Most of the world's poor are women and children. According to the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), women's active inclusion and participation in science is crucial in countries' efforts to alleviate poverty and that encouraging women to take part in science will allow any country to maximize its valuable human assets, empower its women, and improve its economic prospects. In many parts of the world, including Central Africa, it is still rare to find women working in scientific fields and female researchers remain under-represented. In the past year iCOACCh has been involved in working with women scientists in Yaoundé, Cameroon to understand the issues that they face in conducting their research, and to conduct several initial workshops there on career building and leadership skills. These initial workshops conducted in Yaoundé in October 2011 with women scientists in agricultural and health fields drew a large attendance and an overwhelmingly positive response from participants.

The success has led to the desire to provide additional workshops (funding permitting) in Cameroon in partnership with the International Center for Research in Agro Forestry (ICRAF) that sees these iCOACCh activities as important part of their effort to increase the participation of women in agricultural research and outreach to their communities. In the meantime, video-conferences facilitated by the University of Oregon and ICRAF in Yaoundé are being implemented as a follow-up to the iCOACCh workshops and as a mechanism for planning for future activities in other regions of Cameroon. COACCh is seeking funding for these activities. University of Oregon and ICRAF are providing staff and facilities support.

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