



The L'Oréal Foundation presents its educational program "Beauty for a Better Life" at the Women's Forum in Myanmar

Clichy, November 29th – The L'Oréal Foundation will present its "Beauty for a Better Life" educational program at The Women's Forum held in Myanmar (Burma) on December 6th and 7th with the presence of Nobel Peace Prize winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi .

The issue of education in Myanmar and the surrounding region as well as the development of new professional training methods for those excluded from the current economic system is one of the opening discussions at the Women's Forum in Myanmar.

The L'Oréal Foundation has been invited by the Women's Forum to enrich the discussion by presenting its international educational program "Beauty for a Better Life".

Sara Ravella, Director of Communications, Sustainable Development and Public Affairs for L'Oréal and Director General of the L'Oréal Foundation, declared, *"At L'Oréal, our firm belief, based on more than one hundred years of expertise, is that beauty has a true social utility. Driven by this conviction, the L'Oréal Foundation deploys projects that link beauty with social integration. The goal of the "Beauty for a Better Life" education program is to enable society's most vulnerable members to find their place in society."*

About Beauty for a Better Life

The mission of the international "Beauty for a Better Life" program, initiated and implemented around the world by the L'Oréal Foundation, is to help certain fragile communities regain self-esteem and reintegrate socially through free, top-quality beauty training programs (hairstyling, make-up and beauty care). Beauty-related professions are not only characterized by social interaction and service provision, but are also professions where passion, creativity and imagination take center stage. L'Oréal is convinced that these qualities positively impact one's self confidence and motivate the proactive development of one's future.

The beneficiaries of the program are mainly women from disadvantaged backgrounds. Among them are the unemployed, members of the working poor and victims of human trafficking as well as those with school or family problems and still others who are victims of domestic violence or conflicts within their own countries. The "Beauty for a Better Life" program deploys customized teaching methods characterized by reinforced instructor supervision in relation to a limited numbers of students. The training is both theoretical and practical and takes place in an authentic, specially-equipped salon.

In each country where the program is deployed, The L'Oréal Foundation works with a local partner (an NGO or association) that is perfectly familiar with the country's particular conditions and can identify the right beneficiaries. These partners are recognized experts in the fields of economic development and vocational training.

Key Facts

- 2009 saw the first initiatives that led to the creation of this educational program.
- "Beauty for a Better Life" has been established in almost 20 countries worldwide: from Latin America to Asia, through Europe and the Middle East.
- "Beauty for a Better Life" benefits more than 1,000 people in very difficult social or economic circumstances.

About the L'Oréal Foundation

The missions of the L'Oréal Foundation focus on two main causes, promoting science and providing help to the most vulnerable members of society. Conveying the values of excellence, generosity and creativity, science is at the core of the Foundation's commitments, most particularly its commitment to supporting women researchers through its "For Women in Science" program, a worldwide initiative in partnership with UNESCO. The Foundation's other commitments, whether reconstructive surgery, socio-esthetics or education, are based on a vision of beauty as way to improve the lives of disadvantaged persons and help them re-enter the world of work, a way to help them regain the sense of self-esteem and self-respect necessary for a life of dignity. <http://www.loreal.com/Foundation>

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“Beauty for a Better Life” in Asia

“Beauty for a Better Life” is being rolled out in almost 20 countries worldwide: from Latin America to Asia, through Europe and the Middle East. More than 1,000 people in extremely vulnerable social or economic situations have benefitted from “Beauty for a Better Life”.

The programme has been introduced most rapidly in Asia, where there have been more than 550 beneficiaries to date.

Vietnam

The “Beauty for a Better Life” programme was rolled out in 2013 in Vietnam, where it is providing 235 highly vulnerable women with professional hairdressing training, offering them a lifeline to help build their future. According to our local partners, being born a girl can be a disadvantage in Vietnam in poor families or in remote villages. Education is prioritized for boys. Some of the young girls are forced to get married at an early age or have to start work when still very young to contribute financially to their families. Others fall victim to human trafficking networks in the region. Single mothers with no income also face immense economic and social challenges.

In response to this reality, two associations – **REACH and Association des Femmes** – have formed to take action to help these women find their place in Vietnamese society. REACH focuses on providing support and vocational training to vulnerable women. The Association des Femmes meanwhile has set up a network of 10 million members nationwide, and is striving to improve the lives of women in Vietnam.

It is through a partnership with REACH and Women Association that “Beauty for a Better Life” is now providing a tailor-made 6-month course in hairdressing in Vietnam, helping women in extremely difficult social and economic situations to regain their self-esteem and confidence in the future. Since the creation of the programme in 2009, 629 women have attended the course and 507 have been awarded diplomas.

India

In India, the beneficiaries of the programme are young women aged 18 to 35. Most have not completed their schooling, come from underprivileged backgrounds and live in the poorest areas of large cities. In a country where the beauty and well-being sector have a double-digit growth every year, there is a real need for skilled labour. In view of the great social difficulties faced and the many vocational opportunities available, the international NGO **Aide et Action**, which specialises in educational issues, has developed a programme focused on professional beauty care training in partnership with L’Oréal. By the end of 2013, 200 women would have received training. In the following year, this figure should rise to 600 as new training centres are opened.

Thailand

In Thailand, the “Beauty for a Better Life” programme targets the unemployed and people whose meagre resources deny them decent living conditions. To help them break the vicious cycle of unemployment, Thailand’s Ministry of Education, in partnership with educational and vocational training centres such as **Siphraya Polytechnic College**, have set up a series of short training modules. Professional instructors teach 6-month courses on subjects such as cooking, painting, carpentry, and information technology. Recognised for its training achievements, Siphraya Polytechnic College was contacted by L’Oréal’s teams to set up a hairdressing course at the college. A special hair salon was established for this purpose and 50 women are currently attending the course.

Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, the “Beauty for a Better Life” programme supports the underprivileged suffering from mental disabilities. According to the analysis of local associations, these individuals have great difficulty finding employment even though in medical terms some of them have only minor disabilities. With no regular income or social connections, they live in isolation on the margins of society which often worsens their psychological difficulties. The **Hong Chi Association**, a prominent local NGO whose mission is to raise the employment rate among the mentally disabled through vocational

courses, has been helping the mentally disabled and their families since 1965. The NGO provides vocational training, housing solutions, support for finding employment, adult education programmes, access to health care, family and community support, as well as leisure programmes. A range of professional skills, adapted to each individual's disability, are taught, such as catering, hotel services and now, hairdressing and beauty. Together, L'Oréal Hong Kong and Hong Chi are striving to train some 50 students a year.

Cambodia

In September 2013, "Beauty for a Better Life" was introduced in Cambodia, where 22 young women from the disadvantaged suburbs of Phnom Penh have access to the programme. With the country only just recovering from the Khmer Rouge genocide thirty years ago, young Cambodian girls in particular are in desperate need of support. According to Toutes à l'Ecole, L'Oréal's local partner, the few children that are able to attend school are boys. Girls tend instead to remain at home and are often forced into arranged marriages. Some girls have to start working at an early age to support their families. They are also threatened by prostitution and its disastrous consequences.

To try to help them, the Happy Chandara school was founded in 2008 by the **French association Toutes à l'Ecole**. The school offers free education to around 1,000 girls from the poor suburbs of Phnom Penh, to enable them to study at a higher level and ultimately to learn a trade. The first students began their hairdressing course in September 2013, and the aim is to provide job opportunities for the 22 young women.

In Asia, the programme is currently being rolled out in the Sichuan province of China and in Indonesia to benefit 250 people:

In the Sichuan province **of China**, the programme focuses on young people in economic difficulty who were affected by the recent earthquake in May 2013. L'Oréal is teaming up with the China Youth Development Foundation, which specialises in development solutions for underprivileged young people in China. The target is to train 100 youth by mid-2014 and to develop the training in other provinces in China.

In Indonesia, L'Oréal is partnering the Pekka association which supports the mothers of poor families. The aim is to develop a "Beauty for a Better Life" programme in 2014 in Karawang, a rural region located three hours from the capital, Jakarta, where economic difficulties are particularly severe. The programme should benefit an estimated 150 people from the region a year.