



Education: Strategies for Young and Adolescent Girls

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By Albina du Boisrouvray, Founder and President

Thank you so much, Gene. This (is) a great place to be and I'm so honored to be here today, because first the CGI is wonderful for NGOs like ours. It's not only inspiring but it serves so many opportunities to be able to expand our work and the models that we do. But I also am very honored to be here at Gene Sperling's panel because if there is somebody who is total inspiration, and to me especially on education, it is him. And education for us, at FXB, is the key that allows all the other components of our model to be successful.

So with that I'd just like to explain to you that the commitments that I've been doing since 2005 are numerous and in numerous different fields. But the most important one that I made was last year, was to add 50 FXB villages to the already existing ones that we have. And those villages, I would like to explain the background of what they are and how they rely so importantly on education and that is the key to the success of the rest, as I just said. Well I just have to put in context what is FXB and who I am.

Twenty-one years ago, my only son Frances, who was a very dedicated helicopter rescue pilot, died in Africa on a mission in Mali. He was 24 years old. I was shattered. He was a central pillar of my life and I didn't know how I was going to go on. And when I thought best how to honor him and continue his very valuable work, I felt that I had to use the rest of my life, and I wanted to use the rest of my life, to continue his mission of rescue and his spirit of rescue so also that his generous commitment to others would not be lost but expanded.

And at FXB what is more rescuing than to raise the most vulnerable children in the world, the AIDS orphans. And that's what we set about to do. I had inherited, five years before, a lot of jewelry and art and furniture and houses and companies. They were of no more use to me. So like a PTA mom in America, I held a version of a bake sale, but this one was at Sotheby's. [Laughter] And with the proceeds I started FXB and I created its programs to help the most vulnerable children around the world, the AIDS orphans that were coming up so strongly in '89 and all the other children who were as destitute as AIDS orphans.

FXB is a leader in addressing the AIDS orphans crisis and we need all your help. Every 15 seconds a child loses a parent to AIDS. And every 15 seconds you have one more little kid, since we've been speaking, who's going to be an orphan, and by the year 2010 over 25 million children, at least, will have lost a parent to AIDS. That's a hell of a lot of kids.

This is also in our self interest because without loving parents to protect and raise them, orphans are at risk for sexual trafficking, for drugs dealing, for recruitment into criminal gangs, into child soldiers and armies. And there's an example in north Uganda that you probably have all heard about – the (Lord's) Resistance Army that has used AIDS orphans in terrorist missions against civilians. They also are at risk of being recruited by radical Islam, which is gaining a lot of strength in Africa, precisely in the countries that have the most severe orphan crisis.

Well FXB was the first organization working internationally on the AIDS orphans crisis. And over the past 18 years we have developed an approach that provides education, health, and stability to these children, and tools to their families, jobs, so that they can make a living.

Our FXB village model is extremely cost effective because we have a model that is low cost, high impact. It only costs \$165,000.00 over three years to provide to 80 to 100 families – and that's 500 to 600 people of which most are children – with all the most important services that these children need and also the tools for their families to be able to become permanently economically self-sufficient so that the services to the children can continue.

And our approach to education has five primary goals and five primary elements. The first one is to enable children to pursue or to resume their primary and secondary education. We also give vocational training to adolescents and adults who have not been able to attend school on a regular basis. We promoted HIV prevention through information, which are educative sessions on health and hygiene, and nutrition and the environment, and community development. And we raise the awareness on children's rights, the focus is to decrease the stigma and the discrimination that is attached to HIV infected individuals among the foster families, and the schools, and the community at large. We also, and I think it's a very important part, it's not a right of the child but it's the most important one, is that we do restore their self-worth, their feeling of self-worth and their dignity.

Our model has been working in the most difficult parts of the earth. And we're currently running programs in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, India, China and Thailand. But we are currently looking for more donors for our commitment of 50 added villages to the existing one, which is a commitment over three years. We already have 27 and we need many more in India, in China, in Thailand and Myanmar where we already (work on) education. And in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Liberia where we would like to start. So can we count on you all to help us and those children?

Thank you.