

Report of the opening ceremony of of the Public Preschool of Gbéssoumé

Thursday, May 19th 2022

This Thursday, May 19th 2022 had a festive taste: smiles on all lips, music played by the group Vie&Culture making all guests sing and twirl, speeches of gratitude, cheers and above all, happy schoolchildren! It was on this very day that the opening ceremony of the preschool of Géboussoumé took place along with the official hand over of the new building. This occasion made the inhabitants of the village as well as multiple local, public, and administrative authorities gather.



► Course of the ceremony:

After long hours of travel and a gentle crossing in a dugout canoe through the branched arms of the Ouémé River, we finally arrived at the village of Gbéssoumé at 9:30 am. At our arrival the inhabitants dressed in their traditional clothes, were already ready to welcome us happily. The women of the village supported our arrival with music, while the school children formed a hedge of honor to let the director of the NPO Actions de Solidarité, Mrs. Astrid Toda, pass by.



The group Vie&Culture opened the festivities with music. The whole village followed the movement by dancing and singing. Mrs. Astrid Toda was then awarded the traditional dress, a token of appreciation for her strong commitment to the construction of the Public Preschool of Gbéssoumé.



The "guardians of the night" (Sangbeto), fetiches of the village, then joined the party calling the whole population to dance and sing.



Then many speeches of gratitude were held to honor the NPO Actions de Solidarité and its partners in the construction process of this school building. The principal of the school opened her speech with a song and was accompanied by the preschool children dancing at her side. "Our joy is so immense that we lack words to express our gratitude" she said.



The Mayor, the District Chief, the Village Chief, the President of the NPO, the Representative of the Parents, the Representative of the Development Association of the village of Gbéssoumé and the Executive Director of the NPO also took the floor to express their gratitude for the project aimed at improving the learning conditions of the children in this very isolated preschool.



Then it was time to hand over the keys. The Executive Director of the NPO was in charge of symbolically handing over the keys to the students' representative before finally handing them over to the Mayor, a sign of his leading responsibility in the sustainability and good use of the school.



Everyone then moved to the entrance of the building to cut the ribbon marking the completion of the construction work.



Finally, two group rooms equipped with cupboards and a playhouse each, an office equipped with a cupboard for educational material and shelves to store toys, the construction of toilets with four cabins as well as the installation of games in the courtyard are now available to the school.





The local, public, and administrative authorities then wrote nice words on the blackboards to encourage the students.



The women of the village then concocted a very delicious local dish with pate made of corn flour and fish, that we all enjoyed before heading back to the road.

► Perspectives:

Even if the inauguration of the public preschool of Gbessoumé marks a huge progress in the life of the inhabitants of the village and offers beautiful learning conditions for the children, it is necessary to recall that the village is located in a particularly isolated rural area and difficult to reach. One of the next challenges underlined by the Mayor during the inauguration ceremony concerns the challenge of electrification of the area as well as access to drinking water. In fact, it should be recalled that one of the major difficulties encountered during the construction was the problem of water. Not for the construction, since the site was located right next to the river, but because of the lack of access to drinking water, which led to an epidemic of diarrhea among the workers who were not used to these conditions. In this continuity, the issue of access to health care was also raised, given the landlocked situation of the territory.

