

Yaoundé vibrates to the rhythm of College Admission Counseling

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On Wednesday February 5th 2020, 72 High School Counselors and Teachers converged at the Conference Hall of the Teachers Resource Unit, Poste Central, Yaoundé - Cameroon for a professional development seminar, organized by Open Dreams and the Cameroon Fulbright TEA Alumni Association with sponsorship from the International ACAC, on how to support their very ambitious students in school and in the college application processes, for those interested in pursuing education in foreign countries, especially the USA, Canada, Europe etc as well as explore further education opportunities for themselves, for programs fully sponsored by the US Department of State and other Governments and international institutions.



Kick-starting the seminar, the Head of the Teachers Resource Unit encouraged the audience to continue to explore news ways to keep the steam on and meet the emerging needs of young learners and by extension the growing needs of the nation in the areas of education and sustainable development.



The Seminar Proper

The program coordinator, International ACAC Scholar and Fulbright Alumna, James Akaba, gave a preview of the entire program while heartily thanking all who responded to the invitation before introducing the first presenter for the day, Atem Arabella, an English Language teacher, a counselor and a Fulbright TEA Alumnus.



Atem Arabella

The second major presenter, FEKA Parchibell, a Fulbright TEA Alumnus and very renowned community activist in the areas of education and women empowerment focused on teacher leadership within the school community and beyond, highlighting key strategies, qualities and selfless efforts within he school community which can make teachers to stand out as leader and hence create resounding impact leading students to the development of their full potential.



Feka Parchibell

James Akaba queued in to present Open Dreams, a member of the HALI Access Network and how teachers in the field can work with the organization to create pathways for outstanding students by supporting and empowering them to achievement dreams they might never have thought achievable. Among other things, he added that teachers should follow up their students very closely and recommend to Open Dreams the brightest ones who are highly motivated, have love for the community, demonstrate high leadership skills, are well cultured, ready to tackle challenges and to go any length to academic achievement.



James Akaba



James Akaba, came on board once again, to make a very thorough presentation for an hour on the vast educational opportunities for students and teachers and the rigorous work it entails, the possible challenges, the key processes involved to boost one's candidacy and to also come up with a very competitive application file that stands out. Part of this involves keenly following up students, coaching and mentoring them over time and providing leadership opportunities to them so that they stay on the lane of consciousness and high-achievement all along.

Soon after, FEKA Parchibell came up to talk about Pro-activism in the community outside the school and how teachers have the best advocacy platform to mentor and shape the society; how they can move the ideas from the classroom to impact the society. She talked about the extra-ordinary work she has been doing in Cameroon, Uganda and other countries around supporting girls, the underprivileged and empowering communities thanks to the opportunities which came with international education, selflessness and the readiness to make a difference in the community.

Atem Arabella shared her inspiring and success story on the challenges she is passionately addressing through her community-based organization while working with students with disabilities (dyslexia, autism) and helping them to sustain hope and hold tied to their dreams. This is an area many people are impatient with and she has found a fortune working with the young kids with special needs.

Now, another presentation switch - Jonathan Burdick, Prevoist, Cornell University moved the audience with an inspiring presentation on the immense Potential in Africa, a continent he has fallen in love with and is fondly referred to within international circles as the "Africa-Guy". With such conscious on the immense potential on a continent he has been exploring for the past four decades as an international education expert, he underlined the importance of nurturing students, harnessing the potential and helping the students in their progressive academic development. He spoke particularly of Cornell University and the opportunities high-achieving students can access.

John Njende, an Open Dreams scholar spoke about his enriching experience at the Yale Young African Scholars (YYAS) Summer Program and the role teacher-mentors and models have played in his life as as a student which made him suitable enough to be accepted into Open Dreams. Elle Elieh Junior spoke about the Open Dreams Summer Academy and mentorship experience and thanked the teachers who sacrificed a lot to mold him and who also wrote letters of recommendation for him and how he is on a steady part of academic achievement thanks to the many who believed in him from day one.

Evans Nomboh, another Open Dreams Scholar, expressed appreciation at the work done by teachers who exercise patient with

them and they are the academic giants on whose shoulders students stand to achieve their dreams.



Mballa who coordinates the YYAS for Cameroon, in a short presentation, said there are many bright students but the difference comes from the students' involvement out of classrooms. He urged the teachers to follow up the students who may be reckless with receiving and replying to email and help them to develop interest in constantly checking their emails, seeking support where need be and replying on time . This brought the seminar to an end at 5:15pm. It

was such a successful seminar and the positive reactions from participants were overwhelming.



Seminar Sponsorship: The International Association for College Admission Counseling (Opportunity Pathway Funds).

Organizers: Open Dreams and the Cameroon Fulbright Alumni Network alongside members of the International ACAC.

Secretary: Nomboh Evans (Open Dreams Pre-Scholar) with input from James Akaba

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