



**RENATA**

**Réseau National des Associations des Tantines<sup>1</sup>**

**Cameroun**

**in collaboration with the International Alliance of Women**

**IAW / AIF**

## **Report of the project**

### **Water and Pads for School-girls – Empowerment for Life**

#### **Activities at the Kongola and the Luggéo Doubai Primary Schools, in the Far North of Cameroon.**

### **Preparing the activity**

I left Yaoundé for the Far North of Cameroon on 15 May 2019 and arrived there the next day. It started with a brief meeting with two RENATA Aunties. We also prepared our materials and decided about our roles. Our team also contacted a journalist and the directors of the schools.

### **The activities**

The first activity took place on Friday 17 May 2019 at the Kongola Primary School and the second one on 6 June 2019 at the Luggéo Doubai Primary School in Maroua. The Far North being mostly a Moslem Region, we had to make sure that we started early to permit the children and the staff to go for prayers. The activities lasted from 9.15 am until 11.45 am.

At Kongola the director of the school plus four teachers (a man and three women) cover the health education of 144 school girls in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade (age 9 - 14).

At Luggéo Doubai school three teachers and 35 school-girls participated. Besides the two RENATA aunties also Equinox TV was present, to cover highlights of this sensitization.

To begin with we expressed our thanks to the Director of the school. He answered by welcoming us and appreciating our initiatives.

Each chapter of the booklet was explained in a summarized and understandable manner for all participants. During these explanations the use, the disposal and the reusable pads was demonstrated by means of practical experiences. Afterwards also some teachers had learnt how to do it. The participation of the teachers and school directors was interesting because obviously they wanted to acquire this knowledge for their future teaching of the children.

The RENATA Aunties also wrote a menstrual calendar on the chalkboard. This showed in a practical way to the girls how they could calculate their menstrual cycle. The girls asked questions and followed this activity very attentively. But they were too shy to talk about their personal menstrual hygiene.

In fact most of the girls use washable pads due to the high costs of the disposable ones (an average of 500frs CFA/0.97Euro) and the scarcity on the market.

### **Attained results**

- A partnership with primary schools for continuous sensitization was created,
- More than 200 adolescent girls in 2 different schools acquired knowledge on menstrual hygiene management,
- 6 Teachers and 2 school directors acquired knowledge and skills on how to teach the menstrual hygiene management to their pupils,
- 220 booklets were distributed to the girls and teachers,
- Demonstrations on the use of disposable and reusable pads were performed,
- 84 packets of disposable pads were distributed to the adolescent girls in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade (girls above 10 years), assuming that their menarche would start soon,
- -Equinox TV captured the event which was broadcasted in the local news of the region.

**Best practice**

The director of the school gave a lecture to the girls on the importance of understanding their menstrual cycle. This was a strong statement within the cultural context of this area: In the Far North of Cameroon, an almost 100% Moslem community, where men hardly discuss sexuality with their daughters or sisters, the director openly encouraged the adolescent girls to talk openly to their parents about their bodily changes.

**Recommendation**

This activity is very important and should be multiplied in many other rural areas, where health services and information about sexual reproductive health rights like menstrual hygiene management are often lacking.

***Report by Sab Julliet, Program Manager of RENATA (Réseau National des Association des Tantines), Yaoundé, Cameroon***

<sup>1</sup> The active members of the Network are called AUNTIES