

# YPM launch media campaign for girls child



**Young People in the Media has revealed plans to launch a media campaign that seeks to support the girls to have increased access to the media**

Eric Samuel Ketter, the president of YPM, said 'the campaign is a UN Women initiative.

“We will be focusing on the girl child in the media and to advocate for the right of women and girl child in the media,” he told The Standard.

YPM is a non-profit making organisation led by young people. The media campaign was launched on the April 26, 2015, coinciding with commemoration of the International Children's Day of Broadcasting'.

Eric added: “We intend to sensitise people on the importance of supporting the girl child in the media, to discover and harness their talent.

“The campaign will serve as a tool to promote he/she campaign in support of girl child in the media; to ensure that the issues of the girl child is reported and to enhance their participation in the media.”

He assured of his association's commitment to help young people take active part in the development of the country

'We will continue to organise series of sensitisation programmes and training workshops to equip girl child in the media,’ he said.

## YPM holds refresher training on communications skills for adolescents



Young People in the Media (YPM) in collaboration with UNICEF and the Department of Information Services (DOIS) on Monday commenced a two-day refresher training workshop on communication skills for adolescents with the theme, 'Effective Communication: A tool for adolescent, empowerment and development'.

In her opening remarks, the Social Secretary of YPM, Marie Jeng, said the training was geared towards empowering adolescents with the communication tools that would enable them to effectively disseminate key messages to the public through various avenues on issues that affect them either directly or indirectly.

Eric Samuel Ketter, President of YPM underscored the need for stakeholders to develop themselves most especially their communication skills. This is refresher training, meaning you are not here to be taught but to be reminded of what you have already been taught. This means that a lot more is expected from you, one of which is your effective participation. We expect you to contribute more than the last time, ask questions more than the last time and answer more questions than the last time."

The YPM President concluded that after they have acquired the skills and improve on them, they have the responsibility of making best use of those skills in their advocacy for the rights and welfare of children.

Sally Sadie Singhateh, UNICEF's Communication Specialist, commended YPM and the government of The Gambia, through the Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure and the Department of Information Services for ensuring the continued strengthening of adolescents' skills in communication through frequent training sessions. Communication, she noted, is a fundamental part of effective development at both personal and national levels.

She alerted the participants that when she talk about communication, it always refers to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that all children have the right to express their opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child; therefore encouraging children to communicate, or express their views freely in all matters that affect them.

She went on: "It is important for children to know how to communicate effectively now because the future belongs to them. The UNFPA latest status report, Adolescents and Young People in Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that in 2014 nearly half of the world's population (about 3 billion) was under the age of 25, and in The Gambia, 32.3% of the overall population are adolescents and young people aged 10-24 years old."

She noted further that it is important to give all children a voice today, and skills to use this voice so that today's most vulnerable children such as children with disabilities and very poor children, can have their problems and challenges heard first hand for consideration when policies and programmes are put in place.

Ebrima A. Njie, Deputy Director at the Department of Information Services, explained that the training was an opportunity created by the Media Support to Advocacy Programme which seeks to empower young people to be able to speak for themselves and highlight their issues so that decision makers and the community can help in addressing them.

"Sometimes societies tend to celebrate child marriages not knowing that they are celebrating somebody's downfall, as putting a young girl or boy into marriage means they are being denied of skills acquisition which in the long run will not help them".

He assured of the Department's commitment to continue to work with YPM and young people in general to ensure that their capacities are built and that as people working in the media, will ensure that issues of children are reported responsibly so that positive decisions could come their way.

Bakary Saho, Assistant Secretary General at MOICI, who represented the Permanent Secretary, stated that the mass media plays a significant role in the promotion and protection of the rights of the world's children, beginning with their right to participation and to express themselves freely.

The two-day refresher capacity building workshop, he said, underscores the power of communication technology to transform the world; "a power that is only beginning to unfold, especially through television and the Internet".

## YPM engages media personnel on issues of child rights

-As Day of the African Child commemorated



As The Gambia joined other African countries to commemorate the day of the African Child on the 16th of June 2015, Young People in the Media (YPM), in collaboration with other national partners, with support from UNICEF, engaged media personnel in the promotion of the rights of girls and ending child marriage. This year's celebration of the Day of the African Child was on the theme '25 years after the adoption of the African Children's Charter, accelerating our collective efforts to end child marriage in Africa'.

The occasion gives an opportunity for all stakeholders on children's rights, including government, non-governmental and international entities to reflect on issues effecting children in the region, as the theme also centered on the need to take stock of progress in ending child marriage and intensify collective efforts to address bottlenecks such as limited reliable data on child marriage and cultural norms that promote the practice.

Speaking at YPM forum in Bakau, Abdou Jatta , Chairperson, the Day of the African Child (DAC) 2015 National Steering Committee, said the day is celebrated on the 16th of June every year since 1991, when it was first initiated by the Organisation of the African Unity, now the African Union. "This day honours those who participated in the Soweto uprising in 1976 in South Africa when thousands of black school children took to the streets in a match past more than half a mile long, to protest the inferior quality of their education and demand their rights to be taught in their own language".

On that day, he went on hundreds of young boys and girls were shot down, and in the two weeks of protest that followed, more than a hundred people were killed and more than a thousand were injured. "This has however served to highlight issues affecting the lives of children and young people around the world, therefore child marriage is a human right violation which exposes millions of girls to the risk of physical and psychological trauma".

Commenting on the issue of child marriage in The Gambia, Jatta cited UNICEF's global figures, which indicated that in 2010 over 64 million women aged 20 to 24 were married before the age of 18yrs in The Gambia and that in the same year about one in five young women ages 15-19 years were married while 46.5 percent and 8.6 of women were married before their 18th and 15th birthday. However, he noted, with the intervention of the Government of The Gambia through the Social Welfare and Women's Bureau gains have been made to reduce the incidence of child marriage and other harmful cultural practices in The Gambia.

"As a result of these interventions, prevalence of child marriage decreased from 46.5 percent in 2010, as national partners have joined forces and formed a steering committee to plan and implement

various advocacy activities for this year of the African Child, as its includes stakeholders, religious leaders, media campaign advocacy on child marriage”.

For her part, Awa Jobe, from UNICEF, child marriage causes damage to the little girls, saying that early sexual intercourse is very bad to the health of those children.

She assured government of UNDP's full support to end early child marriage and described this year's theme as very important.

Ebrima Njie, Deputy Director at the Department of Information Service, assured of the media full participation in the fight to end child early marriage with accurate information to the general public especially to those who practise it in their various communities especially in the provincial villages.

Amie Kujabi of Child Protection Alliance (CPA) assured that her office is also well engaged in the protection of children in the country. Other speakers at the ceremony included representatives from Child fund, Action Aid, and Social Welfare.

<http://standard.gm/site/news/7446-YPM-launch-media-campaign-for-girls.html>

<http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/unicef-ypm-train-youth-on-communication-skills>