

Cameroon: Project Esther

Overview

Project Esther works to offer support services to those who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation, especially young mothers. The project aims to biblically equip young women to develop self-esteem, confidence, and the capacity to build their lives on positive values while overcoming past experiences.

The Need

According to the United Nations, more than 55 per cent of women over 15-years-old in Cameroon have experienced physical violence. 20 per cent of women report that their first sexual intercourse experience was against their will, especially those who had intercourse before they were 15 years (30 per cent). Teenage pregnancy is prevalent as many girls in Cameroon are victims of sexual abuse from a very young age.

For fear of stigmatization and reprisals, they become timid and remain silent. This trauma usually lasts a lifetime and there is a great need for internal healing, restoration, forgiveness, love and reconciliation.

Project Esther aims to offer various channels of support to such women to assist them in navigating challenges and achieving a better future for themselves and their children.



Project Goals

In 2022, the Esther project will offer rehabilitation services to at least 120 teenage mothers who are victims of sexual exploitation, through training camps. The camps will include a focus on developing self esteem and confidence, and recognise biblical values as a foundation for a restored and flourishing life. The camps will offer counselling, a spiritual retreat and space to share experiences and read the Bible together.

Additionally, the project will offer practical support to assist young women to generate an income and help them regain financial independence.

An awareness campaign on the prevalence of sexual abuse will also be conducted for adolescents in schools and churches.

Impact

Overall, the Esther Project aims to impact 1,620 people in 2022. The impact will be measured by 1) participants discovering spiritual values and their own value through biblical teaching about their bodies and their rights; 2) adolescents recognising sexual dangers and choosing to lead their lives according to God's values;

3) young women receiving access to rehabilitation services that help them recover from abuse, exploitation and trauma; 4) participants gaining skills in business opportunities and income generation activities and, 5) participants becoming involved in church activities and reading the Bible.

Testimonies

"I was captivated by the quality of teachings and workshops in the project. Since then, my life - that was so sad - has become more joyful. I have started appreciating life. More over I have started reading and meditating (on) the Bible every day. My communion with God has been reinforced. My life has become light and peaceful... Project Esther...permitted me to have faith in me and to believe that there's still hope for me. Jesus is my solution." (Albertine, 2014)

Prayer Needs

- Pray for the girls and young women of Cameroon who have experienced abuse and exploitation, that they may find healing in the word of God.
- Pray for a changing social environment and a legal system that protects young and vulnerable women.
- Thank God that this project is reaching the lives of hundreds of young women who need support.
- Pray that former beneficiaries would begin training up new beneficiaries.