



VISION IN ACTION CAMEROON

www.viacame.org

INCLUSIVENESS, SUPPORT, PROTECT

Hello there,

We hope you're having a wonderful day. We bring you exciting news and updates from the SRHR world in this edition of our June Newsletter. Have a good read.

Thank You!

**JUNE NEWS AND UPDATES
FROM VIAC**

Quote of the Week

“Child marriage hinders progress towards population health and development goals. Cost-effective interventions that address the root causes of child marriage are needed to speed progress towards ending the practice.”

~ Omobowale, O., Omigbodun, O., Egbokhare, O., & Koski, A

INFORMING, EMPOWERING AND PROTECTING: EQUIPPING SEX WORKERS WITH SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE



Sex work in Cameroon is a complex and controversial issue, marked by legal ambiguity and significant challenges faced by sex workers. To gain deeper insights into the experiences, perspectives of sex workers in the country and provide SRHR information and services to

sex workers, two focus group discussions were conducted in the month of June, involving a total of 15 sex workers from two different locations in Buea, South West Region. During these discussions, it became evident that one of the most pressing challenges faced by sex workers in Cameroon is the pervasive stigma and discrimination they encounter. Sex workers shared their experiences of social condemnation, prejudice, and marginalization, which often resulted in their isolation and limited access to essential health services and support networks. The societal attitudes, cultural norms, and moral judgments surrounding their profession contribute to this deeply entrenched stigma. Barriers in accessing healthcare services and HIV prevention emerged as the most significant concern raised by these sex workers.

As a result of the stigma and criminalization surrounding their profession, sex workers often encounter discrimination and judgment within healthcare settings. This not only hinders their ability to receive appropriate care but also puts them at a higher risk of HIV and other STIs like syphilis and chlamydia. The lack of effective outreach and harm reduction efforts due to legal restrictions further exacerbates these health risks. We are actively working towards promoting the rights and well-being of sex workers. Our efforts include advocating for the decriminalization of sex work, raising awareness about the challenges faced by sex workers, and providing access to essential healthcare and social services. It is crucial to acknowledge that sex work is a multifaceted issue, and the experiences and needs of sex workers may vary. Thus, any efforts to address these challenges must consider the diverse perspectives and contexts of the individuals involved. By recognizing the human rights, safety, and well-being of sex workers, we work towards fostering an inclusive and supportive environment that addresses their unique needs.

COMMUNITY NURSING: PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF AGYW IN OUR COMMUNITIES



Community nursing plays a crucial role in promoting health and well-being within our communities. Effective community nursing in STI prevention and contraceptive use requires collaboration with various stakeholders. This is why we partner with local healthcare

providers, community organizations, and educational institutions to ensure access to the right comprehensive sexual health information and services. By working together, we and our partners can maximize our impact and reach a broader audience.

By means of Safe space discussions, in the month of June, we provided a supportive and non-judgmental environment for 16 AGYW in two health centres in Buea, South West Region, to openly discuss their sexual health issues, including our areas of focus like STI prevention and various contraceptive options. These safe space discussions facilitated by our community nurses in these healthcare centres encouraged open dialogue, addressed health misconceptions, and provided accurate information to help women make informed sexual and reproductive health decisions. Ultimately, by addressing STI prevention and promoting contraceptive use, we can contribute to healthier communities with reduced rates of STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

EMPOWERING OUT-OF-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS: BREAKING THE SILENCE ON HIV AND AIDS



In an effort to combat the rising rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV among out-of-school adolescents, Vision in Action Cameroon developed a comprehensive door-to-door sensitization program. This initiative helped us in reaching 25 adolescents in the communities in Bamenda, North West Region, providing them with essential knowledge on STI prevention, the importance of practicing safe sex, and encouraging them to get tested for HIV. By actively engaging with these adolescents, we empowered out-of-school adolescents with accurate information on STI prevention, condom use, and carried out HIV testing on 60 adolescents in the month of June.

Through personalized interactions, we create supportive environments that encourages

healthy sexual practices and reduces the transmission of STIs and HIV within our communities. This initiative represents our commitment to promoting sexual health awareness and ensuring the well-being of all adolescents in our society and so by implementing a comprehensive door-to-door sensitization, we empowered out-of-school adolescents with accurate information on STI prevention, condom use, and HIV testing.

BUILDING A STRONG DEFENSE: HIV AND AIDS PREVENTION TRAINING FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES.



Within the framework of the Network Grant Agreement referenced between GLOBAL FUNDS (Funder) CARE INTERNATIONAL(recipient) for the implementation of the project “Scale Up Of HIV Prevention To Contribute To The Reduction Of HIV Related Morbidity And Mortality By 2023”, VIAC had the opportunity to participate in a two day training in Douala aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of the concept of scaling up HIV prevention by 2023. This two day training to train accountants and supervisors emphasized on the importance of scaling up that involves expanding interventions and strategies to reach a larger population, ensuring that essential services are accessible to those who need them most. By adopting a combination prevention approach, which includes behavioral, biomedical, and structural interventions, we can effectively reduce new HIV infections and improve health outcomes.

This training gave an insight in applying the knowledge gained and actively contribute to scaling up HIV prevention efforts in our respective communities. We continue to strive for

advocating for policy changes, engaging in community outreach programs, and supporting initiatives that prioritize STI/HIV prevention because by taking collective action, we can make a significant impact on reducing new infections and improving the lives of those affected by HIV/AIDS.



This training reinforced the importance of prioritizing prevention efforts in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. By implementing targeted interventions, promoting awareness, expanding access to testing and treatment, and fostering collaboration and partnership, we can contribute to the ambitious goal of reducing HIV-related morbidity and mortality by 2023. Let us all play our part in creating a future free from the burden of HIV/AIDS.

Together, we can make a difference.

CHARTING A PATH TO SAFE ABORTION: MAPPING PHARMACISTS' ROLE IN WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



The World Health Organization (WHO) has comprehensive guidelines for self-managed abortion using pills, which can provide safe and effective options for women seeking to end a pregnancy. To ensure widespread access to these services, it is crucial for us to map and train pharmacists on the implementation of these guidelines. Pharmacists play a vital role in ensuring the safe and effective use of medications, including those used for self-managed abortion. We develop training programs to familiarize pharmacists with the WHO guidelines on self-managed abortion using pills wherein pharmacists are educated on the content, recommendations, and evidence-based practices outlined in the WHO guidelines. This includes information on the appropriate use of medications, dosage regimens, contraindications, and potential side effects.

Mapping pharmacists and providing them with appropriate training on the WHO guidelines for self-managed abortion using pills is crucial in expanding access to safe and effective reproductive healthcare services. By ensuring that pharmacists are knowledgeable, skilled, and equipped to provide accurate information, counseling, and support, we can empower women to make informed choices regarding their sexual and reproductive health. This is why we collaborate with professional pharmacies and healthcare providers to implement these training programs and create an enabling environment for pharmacists to play a significant role in supporting women's reproductive rights. In the month of June, we succeeded in mapping a total of 52 pharmacists in 3 communities in the South West Region of the Country.

BREAKING THE CYCLE: COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN COMMUNITIES



Violence against women remains a pervasive and widespread issue globally especially in our Cameroonian communities, and so necessitating efforts to enhance women's capacity to prevent and respond to such violence is very crucial. Ensuring that women have access to support services is crucial in preventing and responding to violence. This support services includes establishing helplines, shelters, counseling services, and legal assistance specifically tailored for survivors of gender-based violence.





Enhancing women's capacity to prevent and respond to violence is essential in creating a safer and more equitable society. Hence, by integrating comprehensive gender-based violence education, promoting access to support services, encouraging peer support networks, advocating for policy changes and challenging harmful gender norms, we play a significant role in preventing and addressing gender based violence in our communities. We equipped a total of 67 AGYW with comprehensive gender-based violence education. It is crucial for everyone to work together to create a society free from gender-based violence.



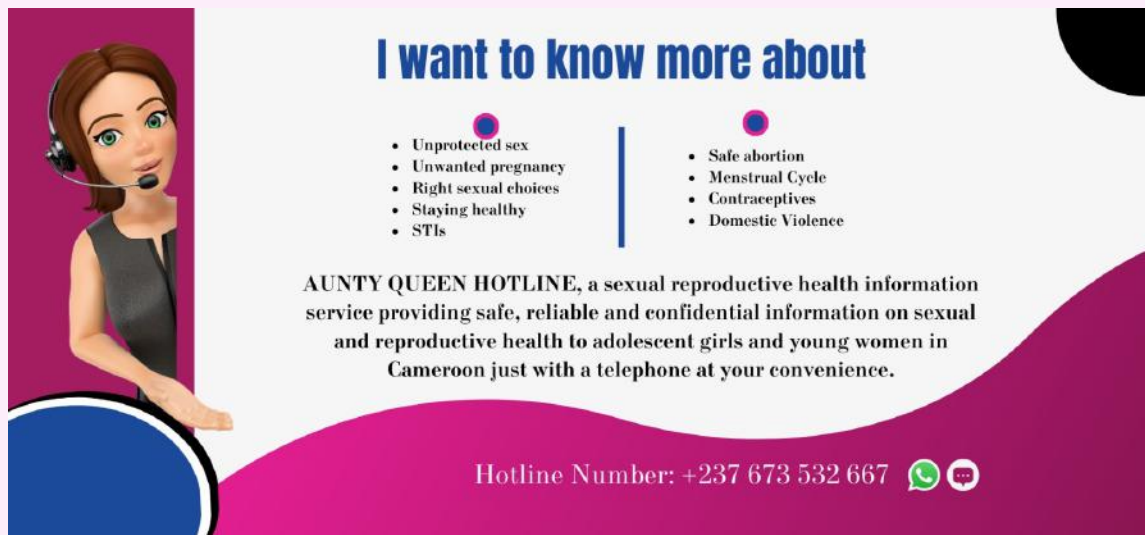
SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY: PRIDE MONTH CAMPAIGN

As the world always celebrates Pride Month in June, it is essential to recognize and support LGBTQ+ communities in African countries like Cameroon. Despite facing unique challenges and cultural stigmas, these communities continue to strive for acceptance, equality, and human rights. We ran a pride social media campaign aimed to raise awareness, promote inclusivity, and foster dialogue surrounding LGBTQ+ issues in African nations during Pride Month.

The primary objective of this social media campaign was to create a safe and supportive online space for LGBTQ+ individuals in African countries. We aim to challenge stereotypes, break down barriers, and foster a sense of community and acceptance. Through storytelling,

education, and community engagement, we aim to challenge stereotypes, promote dialogue, and empower LGBTQ+ communities. Together, let us celebrate diversity and advocate for equality in Africa. #PrideInAfrica

Have a look at some of our social media content!





I want to know more about

- Unprotected sex
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Right sexual choices
- Staying healthy
- STIs

- Safe abortion
- Menstrual Cycle
- Contraceptives
- Domestic Violence

AUNTY QUEEN HOTLINE, a sexual reproductive health information service providing safe, reliable and confidential information on sexual and reproductive health to adolescent girls and young women in Cameroon just with a telephone at your convenience.

Hotline Number: +237 673 532 667  

ABOUT VIAC

Vision in Action Cameroon (VIAC) is a youth-led not-for-profit organization that supports and enables adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) and communities in programs and influences change in the areas of Research (Evidence Generation), Advocacy (community mobilization), information & communication. VIAC is committed to feminist principles,

using gender transformative and rights-based approaches.

At VIAC we believe that reproductive Health is a fundamental human right of every woman and man throughout her/his life cycle.



Sent via

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