

WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CAMEROON

The Women Economic Empowerment and Literacy Project (WEELP) of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC), is aimed at improving upon the livelihood of self employed and less educated women in our community. This is done through income generation activities and Adult Literacy Programmes. Since its inception in 2007, the project has served 2,395 women who have been organized in 105 groups.

Some Women's Voices about the Project:

1) When I was growing up, I missed the opportunity to go to school like many other children of my time. We were 9 to my parents. As a result, preference was given to my brothers to go to school. I used to wonder aloud what miracle there was in reading and writing. I made up my mind to learn these skills even in adulthood. Later on after some years in marriage the Government of Cameroon introduced a National Adult Literacy programme in my District. I started classes but the programme failed after a year. As fate will have it, WEELP came to my rescue immediately after that. For close to 2 ½ years with the WEELP project, I graduated in December 2015. I can now boast of being able to follow-up all church programmes during services, as well as read the Bible. I can equally take down minutes of meetings as the secretary of my group. Travelling out of my village is no big deal for I can identify places through sign posts. With this I was able to freely travel to Rome to visit my sister, all by myself. This has contributed immensely in building my self-esteem as I now earn more respect from the public. It has also helped me to keep good accounts of my business. (*Fobang Emmerencia -Ngwalang Ndop Presbytery*).



2) When I got married, I used to depend on my husband who was employed by a private company for all my needs. When he lost his job, I became very frustrated as life became unbearable for the entire family. None of us was earning any money. Thank God for WEELP. We constituted a group to train in fries. (gateaux, chin-chin, cakes etc). After the workshops, I decided to teach my eldest son who is a student in the High School in my village. I took up fries as a full time business beginning from January 2015 with a capital of 30,000FCFA (60 USD), with a monthly profit of 15000 (30 USD). Every month I made a saving of 12 USD as encouraged to do by WEELP. The rest of the money helped me to run my home. When I had a higher profit, I re-invested it into the business. At the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year I supported my husband with (80 USD) for school needs for our 4 children. My eldest son goes on with production and marketing even when I travel out of my home village (*Mercy Nkar- Bui Presbytery*).



Evaluation as advised by WEELP

Our group carries out a monthly evaluation of all WEELP activities. It has helped to spur up those who are slow to pick up all steps of production discussed during trainings. The reports of profits hard-working group members generate from WEELP activities, rekindle the spirit of work in sluggish members. With this approach, we are able to monitor our progress and help all the women involved in the various sectors in our production activities. (*Kumbo women*)

Conclusion: The Department intends to take these activities to many more women. The activities would go a long way to stop hand-to-mouth living, enable women gain power over own life and decisions, become financially independent and improve their living conditions. The financial burden on relations will reduce. The number of children on the streets will reduce thus reducing societal crime wave. There would be more harmony in the homes and more peace will reign in the society.