

Fostering Civic Activism Education Program

Manual Test Version 2.0
October 2010

Disclaimer:

This manual was handed to the Peace Corps by an external body as an experimental version for the aim of gathering feedback from field instructors, community organizers and rural communities.

Views expressed in the manual do not necessarily reflect the stand of The Peace Corps. The Peace Corps do not endorse nor take any responsibility in any way for the content of this booklet.

Introduction

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What is Community Activism?

Fostering Community Activism is a field that is largely ignored in education work in the developing world context. We find many well elaborated education programs guiding us guidelines and lesson plans in educating communities in anything from healthcare, to agriculture. But teaching skills for individuals is different from developing a community

Community activism relates to the social capital of a community – the shared norms or values that promote social cooperation, instantiated in actual social relationships. Transfer of skills is, therefore, not all that is needed in order to develop a community. We need to instill a spirit of community service valuing the public interest. When we refer to “strengthening a community”, “developing community leadership”, “mobilizing a community” – we do not refer to mere transfer of skills. We do not refer to human capital but social capital.

In our context we find many times communities that manifest exactly the opposite – they seem unable to organize and collaborate for a mutual goal, private interest prevails over the common good, and general disinterest in and disengagement from community action is observed. When social capital reaches bankruptcy, It becomes a major obstacle for sustainable development objectives.

But while the need for it is clear, no manual currently exists to give methods or guidance for fostering community activism. This booklet

is therefore an attempt to begin this process and explore this new education field advancing through trial and error.

In order to understand how to teach not just a skill but a “spirit”, we need to explore the principles common to the different models of Community Activism. In its basis is the recognition of the personal responsibility and ability to participate in changing one’s reality. A spirit of volunteerism is essential accompanied by a sense of service. The individual has to feel a part of a community recognizing the value of the public interest, sometimes above the personal private interest. But Community Activism is about action, and it is therefore integral that the individual moves from being an observer to becoming a participant and carries actions to better the community.

What is Community Activism?

- Recognizing the personal responsibility and ability to participate in changing one’s reality
- Volunteerism
- Valuing the public interest
- Sense of service
- Involvement



Enabling conditions for Community Activism

Analyzing the factors common to different models of Community Activism, we can identify several enabling conditions essential for its development.

It is important for members of the community to possess knowledge of issues and problems affecting it. Without good understanding of the root causes of the problems, no Community Activism can take place.

But knowledge is not enough. A community activist has to identify the interests behind each source of information and adopt critical thinking, criticizing and evaluating the information, rather than blindly accepting views just because they seem popular. Individualism is a contributing factor in this regard, giving value to the opinion of the one.



Another important enabling condition is exposure to activism models. Some societies have their “Martin Luther King”, their “Gandhi” or any

other ethos shaping our collective memory. Others may not have such models or have not been exposed to them.

The social environment plays a major role in enabling Community Activism as it can either encourage or discourage the individual in its quest to make a difference. A supporting environment will put value to any action the individual takes for the community, it will provide him more information about the issues affecting the community and provide a space for debating them, it will provide ideas and models for transforming these realities and reward the activists with appreciation and respect from the community.

Conditions for activism

- Knowledge of issues and problems effecting the community
- Critical thinking
- Models of individuals transforming their reality
- A supportive environment

Community Activism Education Program

- Consists of ensuring these four conditions are met.
- Based on educational activities in a community center
- Natural target audience is youth groups

The Community Activism Education Program attempts at ensuring these enabling conditions are met. Different educational activities are proposed to build a supporting environment for Community Activism, most of them can be carried in a community center.

The Program The Program

Community Activism Education Program

Weekly Debates

Members of the community debate issues of development and activism and encourage critical thinking of the realities of their community and the ways to bring about a change and participate in shaping a better future. The format is of a 2.5 hours slot consisting of a film or a presentation followed by a debate.

This is an opportunity to expose the group to different causes, identify and discuss the community's problems and connect members of the community with their responsibility to participate in solving them. One of the major challenges for developing community activism in our context is the lack of recognized local models. It is therefore an opportunity to introduce the group to different models of activists exposing them to individuals participating in change.

Food for Spirit

The community organizer can create a supporting environment for community activists by regularly exposing them to inspiring short quotes. These quotes stress a specific value in line with the spirit of volunteerism, community service, and the individual as an agent of change. Most of these quotes inspire action towards building a better society.

Food for Thought

One of the essential conditions for the development of community activism is well informed citizens with a critical view of issues that

affect the community. The community organizer can create a supporting environment in this regard by regularly exposing the group to pieces of information that are both relevant to the community and challenging conventional views thereby encouraging critical thought.

The quotes can be posted weekly at the meeting place of the group or in a public place where more members of the community can be exposed to.

Community Activism Education Program

- Weekly debates
- Food for Spirit
- Food for Thought
- Press briefing

Press Briefings

Knowledge of issues affecting the community is a basis to community activism. One of the members is put in charge of daily or weekly press briefing.

This activity is aimed at connecting the community members with the realities affecting them, turning them from passive observers of news to participants that debate news and use it as a basis for their community action, in fact, aspire to create news rather than consume it.

Weekly debate

- Members of the community debate issues of development, activism and encourage critical thinking of the realities of their community and the ways to bring about a change and participate in shaping a better future.
- A format of a film or a presentation followed by a debate.

Lesson 1 - Gandhi

Gandhi – non-violent activism that brought India its independence

Section: Activism Models

Time: 1.5 hours film + 45 minutes debate

Resources: DVD player + the Film Gandhi (available in Peace Corps library)

Background:

The film Gandhi portrays the commitment of a single man who stood for the freedom of his people in his country. His ideas and resistant to non allied policy gained independence for his people through peaceful and non-violent actions. This film typifies the fact that an ordinary, simple man can bring change. All it takes is commitment and believing in your cause.

Questions for debate:

- Compare the people of India that time to the people of Cameroon now – were they asking for perdiems for meetings? Were they asking the international community to change their reality?
- Violence vs. Non violence: should all protests be non-violent? Sarafina the South African film portrays violent protests, compare.
- Was Gandhi the only liberator of India?

Remembering Gandhi



Be The
Change
You Wish To See In
The World

- Did Gandhi have the financial means to bring about a change?

Comments:

Alternatively, without the film, the facilitator can tell the story based on watching the film, or sources in further reading section.

Further Reading:

“ Autobiography / M.K. Gandhi”
www.mkgandhi.org

Lesson 2 - Globalization

Darwin's nightmare–Tanzania's globalization

Section: Causes / Injustice

Time: 1.5 hours film + 45 minutes debate

Resources: DVD player + the Film Darwin's Nightmare (available in Peace Corps library)

Background:

The film is using the ecological disaster in lake Victoria to Tanzanian society's interaction with the globalized new world. Lake Victoria has been home to thousands of fish species – richness on which the people of Tanzania could rely for generations. Introduction of the Nile Perch to the lake by foreign exploiters, triggered a chain reaction resulting in extinction of the diversity of fish species, and loss of food source. Introduction of foreign industry to Tanzania is portrait as well as triggering a chain reaction leading to poverty, dependence, and social ills.

Questions for debate:

1. Compare both parallel tragedies
2. What role did the Tanzanian Government play in both tragedies?
3. What role did the Tanzanian people play in both tragedies?
4. Who is more to blame the government, the foreign industry or the people?



Comments:

Alternatively, without the film, the facilitator can tell the story based on watching the film, or sources in further reading section.

Further Reading:

www.coop99.at/darwins-nightmare/
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0424024/>

Lesson 3 - Music & Change

Lesson 3 - Music & Change

Music is the Weapon – Fela Kuti

Section: Activism Models

Time: 1.5 hours film + 45 minutes debate

Resources: DVD player + the Film Music is the Weapon (available in Peace Corps library)

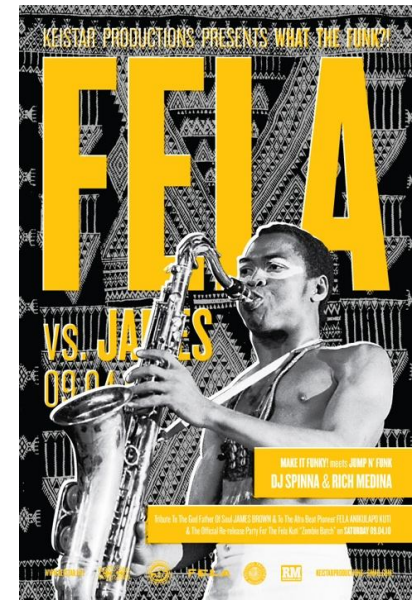
Background:

Fela Kuti the late musician had danced in his underwear calling Nigeria's dictators liars and thieves. Singing in Pidgin English to be understood by the common man, he railed against Christianity, injustice and tyranny. Fela was jailed and beaten again and again for screaming at those who'd ruled Nigeria by the butt of a gun and often the barrel. And he'd lost his seventy-eight year old mother doing so after government soldiers stormed his house and threw her out a window. They set fire to Fela's compound and cracked his skull. Fela sang of the funeral procession, of setting his mother's coffin down in front of Dodan Barracks, where the president lived, so that Obasanjo would have to bury her, himself. Fela is an African example of Social Activism through music. The film followed Fela and explored how he used his Afro-beat music to portray injustice, his Pan-African and activist philosophy, and his relations with authorities and the people of Nigeria.

Questions for debate:

1. Has Fela changed reality in Nigeria?

2. How is music different than other mediums in bringing about a change?



3. Why did the government not kill Fela, what protected him?
4. Is a suit and tie less African than underwear?
5. What did Fela regard as the strength of Africa, what did he regard as weakness?

Comments:

Alternatively, without the film, the facilitator can tell the story based on watching the film, or sources in further reading section.

The activity can be carried with a CD player, playing parts of Fela's songs touching different social issues, discussing the content of the songs first, and Fela himself later.

Further Reading:

blackactivism.wordpress.com/2010/02/16/fela-kuti

Lesson 4 - Pay it Forward

Lesson 4 - Pay it Forward

How to create a better community

Section: Community Models

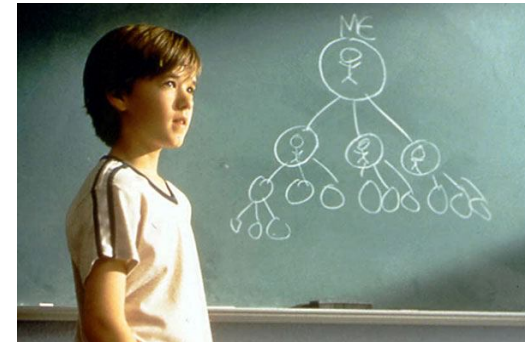
Time: 1.5 hours film + 45 minutes debate

Resources: DVD player + the Film Pay it Forward (available in Peace Corps library)

Background:

“Pay It Forward” is a book written by Catherine Ryan Hyde, but it's also an idea. It's an action plan within a work of fiction started in order to educate and inspire students to realize that they can change the world, and provide them with opportunities to do so. By bringing the author's vision and related materials into classrooms internationally, students and their teachers are encouraged to formulate their own ideas of how to make the world a better place.

In the film Young Trevor McKinney, troubled by his mother's alcoholism and fears of his abusive but absent father, is caught up by an intriguing assignment from his new social studies teacher, Mr. Simonet. The assignment: think of something to change the world and put it into action. Trevor conjures the notion of paying a favor not back, but forward--repaying good deeds not with payback, but with new good deeds done to three new people. Trevor's efforts to make good on his idea bring a revolution not only in the lives of himself, his mother and his physically and emotionally scarred teacher, but in



those of an ever-widening circle of people completely unknown to him.

The book and the film inspires community activism and offers hope to any community that simple acts of individuals can transform it to become a better support net to its members.

Questions for debate:

- Explain the “pay it forward” idea; is it applicable to local realities?
- Why were people not doing it before the child started the idea?
- What were the people participating in “Pay it forward” stand to gain”?
- Why did the teacher give the assignment of “changing the world” in the beginning of each year?

Comments:

Alternatively, without the film, the facilitator can tell the story based on watching the film, or sources in further reading section. The community organizer can carry a follow up activity where the idea is introduced to a larger forum, and later exposing some of the best successes of this.

Further Reading:

www.payitforwardfoundation.org
payitforward.warnerbros.com

Lesson 5 - Women's Rights

Lesson 5 - Women's Rights

Women's Rights and the law in Cameroon

Section: Causes / Injustice

Time: 45 minutes presentation + 45 minutes debate

Resources: Projector/ TV screen + Power Point Presentation No.5 (Downloadable / available in Peace Corps library)

Background:

The presentation looks at women's rights enshrined in Cameroon's constitution, and international conventions ratified by Cameroon, it then compares them with the actual laws that till now discriminates women.

The first part of the presentation focuses on informing the audience about rights that are guaranteed to women in Cameroon. The facilitator is encouraged to expound and debate the moral base and values behind these rights.

The second part reviews articles in Cameroon's national law that violates these rights. Some of the laws that remained unchanged following the constitution and ratification of international conventions, are shocking for the discrimination of women.

Questions for debate:

1. Why do we need rights for women?
2. Compare the national laws with the constitution of Cameroon



3. Are women's rights kept in your community?
4. Are there contradictions between the principles of women's rights and tradition?
5. How can women as well as men improve the situation – nationally and in the community level?

Comments:

Note that the issue of women's rights is not socially developed in Cameroon, and you are likely to hear voices against it. Encourage an honest debate that accommodates all views and while preparing arguments for the development of women's rights, be sensitive to cultural context.

Use the opportunity to photocopy the constitution of Cameroon, encouraging the audience to circle articles relevant to their lives.

Further Reading:

New Constitution of Republic of Cameroon / 1996
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2872/is_1_27/ai_71563386/
<http://genderindex.org/country/cameroon>

Lesson 6 - Neria

Lesson 6 - Neria

Neria – the battle of one woman against traditional inheritance law

Section: Activism Models

Time: 2 hours film + 45 minutes debate

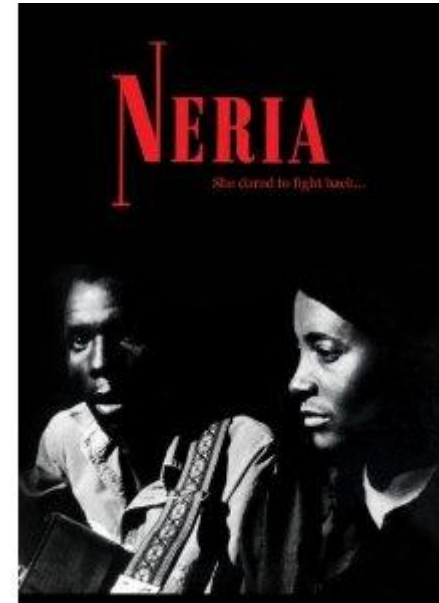
Resources: DVD player + the Film Neria (available in Peace Corps library)

Background:

In Zimbabwe's traditional culture, when a woman's husband dies, the man's brothers are supposed to take care of her and, after a year set aside for mourning, to marry her. In these circumstances nobody asks the widow anything about what she prefers. In this melodramatic film, Neria has just lost her husband and her brother-in-law has decided to take full advantage of the situation. He not only reduces Neria to servitude, but tries to bribe her children so that they turn against her. One day, she stands up for her rights, and seeks out a good lawyer. In a legal battle she challenges her oppressor opening a debate on the issue of tradition, modern African life and the rights of women.

Questions for debate:

1. Was Neria right in her actions?
2. Was the brother in law right according to traditional rules or was he abusing tradition?



3. What did the grandmother think of Neria in the beginning of the film, and in its end?
4. Do you agree with Neria's argument that we should behave differently in city and in a the village?
5. Do you have similar examples in your community?
6. Could Neria do the same thing has she been a Cameroonian?

Comments:

The film touches an issue that is still very sensitive – the conflict between tradition and modern liberal values, encourage discussion of all views including those objecting to liberal values.

Further Reading:

http://www.ovguide.com/movies_tv/neria.htm

Lesson 7 - Failure of Development

Lesson 7 - Failure of Development

The Failure of development in Africa

Section: Causes / Injustice

Time: 1 hour presentation + 45 minutes debate

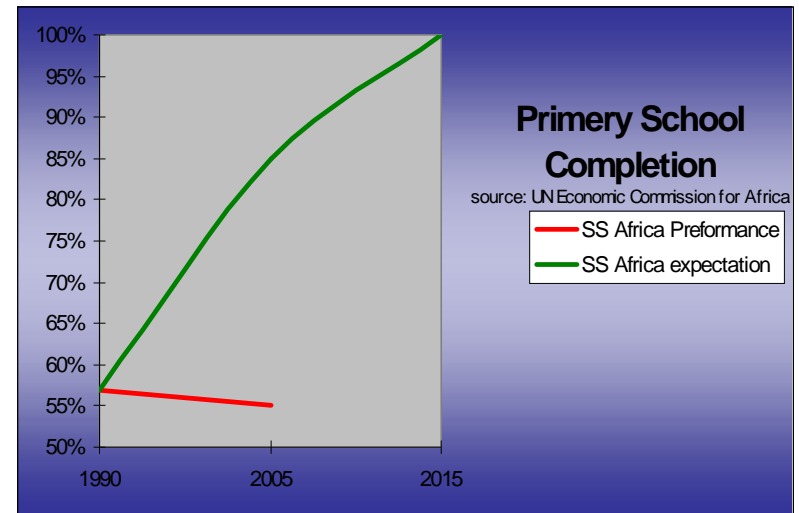
Resources: Projector/ TV screen + Power Point Presentation No.7
(Downloadable / available in Peace Corps library)

Background:

The presentation tries to analyze all the buzz words of the development myth that each Cameroonian hears on radio everyday - like Millennium Development Goals or Human Development Index. It tries to take any citizen, and supposed beneficiary of development through a journey of understanding and evaluating these vague terms, demystifying what many consider too undereducated to understand. The presentation shows that sub-Saharan Africa is moving backwards in every single indicator, while the reports try to downplay the grave picture with beautiful words. The presentation empowers the audience with the realization that they too can understand the process set for poverty alleviation, ensuring basic healthcare, basic education etc. and calls for their involvement in these process.

Questions for debate:

1. Why would Donor's report have the interest to portray success regardless to real results?



2. What are the contributing factors for the public's lack of knowledge or disinformation?
3. Why has the data analyzed in the presentation not appear in Cameroon's media?
4. What are the causes for this failure of development?
5. Can Cameroon be considered as a developing country?
6. Explain why you are a beneficiary of development and explain the implications?
7. What role can the community play in ensuring projects will deliver development?
8. Give examples relevant to your community

Comments:

Carry follow up activities with the community empowering them as beneficiaries of development projects, and encourage them to seek information about projects supposedly benefiting them. Discuss with them ways to get involved in the management of these projects/programs.

Further Reading: "The Trouble with Africa" / Calderisi

Lesson 8 - Florence Nightingale

Lesson 8 - Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale – activist that brought change in the health sector in Britain

Section: Activism Models

Time: 45 minutes + 1 hour debate

Resources: Projector/ TV screen + Power Point Presentation (available in presentation archive of LAGA)

Background:

Florence Nightingale is an immutable icon in the world of nursing but this lady from upper class British family born in 1820 had nothing to become a nurse but her willingness, devotion and most especially sacrifice to a cause at the a time when society was rigidly stratified.

The presentation takes us down the life of Florence from the time she was born to her death, as it says she died peacefully in her sleep. Peacefully indeed because she was groundbreaking in a profession that until then was unknown, pioneering nursing to new heights; from the hospitals in Britain to the war fields in Crimea, foregoing all lustful and lively pleasures of everyday which she could easily afford including even getting married. She fully realised her dream of serving



others and not others serving her, a normal privilege for a British upper class member.

An inspirational lady, her story tells us of what it takes to surmount difficulties few thought could be surmounted.

Questions for debate:

1. Was she right in leaving all her privileges and stepping down her pedestal of upper class to consecrate her life to work that was not of her class?
2. Are women of other classes able to do what she did or could she not have benefited from the same position she left – an upper class family – to be able to achieve what she achieved.
3. What is right for a woman, getting married and bearing children or taking up a life of celibacy and working for humanitarian and humane achievements as she did?

Comments:

Florence Nightingale is an example to follow to bring a change in our community, country and the world at large. This can only come when we identify our talent, work for it and see to it that it bears good fruits.

Further Reading:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Nightingale
www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic.../nightingale_florence.shtml

Lesson 9 - Community development

Lesson 9 - Community development

Section: Community Models

Time: 30 minutes + 1hour 15minutes debate

Resources: Projector/ TV screen + Power Point Presentation (available in presentation archive of LAGA)

Background:

Accod is an organisation created to help the citizen grasps fast changing realities in the world today in order to contribute in an appropriate manner in their society. The presentation focused on Accod as an organisation, its coming to being, the history behind its creation, the problems it faced, what it is doing and what it has in perspective.

Accod's early life is intricately linked to the early life of the Civil Society Forum for Democracy, a forum that has been put in place to unite civil society organisations working in the domain political governance. The stuttering steps of Accod is very similar to the early days of the Forum and Accod being a steering committee member, the lives of the two are closely linked and this makes the basis of the presentation. Presenting Accod and the Forum and much especially presenting the perspectives of the both structures.

Questions for debate:

1. What is the role of ACCOD in civil society?
2. What is the place of ACCOD in elections and democracy with community development?
3. What mechanism can ACCOD put in place to help citizen in a situation of unfair elections?



Comments:

Aim is to create awareness in local communities through rural radios to change malpractices during elections. To let the masses/ citizen know their electoral rights, and right for development at all levels in the society.

Food for Spirit

Food for Spirit

Creating a supporting working environment for activists by providing constant inspiration

- **A weekly quote stressing a specific value is posted in the community center**
- **Creating a supportive environment**
- **A year's ready-to-use weekly posts available**
- **Encourage the community to produce by themselves**

The community organizer can create a supporting environment for community activists by regularly exposing them to inspiring short quotes. These quotes stress a specific value in line with the spirit of volunteerism, community service, and the individual as an agent of change. Most of these quotes inspire action towards building a better society.

The quotes can be posted weekly at the meeting place of the group or in a public place where more members of the community can be exposed to.

Since this activity is aimed at strengthening the values base of community activists and instill in them the spirit of activism, we dubbed it – Food for Spirit.

Focusing your life solely on making a buck shows a poverty of ambition. It asks too little of yourself. And it will leave you unfulfilled.

Barack Obama

Liberty is the right of every man to be honest, to think and to speak without hypocrisy.

Jose Marti

Like stones rolling down hills, fair ideas reach their objectives despite all obstacles and barriers. It may be possible to speed or hinder them, but impossible to stop them.

Jose Marti

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.

Robert F. Kennedy

It does not take a majority to prevail... but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men.

Samuel Adams - American Revolution leader

It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

Robert F. Kennedy (1925 - 1968), South Africa, 1966

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

One needs something to believe in, something for which one can have whole-hearted enthusiasm. One needs to feel that one's life has meaning, that one is needed in this world.

Hannah Sennesh

We who in engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Start with what is right rather than what is acceptable.

Franz Kafka

"What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth. This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man does not weave this web of life. He is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."

-Native American Chief Seattle (1786-1866)

All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.

Arthur Schopenhauer

The fact that man knows right from wrong proves his intellectual superiority to the other creatures; but the fact that he can do wrong proves his moral inferiority to any creatures that cannot.

Mark Twain, What Is Man, 1906

Man is subject to innumerable pains and sorrows by the very condition of humanity, and yet, as if nature had not sown evils enough in life, we are continually adding grief to grief and aggravating the common calamity by our cruel treatment of one another.

Joseph Addison

"We can do no great things; only small things with great love."

Mother Teresa

Few men are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world which yields most painfully to change.

Robert F. Kennedy

In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock

Thomas Jefferson

When the Earth is sick, the animals will begin to disappear, when that happens, The Warriors of the Rainbow will come to save them.

Native Indian chief Seattle

Each person has an ideal, a hope, a dream which represents the soul. We must give to it the warmth of love, the light of understanding and the essence of encouragement.

Colby Dorr Dam

A thinker sees his own actions as experiments and questions--as attempts to find out something. Success and failure are for him answers above all.

Friedrich Nietzsche

"The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life."

Muhammad Ali

Work isn't to make money; you work to justify life.

Marc Chagall

A mind always employed is always happy. This is the true secret, the grand recipe, for felicity.

Thomas Jefferson

If you once forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

Abraham Lincoln

But there is suffering in life, and there are defeats. No one can avoid them. But it's better to lose some of the battles in the struggles for your dreams than to be defeated without ever knowing what you're fighting for.

Paulo Coelho - Author

We loose our health to save money
Then loose our money to save our health
With our thoughts on the future we forget the present, And so we do not live - not for the present nor for the future
And while we live as if we will never die
We die as if we have never lived.
Confucius (551-479 BC).

"Kites fly highest against the wind, not with it"

Sir Winston Churchil

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)

Be not ashamed of mistakes and thus make them crimes.

Confucius

Good ideas are not adopted automatically. They must be driven into practice with courageous patience.

Hyman Rickover (1900 - 1986)

"The person who is being carried does not realize how far the town is"

Nigerian proverb

The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie -- deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic.

Belief in myths allows the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.

John F. Kennedy

Woman must not accept; she must challenge.

She must not be awed by that which has been built up around her; she must reverence that woman in her which struggles for expression.

Margaret Sanger

I've loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.

Galileo Galilei

Collective fear stimulates herd instinct, and tends to produce ferocity toward those who are not regarded as members of the herd.

Bertrand Russell

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

Mahatma Gandhi

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

Mahatma Gandhi

"We find comfort among those who agree with us--growth among those who don't."

Frank A. Clark

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.

With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

Martin Luther King Jr.

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world.

The unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself.

Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

George Bernard Shaw, 1903.

Now, make no mistake: History is on the side of these brave Africans, not with those who use coups or change constitutions to stay in power. (Applause.) Africa doesn't need strongmen, it needs strong institutions.

Obama in his visit to Ghana

I have one life and one chance to make it count for something . . . I'm free to choose what that something is, and the something I've chosen is my faith. Now, my faith goes beyond theology and religion and requires considerable work and effort. My faith demands – this is not optional -- my faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference.

Jimmy Carter

"To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history; but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist." Barack Obama in his inaugural address

Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life.

Dalai Lama

An activist is one who is actively involved in creating community, whether that is locally in their neighborhood or internationally. It is an admirable quality.

Jasmine Guy

The if poem

If you are beaten, you are

If you think you dare not, you don't

If you'd like to win but think you can't,

It is almost certain you won't

If you think you'll lose, you've lost.

For out of the world we find

Success begins with a fellow's will –

It's all in the state of mind

If you think you're outclassed, you are

You've got to be sure of yourself before

You can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go

To the stronger or faster man

But sooner or later the man who wins

Is the one who thinks he can!

R Kipling

"Like development, democratization is not something that one people does for another.

People must do it for themselves or it does not happen."

Claude Ake, Journal of Democracy (1991:38)

Wisdom ceases to be wisdom when it becomes too proud to weep,
too grave to laugh, and too selfish to seek other than itself.

Kahlil Gibran

I have come to the conclusion that politics are too serious a matter to
be left to the politicians.

Charles de Gaulle

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used
when we created them."

Albert Einstein

To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than
luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worth, not
respectable, and wealthy, not, rich; to listen to stars and birds, babes
and sages, with open heart; to study hard; to think quietly, act
frankly, talk gently, await occasions, hurry never; in a word, to let the
spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common –
this is my symphony.

William Henry Channing

The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more
followers.

Ralph Nader

Here is the test to find whether your mission on earth is finished. If
you're alive, it isn't.

Richard Bach

The fact that man knows right from wrong proves his intellectual
superiority to the other creatures; but the fact that he can do wrong
proves his moral inferiority to any creatures
that cannot.

Mark Twain, What Is Man, 1906

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent
revolution inevitable

John F. Kennedy

All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the
dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was
vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may
act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible.

T. E. Lawrence

"Good courage in a bad affair is half of the evil overcome."

Titus Maccius Plautus (254–184 BC)

"I have had dreams, and I have had nightmares.

I overcame the nightmares because of my dreams."

He that gives good advice, builds with one hand; he that gives good
counsel and example, builds with both; but he that gives good
admonition and bad example, builds with one hand and pulls down
with the other.

Francis Bacon

Enthusiasm is not the same as just being excited. One gets excited
about going on a roller coaster. One becomes enthusiastic about
creating and building a roller coaster.

Bo Bennett

"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will
not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent.
Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education
will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and
determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "press on" has
solved and always will solve the problems of the human race"

Calvin Coolidge

"I would rather be ashes than dust!

I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze

than it should be stifled by dry-rot.

I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.

The function of man is to live, not to exist.

I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them, I shall use my time."

Jack London

Success is the ability to go from failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.

Sir Winston Churchill

Try not to become a man of success but rather to become a man of value.

Albert Einstein

Freedom means you have a choice:

"You may be governed by God or ruled by tyrants."

William Penn



Creating a supporting working environment for activists by providing constant information

- **A fact quoted from a reliable source provoking critical thought on issues affecting the community.**
- **Creating a supportive environment**
- **Posted weekly in the community center**
- **A year’s ready-to-use weekly posts available**
- **Encourage the community to produce by themselves by initiating a daily press briefing**

One of the essential conditions for the development of community activism is well informed citizens with a critical view of issues that affect the community.

The community organizer can create a supporting environment in this regard by regularly exposing the group to pieces of information that are both relevant to the community and challenging conventional views thereby encouraging critical thought.

Since this activity is intended to provoke critical thought, we dubbed it – Food for Thought.

The World Bank headquarters uses more electricity to light its offices than is consumed in the whole of Chad, a country twice the size of France.

Excluding South Africa, Africa produces only as much as Belgium

The Trouble with Africa / Robert Calderisi

Total aid to Africa since 80's – 400 billion \$
 Total debt write off 16 African countries – 40 billion \$
 Total oil revenue Nigeria since 80's 300 billion \$

Some Facts on Cameroon :

- Population – 18,467,692
- Life expectancy at birth – 53.3 years
- HIV/AIDS – adult prevalence rate – 6.9%
- GDP – per capita (PPP) - \$2,400
- Budget – revenue: \$5.37 billion, expenditure: \$4.32 billion
- Population below poverty line – 48%
- Unemployment rate – 30%

(Source: CIA World Fact book)

- Minimum salary – 23,000 CFA

(Source: the post, 28 November 2008)

Nearly 70 percent of Africans who live south of the Sahara work primarily in agriculture. African farmers are the world's poorest.

Over the past 40 years, agricultural performance in Africa has deteriorated.

Since the 1960s, Africa's share of world agricultural exports has fallen from 8 percent to 2 percent.

Over the same period, the sub-Saharan region has gone from being a net food exporter to a net food importer.

Steven Haggblade, ed., Building on Successes in African Agriculture

(Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2004).

"The World Bank says individual African countries lose about 25% of their economic output to corruption annually. If true, that is close to \$500bn.

This may be a tip of the iceberg. As one anti-corruption official puts it - if you put the stolen money in a row it will form a path to the moon and back"

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7484022.stm>

Recently, 2002/2003, the World bank put together a number of governance indicator snapshots reflecting statistical compilations of responses on the quality of governance given by a large number of citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. For each indicator, 5-8 polls were taken on Cameroon. The results are damning:

- 16.7% of the survey respondents thought the government of Cameroon hears its citizens and accounts to them.
- 28.6% thought Cameroon was politically stable.
- 30.9% believed the government effective.
- 18.6% said Cameroon regulations are of quality.
- 6.2% thought there was rule of law in Cameroon and
- 8.8% felt corruption was under control.

A typical African government receives about 15% of its income from foreign aid, not considering the debt relief.

The bottom billion/ Paul Collier

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) lost an estimated \$15.5 billion due to illicit capital flight from 1980 to 2006, According to the report, "pervasive corruption," and trade mispricing in goods and services led to a per annum loss of nearly \$600 million

dollars from the DRC economy. With that money, the DRC could have paid off its entire external debt, which is \$11.2 billion.

A new report by Global Financial Integrity

<http://www.gfip.org/>

End to World Bank's Chad oil deal

The World Bank has cancelled an oil pipeline deal with Chad after a dispute with the government over failed pledges to use profits to tackle poverty.

The bank said Chad had also failed to use revenues on health and education.

It said Chad had paid the outstanding balance of \$65.7m (£37m) under a \$140m loan agreement, after talks with the government of President Idriss Deby.

The pipeline was seen as a test case for how Africa's oil wealth could benefit the poor if spent properly.

BBC News 10 September 2008

At the start of Monday's meeting, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the world's rich nations to spend \$72 billion a year to help Africa achieve U.N. goals to fight poverty, improve health and ensure universal primary education.

Ban said the price tag may be daunting but "it is affordable," pointing to the estimated \$267 billion that the world's richest nations spent last year just on agricultural subsidies.

A new report from the secretary-general said not a single African country is likely to achieve all the U.N. Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015.

latinenews.com/news/ll/english/10079575.shtml?cc=10800

In Ethiopia, 22% of the population has access to a safe source of water. In Mauritius, it is 100%.

South Africa has 724.3 mobile phones per 1000 people; Ethiopia has the least with 5.8 per 1000 people.

During the past two decades fertility rates have dropped in every African country.

The country with the highest adult literacy is Zimbabwe (90 percent).
The country with the lowest adult literacy is Niger (17 percent).
Source - World Bank -ADI Report 2007

Human population and Forest in Africa

- Between 2000 and 2005 Africa's population grew by 2.32% annually (nearly double the global rate of 1.24% per year)
- In the next half century Africa will have twice the population growth rate of any other region
- in 1950 there were 13.5 hectares of land per person in Africa
- by 1990 this had shrunk to 4.7 hectares per person
- by 2005 it became to 3.2 hectares per person
- According to present population growth estimates, by 2050 there will be only 1.5 hectares per person.

The Independent, "Nature laid waste: The destruction of Africa",
June 2008
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/nature-laid-waste-the-destruction-of-africa-844370.html>

Women at work

"In the United Nations system, women comprise 37.1 % (2,136 out of 5,754) of all staff in the professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more. Six out of 37 (16.2%) of the most senior policy-making positions (Under-Secretary-General) are held by women".

(Source: United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/, Accessed November 2005.)

Women Economic Decision-Making

"In over 60 of the world's states, women's income is 50% lower than men's income"

(Source: United Nations Human Development Report 2005, www.hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005, Accessed November 2005)

"Women make up only 39% of salaried workers, but 62% of unpaid family workers".

(Source: United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report 2005, www.un.org/millenniumgoals, Accessed November 2005)

"The report notes that when bureaucrats overseeing three different environmental agreements on chemicals met to discuss cutting costs, they ran up a bill of \$112,500 per meeting on travel and per diem living costs along. The outcomes of those expensive meetings won't be approved until 2010."

So tangled is the U.N.'s environmental organizational structure, and so disorganized the central control, that the report says is not even possible to know how much money the U.N. system is spending on simply managing its environmental actions. (Such records, the report demurely states, "are not available.") But even a "rough estimate" is breath-taking: about \$1.65 billion in 2006, the last year for which statistics were apparently available. When it comes to environmental activities, the report makes clear that the entire system of U.N. environmental management (or "governance," a term that comes up often in the densely worded document) is not improving, but if anything growing rapidly worse.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,499244,00.html>

- * 70 % of the world's poorest people are women.
- * Violence against women causes more deaths and disabilities among women aged 15 to 44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents or war.
- * Women produce half the world's food, but own less than two per cent of the land.
- * Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, yet earn only a tenth of its income.

* Two-thirds of the world's 800 million illiterate adults are women as girls are not seen as worth the investment, or are busy collecting water or firewood or doing other domestic chores.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/struggle-for-equality-and-freedom-in-developing-ocuntries-439320.html>

Ghanaians have chosen constitutional rule over autocracy, and shown a democratic spirit that allows the energy of your people to break through. We see that in leaders who accept defeat graciously - the fact that President Mills' opponents were standing beside him last night to greet me when I came off the plane spoke volumes about Ghana -- ; victors who resist calls to wield power against the opposition in unfair ways. We see that spirit in courageous journalists like Anas Aremeyaw Anas, who risked his life to report the truth. We see it in police like Patience Quaye, who helped prosecute the first human trafficker in Ghana. We see it in the young people who are speaking up against patronage, and participating in the political process. (Obama speech in Ghana)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/Remarks-by-the-president-to-the-Ghanian-Parlia>

Revised Constitution of Cameroon 2009 (Article 66)

The President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, Members of Government and persons ranking as such, the President and Members of the Bureau of the National Assembly, the President and Members of the bureau of the Senate, Members of Parliament, Senators, all holders of an elective office, Secretaries- General of Ministries and persons ranking as such, Directors of the Central Administration, General Managers of public and semi-public enterprises, Judicial and Legal Officers, administrative personnel in - charge of the tax. Base, collection and handling of public funds, all managers of public votes and property, shall declare their assets and property at the beginning and at the end of their tenure of office.

The other categories of persons to whom the provisions of this article shall apply and the conditions of implementation thereof shall be determined by law.

“Few states fail by chance. Accidents of geography and history play a certain part, but so do corruption and mismanagement. Why, for instance, has Zimbabwe's annual GDP growth plummeted from 14 percent to at least negative 5 percent during Robert Mugabe's nearly three decades of rule? Is it really a coincidence that immunization rates in Equatorial Guinea fell 10 points over the last 30 years as the country became a petrostate? How come the percentage of paved roads in Yemen and North Korea is still in the single digits?”

Elizabeth Dickinson

Why is foreign aid not working?

“The answer is, well ...sometimes the money doesn't reach the front line. Channelling your funds through African systems means, by definition, spending money where organisation can be weak, where there's a lack of qualified officials and accountants, where civil service salaries are low and the temptation high, and where there are plenty of bad eggs among the good ones”.

Giles Bolton

International Day of the African Child

200,000 child slaves are sold every year in Africa. There are an estimated 8,000 girl-slaves in West Africa alone.

(Sources: BBC 5 October, 2001 &Anti- Slavery Society)

One in six African children dies before the age of five. Most of these deaths could be prevented.

(Source: stand Up Africa 2015)

Smoke in the home leads to the deaths of nearly 800,000 children each year.

United Nations Regional information Centre Magazine

Corruption costs Africa 30% of GDP

Oct 16 2008 07:06

Addis Ababa – corruption absorbs up to 30% of most African countries gross domestic product, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa said Wednesday at a conference on combating graft.

“In most African countries corruption is estimated to represent between 20% and 30% of the GDP, that is astronomic,” Okey Oyejekwe, director of Uneca’s governance and public administration division, said at press conference in Addis Ababa.

The three-day meeting in the Ethiopian capital which wrapped up Wednesday was at giving fresh impetus to the fight against corruption in Africa and called for a broader section of society to be involved.

“The problem of corruption remains intractable in many African countries, and it is widely acknowledged that there is a need for more innovation, creative and strategic approaches to deal with it” Uneca said in a statement.

Sapa – AFP

World’s governments will fail to meet their agreed target of curbing biodiversity loss by 2010, according to experts questioned by BBC News. Nearly 200 countries signed up to the target in 2002. Ten leading conservationists asked here at the World Conservation Congress were unanimous that the goal cannot be met.

All the global indicators of progress are heading in the wrong direction, and few governments have even translated the target into national legislation.

By Richard Black

Environment correspondent, BBC News website, Barcelona 13/10/08

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Cameroon Budget for 2008 was 800 million CFA FRS. According to Mr. Samuel Ngiffo, a member of the Commission this huge amount of money was to pay the Accountant (“Conciliateur”); pay per-diems to the

Commission members. That is between 1.000.000 to 300.000 CFA FRS per working secession; etc.

NB: The EITI is a Commission that is supposed to ensure that there is Transparency in the Extractive Industries. With such per diems and with no transparency and accountability, can the Cameroon arm of the EITI claim to be worthy?

A Secretary narrates an incident of how in a day, her boss could receive more than 20 visitors, a majority of whom came to use his office telephone. There are situation where certain individuals have had to pay FCFA 1,000 just to go to a government office to make calls which in actually fact will not cost up to FCFA 1,000 if made from a business telephone line.

Cameroon Tribune 11 November 2009

Equatorial Guinea statistics

Since oil was discovered there in 1996, Equatorial Guinea has become the third-largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, after Nigeria and Angola, with estimated revenues of \$4.8 billion in 2007. But although petroleum has made the ruling Obiang family and its associates vastly rich, the oil and gas wealth has not been spread beyond ruling elites.

In 2006, more than three-quarters of the population was living below the poverty line, according to a 2009 International Monetary Fund report. On average, about 35 percent of the nation’s residents die before the age of 40, and 57 percent lack access to safe water, according to a 2009 United Nations report.

By some measures, conditions in the country are getting worse. Though the nation’s gross domestic product grew more than tenfold from 1990 to 2007, infant mortality rose from 10 to 12 percent, according to according to a 2009 UNICEF report.

New York Times 17. 11. 09

Global Witness found that ex-CNDP fighters now in charge of the 212th national army brigade are pocketing tens of thousands of

dollars per month from illegal taxes imposed on civilians working in and around Bisie, eastern Congo's largest cassiterite (tin ore) mine. Most of these funds are channelled directly to ex-CNDP senior officers including brigade commander Colonel Yussuf Mboneza, and to other high-ranking elements of the national army.

Global Witness found that the brunt of the extortion and abuse is borne by the region's civilian population. At the Muhinga cassiterite mine in South Kivu , diggers told researchers that they are forced to pay \$10 each to the military for permission to spend a night working in the mineshafts. Diggers, many of whom are children, also have to pay the army to use dynamite and are forced to hand over an entire day's production each Thursday.

Global Witness

22 indicted FBI sting on paying foreign bribe.

Twenty-two executives and employees at suppliers to the military and law enforcement agencies were arrested on the eve of their industry's annual trade show in Las Vegas after a 2 1/2-year undercover sting operation aimed at schemes to bribe a foreign official.

The Justice Department called the case the largest single investigation and prosecution of individuals in the history of the 1977 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which bars bribery of foreign government officials...there are more than 140 open investigations under the act.

Charged are people at companies in eight states and executives at companies in the United Kingdom and Israel.

The sales agent was actually an undercover FBI agent, and no defense minister was involved at all.

The charges relating to the corrupt practices act carry a maximum five-year prison sentence on conviction. The maximum sentence for money laundering conspiracy is 20 years.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100119/ap_on_bi_ge/us_foreign_bribes

The Adamawa, North and Southwest have been identified as the regions highest hit by the prevalence of leprosy in Cameroon.

Prof. Angwafor said the Adamawa has a prevalence of 0.55, the North 0.93 and the Southwest 0.89 respectively per 10,000 of the inhabitants... even though the prevalence rate of Cameroon is 0.25per 10,000 inhabitant.

The prevalence rates of the three regions are pre-occupying considering the less than 1 per 10, 000 case set by the World Health Organisation, WHO, as a trend towards eradication.

The Post Newspaper 1, February 2010

The Pew Research Center has just released one of the biggest ever studies on attitudes to religion and morality in Africa, which has revealed a host of interesting facts.

Here are 10 things we have learnt from the study, which surveyed 25,000 people in 19 countries.

75% of South Africans think polygamy is "morally wrong" - bad news for their president, as Jacob Zuma took his third wife earlier this year and is engaged to a fourth. However, the survey also revealed some possible double-standards. While only 7% of Rwandans approved of polygamy (although this did include women), a rather higher number - 17% - of men said they had more than one wife.

Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Communities not compensated 10 years after

The 25-year lifespan project was initially estimated at a total cost of US\$ 3.7 billion, even though it was disclosed that the estimated cost now stands at US\$ 6.5 billion.

The ex-workers brandished pay slips with deduction each month.

The former workers are now mounting pressure for the COTCO to pay back the sum 'stolen' from them.

The Post newspaper June 2010