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**Project Title:**

**TEEN HAVEN: Boys & Girls Clubs in Tole, Cameroon.**

**Presented by Reach Out Cameroon**

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**TEEN HAVEN - BOYS AND GIRLS' CLUB**

BACKGROUND

Contraceptive use amongst youths and girls still remains very low with a higher rate of usage amongst educated youths (Demographic Health Survey -DHS-, National Institute of Statistics 2011). Despite the fact that reproductive health policies have been adopted to increase youths and girls access to Sexual and reproductive health services, there still exist wide gender, geographic and socioeconomic disparities (PETS 2010, DHS - Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys 2011). The high prevalence of HIV amongst youths and girls in particular is a call for concern. The 2011 demographic health survey indicates that almost 2% of young people age 15-24 are HIV-positive. Among young women, HIV prevalence is slightly higher in those living in urban areas (2.9%) than those living in rural areas (2.6%). The above mentioned statistics show that the high prevalence of HIV among youths could be primarily due to lack of information and limited access to SRH services. Most youths in Cameroon still lack access to sexual health education, which could be seen from Cameroon's elevated rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies (UNFPA, 2012). Discussing sex-related topics among Cameroonian youths is still regarded as a taboo, thus resulting in misconceptions about sex, pregnancy, and how STIs are spread (International Women’s Health Coalition, 2013). Without proper education, young people are at risk of suffering from STIs and unwanted pregnancy as well as fueling the spread of HIV/AIDS in Cameroon.

Observation of the Cameroonian realities reveals a general lukewarmness of men when it comes to taking responsibilities towards their wives, children and families. Men are absent for most of the time and women are left to take care of the children, from the day-to-day house activities to economic sustainment of the household. This has a significant impact on the socio-economic situation of the household and children's development.

A comparative study of family life education, sex education, and human sexuality conducted by Reach Out Cameroon identified the need to engage in topics such as reproductive health, the status and empowerment of women, intergenerational relationships, and problem-solving skills in order to improve family and social welfare in Tole.

JUSTIFICATION

There is a growing international tendency towards the use of Girls Clubs. It has become increasingly recognized in the context of sexual education programs, that such interventions are unlikely to be effective as long as the underlying economic factors that lead girls into risky behaviours are not addressed. Girls Clubs programs simultaneously provide girls life skills to build knowledge and reduce risky behaviours, and provide skills to enable them to start their own self-reliant economic activities. [[1]](#footnote-1)

This approach is also novel in that it targets those in school as well as those that have dropped out, who are often the most vulnerable and that it does not limit itself to classic lessons, but it uses play, the arts and individual tutoring.

Moreover, Reach Out Cameroon adds to this recognized technique the incorporation of boys as well as girls. Separate spaces allow to have freer sexual education lessons, and to target the above mentioned key issue of responsible fatherhood and gender roles with the boys.

GOAL

Breaking **the intergenerational cycle of poverty** with a multi-pronged approach (sexual empowerment, economic empowerment and the power of culture) for youths in Tole – Cameroon, within a period of 2 years.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

* To improve family welfare and give adolescents’ access to SRH (Sexual Reproductive Health)
* Gradually provide a wider range of skills to tackle their future livelihoods
* To provide a safe space to access for youths to discuss freely issues related to their sexuality and well-being
* To provide a development space for youths to develop creativity, artistic sensitivity, logical thinking and team work and achieve their full potential.

TARGET

The targets for this programme are young girls and boys whose ages range from 10 to 18 identified through schools, door-to-door approach and community stakeholders. Both clubs will be composed of 80 members (40 boys and 40 girls).

TIME FRAME:

This project is expected to last for a period of two years, after which the activities will be reviewed to incorporate current ideas and the pioneer members will be empowered to commence an economic activity of their own.

METHODOLOGY

* Identification of club members through the help of institutions (such as schools and churches) and local community (such as women groups, youth groups, traditional authorities)
* Boys & Girls Clubs: The club members will meet once per week, with one skill development activity per month (Painting, Shoe Making, Designing and sewing..). However, both clubs will be merged to carry out social activities (sport activities, Excursions, debate competitions..).

Topics:

1. Physical maturation and development;
2. Consequences of early marriage;
3. Consequences of unplanned pregnancy;
4. Communication and decision-making skills related to sexual activity;
5. Abstinence and contraceptive methods;
6. Family planning;
7. Understanding STD and HIV infection (stigma); and
8. Sexual victimisation including rape and incest.

Combine these lessons with:

1. Financial Literacy lessons and Business classes to encourage savings and improve the performance of those who are already endeavoured in businesses (majority of teens in Tole)
2. Trainings on feasible Income Generating Activities (Snails rearing, cooking marketable products, crafts) to provide tools to improve their livelihoods
3. Board Games, Sports and Arts to inspire creativity and spirit of discovery
4. Projections of adequate movies to inspire and broaden the horizons of the adolescents
5. Debate competitions inter and intra clubs to improve their logical reasoning
6. Homework revision between peers to guarantee their educational success and mastery of arithmetic and literacy
7. Gradually work on their Legal and Political Empowering, Marching and Community actions.

OUTPUT

* 80 children per year receive and assimilate lessons on sexual education, put them in practice in their private lives and share them with their peers.
* 80 children per year receive financial knowledge and new livelihoods skills and embark themselves in small scale entrepreneurship to complement their education.
* 80 children per year develop their talent on the Arts, Logical Thinking, Creativity and Team work.
* 80 children per year radically change their gender assumed roles and become active advocates of Gender Equality in their communities.
* 4 beehives and two snail farms are put in place and generate income for the Clubs.

OUTCOMES

This project is expected to improve on the livelihoods of at least 80 children by:

* Delaying marriage
* Reducing childbirth
* Improving HIV and pregnancy related knowledge.
* Reducing risky behaviours
* Increase engagement in self-employment
* Increase earnings
* Improve Business Management Knowledge

Youths of the community and Tole as a whole will also benefit from the program as subsidiary beneficiaries.

M&E

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted through the following mechanisms:

1. Assessment of students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to sexuality (pre- and –post training)
2. Assessment of students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to entrepreneurship (pre- and –post training)
3. Feedback from parents, students and school staff gathered in periodic Review Meetings.
4. Internal Monitoring of the quality of training.

SUSTAINABILITY

The economic empowerment and Capacity Building of these youths will have impact throughout their whole lives, with spill-over effects in the community as a whole.

The clubs themselves have mechanisms of sustainability, as some of the economic activities showcased there will serve the purpose of raising funds to keep the club going, by the youths and for the youths (beehives, snail farming, arts&crafts)

A diversified strategy of funding will also ensure the Clubs are kept in place, with crowdfunding with the platform GlobalGiving.org as a powerful additional tool. Reach Out Cameroon is already a consolidated partner of GlobalGiving.

BUDGET

To carry out this project for two years, a total sum of 5,267,000 francs CFA will be required.

Summary Budget:

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| **BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS** | | | | | |
| Item | Unit | Quantity | Cost | Total | Description |
| Identification and sensitization | | | | | 43000 |
| Lessons | | | | | 1190000 |
| Club infrastructure | | | | | 1010000 |
| Art Materials | | | | | 758000 |
| Games & Sports | | | | | 680000 |
| Income Generating Activities | | | | | 300000 |
| Social Events | | | | | 445000 |
| M&E | | | | | 121000 |
| Staff | | | | | 720000 |
| **GRAND TOTAL** | | | | | **5267000** |

1. <http://econ.lse.ac.uk/staff/rburgess/wp/ELA.pdf> *Empowering Adolescent Girls: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial in Uganda, 2012, Oriana Bandiera, Niklas Buehren* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)