiteracy is through establishing an audio-visual center that is free to all women and girls. This center will be connected to the Internet, so women and girls can access effective tools for learning.***
While using computers and new online programs are unique ways that will engage girls and keep them in school, it is also just plain smart. Computer literacy is an important component to learning, as these types of educational programs will make learning more accessible and less elite. Additionally, computer literacy can help their job prospects in the future.

*While it is a challenge, we believe in a better future for girls – free of violence, and filled with education and learning. And we’re working every day to make that future a reality.*

***We call on those who share in our dream of a better world for the girl child to arise, join and support us so that this dream materializes.***

**Our Back to school campaign involves four phases:**

**Phase One:** *Enabling* ***ALL*** *girls complete primary Education*. We intend to start by sponsoring 100 girls through primary school by paying tuition, buying books and sewing uniforms.

**Phase Two:** *Sending 50 girls through secondary schools. They shall also have access to free text books, fees and uniforms.*

**Phase Three:** *Sending 25 girls to Universities (This would be given to those that excel in school work). The additional task for them would be to come back and help enlighten others by dedicating their services to empowerment programs for women and the girl child.*

***Phase Four****: Sending 25 girls to vocational schools. These in addition to regular academic courses will be able to acquire vocational training in income generating activities as a means of overcoming over reliance on others for their needs.*

*Total Number of girls to benefit-200*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Primary school | 100 |
| 2 | Secondary school | 50 |
| 3 | University | 25 |
| 4 | Vocational school | 25 |
| Total |  | 200 |

The use of *Audio Visual Learning Techniques* should act as a tool which would inspire those who have attained a higher level of education to carry out research especially on gender issues, academics as well as to impart the knowledge acquired to other women and girls.

Young girls will be taught computer skills and modern information and communication technology as part of our education program. This will open them to the wider world and help create awareness on the global gender map. Acquiring computer knowledge will facilitate the possibility of them getting a job in this fast growing and competitive world.

We hope to strengthen student exchanges so as to bring different communities together to learn from each other. We also hope to promote these student exchanges to the international level by giving girls the opportunities to travel to other countries for these purposes.

***When we educate a girl child we educate the entire world. Give them the opportunity to learn!***