



RENATA
Réseau National des Associations des Tantines ¹
Cameroon
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 Luggeo Doubai Primary Schools, in the Far North of Cameroon

The RENATA Community Mobilisation Officer (CMO) travelled to the Far North on 5 April 2021 and on arrival had a planning meeting with 4 peer teachers who were going to attend the sensitisation activities while some 4 RENATA Aunties/Peer Educators were dedicated to give pandemic prevention material to the people of both schools.

The aim was to keep the school environment clean during the activity to encourage the pupils and to respect the barrier measures to prevent covid 19. Then we prepared the necessary materials and shared the roles. The team also made calls to the journalists and headmasters of both schools to make sure they were ready. On Wednesday the 5th and Friday the 7th of April 2021 we held sensitisation activities for young girls in the two schools in outlying areas of the city of Maroua. RENATA Aunties from the far north and CMC first went to see the preparations.

- 96 girls participated in Kongola Djaoulao public school on 5 April 2021.

- 169 girls participated in Lougeo-Doubay public school on 7 April 2021

The activities carried out

The agenda for both schools started with the welcome by the head teachers, which was followed by the presentation of the Aunties. They explained the 'Water and Towels' project and why they were doing these teachings in the schools. They briefly recalled that this was not the first visit of RENATA's Aunties to these institutions.

The topics discussed were

- **Puberty:** was defined by the girls as the transition from childhood to adolescence
- **Menstrual hygiene:** washing oneself and one's clothes as well as underwear properly
- **Myths about menstruation:** a menstruating girl is not allowed to prepare meals or to go to school or to play with boys... All these are speculations aimed at stigmatising girls.
- **Instruction of girls and adolescents** on the proper use of washable and non-recyclable sanitary pads: The Aunties have shown with examples that the improper use of sanitary pads leads to infections. In the long run this can lead to sterility in women.

Remarks

Pre-meeting of the Aunties with the teachers

It is also worth noting that this activity was marked by a visit to each school the day before the event, showing them the health and pandemic precautions. This impressed the STAFF at every place. The heads of the schools as well as the teachers hope that this project will be continued, be it in their school or in another institution in their region.

The students

A detailed demonstration in French and Fulfulde was given to enable the girls to understand how to deal with the menstrual hygiene situation that is troubling them.

We want to mention here the interest of the pupils in learning more about menstrual hygiene and in breaking the taboos surrounding menstruation.

Difficulties

We were also confronted with an absence of several high school students. These absences were due to the fasting of Ramadan and the heat in the region.

Conclusion

The RENATA Aunties note a change in behaviour towards young girls as well as an increase in awareness.

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