

World AIDS Day- 2024 : Students Raise Awareness with A Five Day--Long Campaign at Our School, Lycée, Henri Sylvoz, Moanda

December 1st, each year, marks **World AIDS Day**, a global service aimed at raising awareness and taking action towards the fight against HIV/AIDS. This year, our high school students from the Classe de Premier GT 1 & 2 participated in a series of efficuous activities designed to educate and raise awareness not only within their school community but also with the world at large.

A Five-Day Long of Awareness and Action

In the days leading up to World AIDS Day, students launched an engaging campaign to spread critical messages about HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and the importance of fighting stigma. The students created powerful posters that were displayed throughout the school. These posters, which featured eye-catching visuals and heartfelt messages, were designed to educate their peers and the surrounding community on the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Some of the messages were deeply moving, urging everyone to take responsibility for their health and raise awareness about the importance of prevention.

A few of the standout messages the students were holding and some displayed on the noticeboards included phrases like:

- « Visit your Nearest Health Centre for Free Screening & Counseling Services », « Get Tesetd, Get Informed »
- Stop Bullying » "End the Stigma, Not the Lives" - « Support and Accept »
- "Stand Together, We Can Fight HIV/AIDS"
- « Be Faithful to your Partner »
- « Choose Life » not « Hate » etc...
- « All We Need is Love » All We Need is Understanding »



These powerful statements aimed to spark conversation among the students' community and encourage responsibility and action against the epidemic.

Music: A Powerful Tool for Awareness, Behavioral Change

As part of their week-long activities, the students took their campaign a step further by using music as a vehicle for spreading awareness. They chose to adapt the iconic song "**Circle of Life**" by **Sir Elton John** for a special performance. This song was selected not only for its emotional power but also because Elton John is an Ambassador for UNAIDS, who uses his platform to fight stigma and discrimination and to promote global awareness in the effort to end AIDS.



The students' performance was moving and showed their commitment to the cause, using art and music to express the urgency of the fight against HIV/AIDS and to inspire others to take action.

Virtual Learning and Inspiration from UNAIDS Resource Page

To learn more to their local and international initiatives, the students were invited to a zoom session logged into by their Language Teacher, Mrs. Rebecca NATIF-COZE to a unique opportunity to attend the opening ceremony of the World AIDS Day events hosted in Geneva, where they would hear directly from influential global leaders- although it was difficult to have everyone attend, due to circumstances, the message was recorded and replayed to the entire class thereon-

-And in a very brief speech made by the Executive Director of UNAIDS, among others, Hon. Winnie Byanyima--Her address was a powerful reminder of the continued global struggle against HIV/AIDS.



In her speech, Hon. Byanyima emphasized this year's theme, "Take The Rights Path", calling for collective action and responsible behavior. She stressed that despite advances in treatment and awareness, a significant number of new HIV infections continue to occur daily. Therefore, it is crucial that we take responsibility, educate ourselves, and make informed decisions to protect ourselves and others.

School Community Engagement and Togetherness

On the last day of the activities, the school came together for a community gathering on the sports ground. A sizeable student body, along with staff members, wore red, the symbolic color for World AIDS Day, to show solidarity in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The School Principal, Deputy Principal, and CPE (Counselor for Educational and Social Affairs), along with other staff, joined the students in this important display of togetherness-united to end Aids.



The event underscored a clear message: "It is not just about raising awareness, but about learning, preventing, and accepting the reality of living with HIV/AIDS". The gathering was a moment for everyone, especially our adolescents to reflect on the importance of making responsible choices in their lives and to remember the significance of supporting those who are affected by the disease.



Key Takeaways: "Take the Rights Path", this Year's World Aids Day Theme

As the week concluded, the students and staff were left with an important takeaway: "Take the Right Path". This message summed - up everything learned throughout the week—encouraging everyone to live responsibly, to make informed decisions about their health, and to promote acceptance and respect for those living with HIV/AIDS.



Through their Five Day -long campaign, the students not only raised awareness but also took action, fostering a sense of responsibility and empathy within their school community. Their efforts helped to bring attention to the global challenge of AIDS, and they have shown that even small actions—like creating posters, performing songs, or having open conversations—can make a big difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS.