

## 2023 ACTIVITIES

### REPORT ON THE WIVADEV ACCOMODATION, TUTION AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, OCTOBER 2023

The WATSS is a program run by WIVADEV which is aimed at promoting education for the girl child (with emphasis on under-privileged girls in Cameroon and Africa) as a tool to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and promote gender equality. Besides academic support, the program provides a mentorship experience to equip beneficiaries with soft skills required to be role model leaders, exceptional professionals and change agents in future.

#### The Multifaceted-Monster called Gender – Based Violence

As described by UNICEF “GBV is the most pervasive, yet least visible human rights violation in the world”. Whereas the ongoing conflict in the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon and existing conflicts/wars in different African nations have exacerbated the trends of violence against women/girls, the phenomenon is a long-standing societal trend.

56% of women/girls in Cameroon, (33% in Africa) have suffered emotional and/or sexual violence including intimate partner violence. The existence of gender norms in many societies present sexual reproduction as the sole purpose for girl/womanhood, giving rise to unplanned pregnancies and child marriage. Based on a WHO 2019 data, 55% of unintended pregnancies among adolescents in Africa aged 15-19 often end in unsafe abortions.

According to the UNICEF statistical overview on Child Marriage in West and Central Africa 2022, 30% of girls in Cameroon and Africa marry before the age of 18 and 11% before 15 years. These phenomena prevent at least 89% of these girls from ever seeing the four walls of a classroom or receiving quality education.

The above-mentioned plagues on Women/girls have resulted in economic dependency on men and increased vulnerability of women and girls. These consequences further plunge them into diverse devastating experiences.

#### The Undesired Outcome

The consequences of this widespread cankerworm (GBV) cannot be over-emphasized. Most women who are victims are less likely to live their optimum dreams as such there is ripple effect across all sectors of society and

all over the world. From families to communities, countries, regional blocks and continents; every stratum of human societies feels the pinch of this deadlock.

Though much work has been done, there remains a lot to cover in order to achieve gender equality on a global scale. Women make up only 23% of cabinet members leading ministries worldwide. Parliamentary representation for women globally stands at 27% only; only 27 countries worldwide are currently led by women while 107 countries have never had any female head of states.

In Cameroon, women make up only about 30% of the parliament and only about 26% made up the administrative personnel in the academia as at 2019.

Women make up more than half of the population below the poverty margin in Cameroon. The same applies for other African countries like (Benin and Burkina Faso). In these countries, most women occupy low earning positions and they are less likely to influence policy. The ability for these women and girls to champion innovation and change in certain sectors is completely out of the purview. There is a clarion call to raise the tempo of women and girls' empowerment all over the world to improve their livelihoods and give them the voice and pen to write their own stories on the shores of time.

### **The Way Forward; “A Journey of Transformation”**

The above captured statistics incorporates the reality of most of the beneficiaries of WATTS program upon the first encounter. Looking back at the progress we have made so far, we are reminded of the first set of girls (9 in number), admitted to the WIVADEV Shelter Facility in 2018 (named The WIVADEV Girls Dorm).

These girls had either completed the Advance Level Certificate Examination and had no hope of continuing with higher education, or were admitted into the university but had neither tuition nor accommodation and were full of despair and fear of their dreams heading to the rocks. Or still were faced with an extra year of school due to complications arising from the Anglophone crisis.

With the desire to inspire hope and vision, WIVADEV admitted these girls with the intention to provide shelter, fees and mentoring to allow them pursue their academic dreams.

Six years later, that mustard seed has become a pillar of hope to several young girls, whose economic or social situations would have robbed them of the opportunity to write their own stories on the shores of time. The program

has specifically provided Shelter long term (1 year above) to over 40 girls and short term to over 50 others who benefited either from retreats, leadership trainings or shelter to accommodate them while writing their exams.

The tuition package has served over 50 others while more than 100 young girls have benefited from the skills package. The financial commitments sometimes ranged from as small as 10,000FCFA and today we are proud to have students who have benefited from more than 100,000F in an academic year.

We are using this medium to express how amazing it is to see them smile and how grateful we are for all the donations that have made all this possible. Nonetheless, we see more girls who have proven that they can bring positive returns in dire need, but we cannot handle the demands on our own.

The scholarship beneficiaries for WATSS 2023 named as follow; Ndum Hananid, Ayuk Deborah Aneh, Ekanwya Sylvenic Akama, Mbanda Vanessa, Ngong Mercy, Njume Prinette Makane, Clorane Shiya, Ayan Esther, Blanche Olenge, Ojong Favour, Ambo Glory, Ojong Favour, Miriam, Anthea Nitua.

## Pictures



