General Project Information

Project Title: Land Consultation Clinics to Reduce Inequality of Women Infected or Affected by HIV/AIDS

Organization: Coalition des ONG et OCB du Cameroun œuvrant dans le domaine des Etablissement Humains (CONGEH), Cameroon

Implemented in: Central and western region. Central Region: Department of Mfoundi, district of Yaoundé II, Yaoundé III, Yaoundé IV, Yaoundé VI. Western Region: Department of Haut Nkam, district of Bana and Department of Bamboutos, district of Galim – Bamendjin

Grant Amount: $98,000

www.congeh.webs.com

Context

In Cameroon, property and inheritance law is limited, and such rights remain inaccessible for many women. Women are not aware of the status of state law and, even if informed, do not have the financial means to access their rights. Women, particularly those living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, can face severe housing and property-related vulnerabilities in Cameroon. Women frequently do not possess property rights because the title to property is registered in a male relative’s name. Moreover, property owners often choose to bequeath property to their male relatives, and not to their female relatives, partners or wives.

Objectives

CONGEH sought to strengthen an enabling environment for promoting and protecting women’s property and inheritance rights on a community level; and to enhance capacity of HIV-affected women to advocate and assert their property and inheritance rights.

Key results

- Increased legal literacy and awareness of 286 women living with HIV and AIDS on their property and inheritance rights.
- Provided legal counsel to 1,300 women on their property and inheritance rights through the Land Consultation Clinic. Land Consultation Clinics raised the awareness of women on their property and housing rights; provided legal support and assistance to women who have faced discrimination regarding access to land and housing; and referred women to appropriate legal service providers. As a result, thirty-one women have pursued property and inheritance claims.
- Enhanced knowledge and skills of 32 legal service providers, including community focal points, to support women’s access to property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS.

Lessons Learned

- Enlisting the support of traditional and religious leaders is crucial for securing women’s right to property and inheritance at the community level. As traditional and religious leaders are custodians of local culture, their promotion of women’s property and inheritance rights is highly valuable.
- Legal texts need to be simplified and translated into local languages in order to make the law more accessible for women.

Partnerships

CONGEH partnered with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family (MINPROFF); the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MINHDU); Network of Women Living with HIV (Réseaux des femmes positives); and the National AIDS Committee (CNLS).