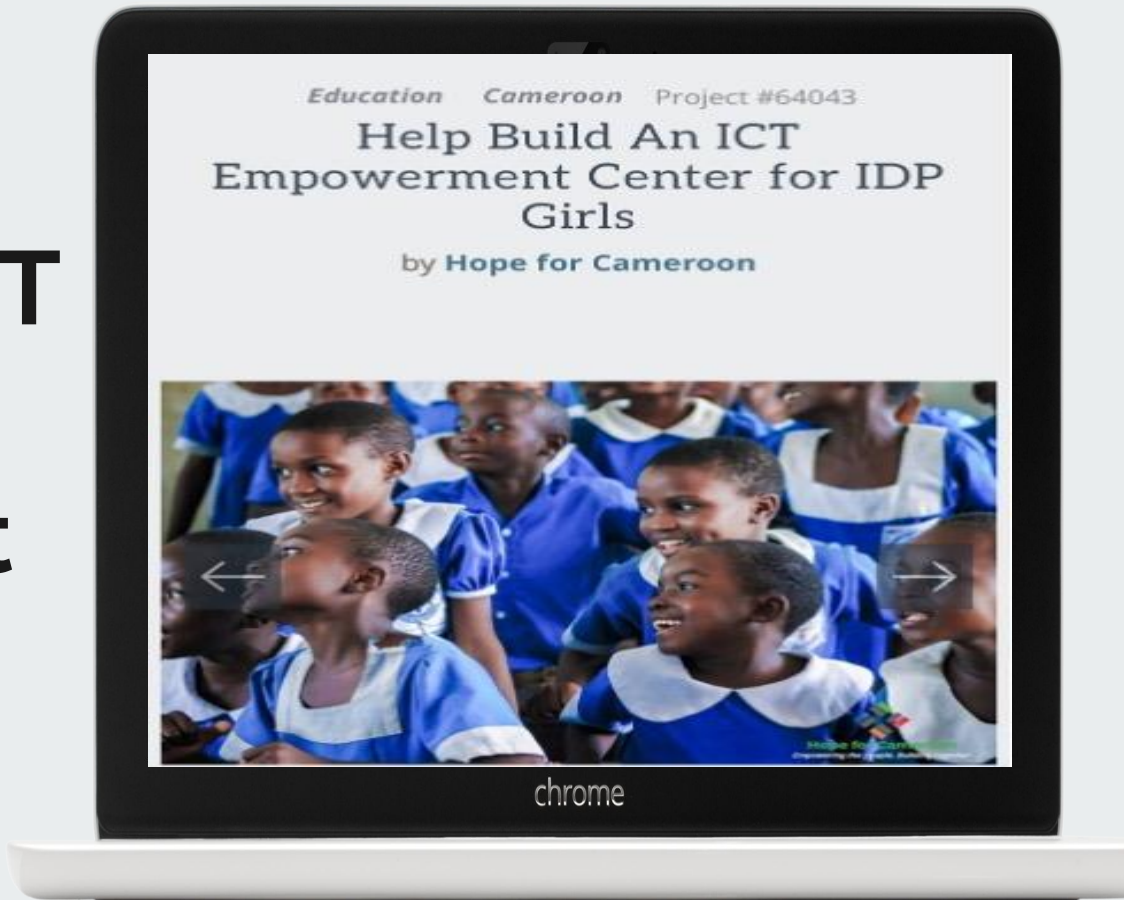




# STEMpower ICT Girls Empowerment Center

Progress Report  
August 21, 2024



# Introduction and Overview

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Since the onset of Cameroon's Anglophone crisis in 2016, over 855,000 children have been forced out of school, according to UNICEF, with a significant number being internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially girls. These vulnerable girls face alarming risks of exploitation, prostitution, and human trafficking, with many resorting to negative coping mechanisms due to limited opportunities for a better future. Traditional assistance methods have proven unsustainable, failing to equip these girls with the skills necessary to enter the job market and build a stable life. In response, Hope for Cameroon launched a project aimed at training 100 vulnerable internally displaced girls and those from low income backgrounds each year and empowering them with essential ICT skills to reclaim their futures.



*Cameroonians holding peace plants and advocating for peace in our country*

# Our Progress and Activities



## Entrepreneurship Training And Seed Funding

In alignment with our mission to empower IDP girls, and in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation Transitions Fund at McGill University, we conducted comprehensive entrepreneurship and vocational training sessions for 100 women and youth in our community, including a strong focus on young tech entrepreneurs. Besides other vocations such as poultry, pig and fish farming, waste recycling, agro-food transformation, the training covered digital entrepreneurship fields such as graphic design, content creation, web design, and other digital skills, equipping participants to thrive in the digital economy. To facilitate these sessions, we had to rent a space, which required funds that would have otherwise been directed towards assisting more IDPs. This underscores the pressing need for a dedicated training facility. We are hopeful that with the success of our fundraising campaign to build the STEMpower ICT Training Center, we will be able to train more IDPs in a sustainable manner, ensuring that resources are optimized to reach and empower a larger number of beneficiaries. Following the training, participants were awarded certificates of completion, and among the 50 participants who pitched their business ideas before a panel of jury, Hope for Cameroon provided micro-seed funding to twenty-seven (27) participants to enable them start or scale their businesses. The impact has been significant, with many participants having launched their businesses, and most who had existing businesses reporting enhanced income and a stronger sense of being on the right path towards economic independence.

Mr. Jude lecturing a session on entrepreneurship Finalists pose for a photo after receiving micro-seed funding



Participants posing with their certificates

# Recruitment of Hope Ambassadors



## Mobilizing Community Leaders To Champion Change

To bring our vision of the STEMpower ICT Empowerment Center to life, we understand that it takes more than just resources—it requires a dedicated community of advocates and leaders. That's why we've been actively recruiting Hope Ambassadors, passionate individuals committed to amplifying our efforts and driving the campaign forward. These ambassadors are not just supporters; they are champions who are raising awareness and mobilizing resources to make the ICT training center a reality. This center is more than just a facility; it represents a safe and nurturing space where girls can acquire the technical skills they need for the future. With the support of our Hope Ambassadors, we are building a movement that will empower these girls to grow, thrive, and take control of their destinies. Together, we are laying the foundation for sustainable change, ensuring that the next generation of women in especially in Cameroon is equipped with the skills and confidence to lead and innovate in the digital world.

# Education and Community Engagement

## Building A Foundation For Future Leaders

Our vision for the STEMpower ICT Training Center extends beyond just building a facility; it's about laying the groundwork for a new generation of leaders who are equipped with the skills and confidence to drive change in their communities. While we are in the early stages of fundraising for this ambitious project, our commitment to fostering educational opportunities remains unwavering. To build momentum and strengthen our community ties, we have actively engaged with student IDPs by celebrating their academic milestones. At the Government Bilingual Primary Practicing School (GBPPS) in Bonaberi, Douala, we recognized outstanding achievements by awarding the Silverman Excellence Award Prizes to top-performing students. This not only celebrated their hard work but also served as a powerful inspiration for more girls to aspire toward STEM education. Of the 40 students we sponsored at GBPPS, 20 were in exam classes, and an impressive 18 of them passed their common entrance exams with honors, securing their spots in college this September. The impact of our support was deeply felt during the graduation ceremony, where we had the privilege of meeting with the parents of these scholars. They expressed heartfelt gratitude, sharing how our support had alleviated their financial burdens and ensured that their children could continue their education—a future that might have otherwise been out of reach without Hope for Cameroon's intervention. This engagement not only solidifies our relationship with the community but also reinforces the critical role education plays in transforming lives. As we push forward with our fundraising efforts, we remain focused on the broader goal of empowering young girls with the tools and opportunities to become future leaders and change-makers in their communities.



Left-right: Our Co-founders handing Silverman Excellence Award Prize, and certificates of graduation respectively, graduating students pose for a picture, GBPPS Director and staff dancing to open the ceremony.

# Health Education and Dignity

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*IDP Girls receive sanitary pads from Hope for Cameroon*

## Empowering IDP Girls Through Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)

Our commitment to supporting IDP girls goes beyond education—it extends to ensuring their health, dignity, and overall well-being. Understanding the unique challenges that these girls face, particularly around menstruation and the stigma associated with it, we took a proactive approach to address these barriers that often prevent them from attending school regularly. To help manage their menstrual cycles without disruption to their education, we distributed sanitary pads to IDP girls, providing them with the essential resources they need to maintain their dignity and focus on their studies. However, our support didn't stop at providing supplies. Recognizing the importance of comprehensive health education, we also sensitized the girl on sexual and reproductive health. This discussion equipped the girls with crucial knowledge about their bodies, their rights, and how to take care of their health, empowering them to make informed decisions and advocate for themselves. By addressing these vital issues, we are not only helping these girls stay in school but also promoting an environment where they can grow with confidence, self-respect, and an understanding of their right.

# Investing in the Future

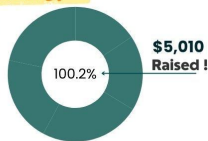
## Back To School Campaign Preparation

As part of our ongoing commitment to education, we launched our annual Back-to-School 5K Fundraising Campaign Run, and surpassed our goal of CAD 5,000 to continue sponsoring our Hope Scholars. This is an initiative to support our Hope Scholars Program which provides scholarships to IDP children affected by conflict, and those from low income backgrounds. The support includes tuition, uniforms, didactic materials, and exam registration fees, for those in examination classes. Last year, we sponsored 100 students, with 98% passing their exams with excellent results. One story that particularly inspires us is that of Abigail N. She's an IDP who fled her conflict-wrecked village of Bangolan and found refuge in Ndop. While in Ndop, her family was unable to sponsor her education. She worked odd jobs like selling roasted fish to afford her tuition and excelled in her Ordinary Levels exam while juggling the odd jobs. But she didn't have funds to continue her education. She then learned about Hope for Cameroon and got enrolled to our Hope Scholars Program. She seized the opportunity to sit for her Advanced Levels in lower sixth, one year earlier than usual, and she passed all three papers that she registered. Abigail is now ready to start university this September through the Hope Scholars program, embodying a story of resilience and making the most of her opportunities. Many of our scholars like Abigail are now preparing to enter university or college, highlighting the profound impact of our support. This year, we aim to continue and expand our efforts, ensuring that even more children have the opportunity to pursue their education and build a brighter future despite their circumstances.



### HFC BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN 2024/2025

We Did It!



Thanks to your incredible support, we raised \$5,010, exceeding our \$5,000 goal! Your generosity will sponsor 100 IDP students this September. Together, we are planting seeds of hope and education!



Left-right: HFC team & volunteers during 5K Run. Abigail. Amount raised. HFC team & volunteers preparing posters

# Why Build An ICT Empowerment Center?



While we are proud to sponsor girls in the current education system, youth unemployment in Cameroon remains high due to a lack of technical skills among graduates. This gap is even wider for women, which is why we are committed to building an ICT training center. The construction of the STEMpower ICT Training Center is a crucial step toward providing sustainable, practical skills development for IDP girls and females from low-income backgrounds. This center will go beyond the theoretical limits of the current academic curriculum by offering hands-on ICT training, access to essential infrastructure like computers, software, and reliable internet connectivity, all within a supportive learning environment where they can grow and thrive. Through targeted instruction and mentorship programs, we aim to build confidence in these girls' technical abilities and prepare them for future employment and leadership roles.

## Long Term Impact

This project has the potential to transform the lives of 100 IDP girls annually, providing them with a pathway out of poverty through ICT training and skills development. As these girls become self-reliant, they will not only be able to support their families but also serve as mentors for future cohorts of young girls. This empowerment will have a ripple effect, fostering a society that values diversity, inclusion, and sustainable personal and community development.

Thank you for standing with us on this journey thus far. We remain dedicated to achieving our goal of building the STEMpower ICT Training Center—this center represents more than just a building; it symbolizes hope, opportunity, and a brighter future for young girls in Cameroon, we are confident that, with your help, we can empower even more girls, offering them hope and the tools they need to overcome the challenges they face and create lasting change in their lives and communities. We look forward to sharing more updates on our progress and encourage our supporters to stay engaged with our cause.



# THANK YOU!

We wish to thank the Global Giving Team and our donors and supporters for your continued support in helping us make a difference in the lives of the people that we serve!

- The HfC Team

