



2011 – 2012 Kick-Off Excursion

Introduction

This year is Nukoko's 5th edition, and the school year visit to kick it all off took place between October 31st and November 7th, 2011 up in the region of Namaré, Togo.

The objectives this year remain Nukoko's drive behind the program:

- 1) Equal access to primary education for girls
- 2) Increased accessibility to schools and education
- 3) The promotion of health education and child health

All of these goals are connected by our support efforts towards school fees and materials, nutrition awareness, and community outreach on issues of education and basic health. REJED offers its own support through various school kits and teaching materials, for kids and teachers alike, and by way of visits such as this one.

Awareness and Community Discussions

As usual, REJED held information sessions with the locals to discuss education in general, and the *Education 4 All* program. They reiterated the benefits of education for children, especially young girls, stressing general population benefits. It is clear that many parents have taken an interest in the program, and are eager to have their children educated- some of the parents were, in fact, able to purchase a few supplies for their children before REJED arrived with the donations!



In regards to the *Education 4 All* program, REJED surveyed both the community and students about the activities of the course over the last 4 years: the goals achieved so far and the challenges that will arise during this 5th edition. One of the most common questions was concerning the girls who would be graduating at the end of this year- will the program

continue to support them, or will it be up to the parents to provide for their



education? REJED will be speaking with its partners in order to respond to the community during the year-end mission in the spring.

School Kit Distribution

The kits delivered to each of the five schools this year consisted of notebooks, textbooks, pens, pencils, crayons, and rulers, and the top two girls received geometry sets. Each school received teaching materials that included notebooks, teacher's guides, pens, chalk, geometry sets, as well as markers and paper for meetings with officials and parents.

Medical kits were also distributed to top up the medicine boxes at each school, with products to relieve fever, headaches, pains, and other problems that might arise throughout the year.

Awareness posters on the issue of malaria were delivered to the classrooms this year- REJED teamed up with World Class Project, a UK based organization that made posters noting the dangers, transmission methods, prevention, and cures for malaria. Teachers will be educating the students and the community in order to fight this disease.

Sponsored Girls

The girls are growing quickly, and REJED noted that their visit foretold a good start to the year, as nearly all the sponsored girls were present!

A few changes did occur during the break, as one girl was transferred to a school in a different region, and four girls left Bouyème due to parent separation or migration to neighbouring countries.



The girls who have been with *Education 4 All* since its inception in 2007 have grown up a lot, and it is time that they are provided with the right tools to lead healthy and responsible lives. The importance of hygiene and sexual education is vital in order to allow these girls to remain in charge of their own lives, and futures.



There are a growing number of educated children in the region of Namaré, which has led to positive effects and awareness to the population on the benefits of education, for all. The gender disparity in the classroom has decreased drastically- in 2007 there were 2 girls for every 10 boys, and in 2011 that had increased to 7 girls for every 10 boys! A positive change to be sure! The parents are seeing the importance of education for their children and the community as a whole.

The locals have requested that the program continue on, and reiterate the need to set up a program that allows access to light during the nighttime so that the children can study after the sun has set.

Conclusion

REJED are happy to note that they felt this visit to be a successful start for the 5th year of *Education 4 All*.

They managed to collect important data in order to continue this success in the coming years, including the realistic needs of the community as well as those of parents, teachers, and students. Education is now a definite priority in the region of Namaré.

Thanks to REJED and its partners who have not stopped supporting both education and health initiatives in Togo, and to all our sponsors throughout the years. Stay tuned for updates as we critically evaluate the lessons learned over the past five years, and as we create a plan for the future. This is a milestone year for us all!

