

## MEDIA RELEASE

### School's Newsletter Seen as Tool For Human Rights Advocacy

**Georgetown, Guyana, September 20, 2007 UNICEF** -- Some forty-eight secondary school students across Regions 5 and 6, in East and West Berbice and Mahaicony are now better equipped in the skill of newsletter production, following a two day workshop hosted by the United Nations Children Fund [UNICEF] in collaboration with the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) and the Ministry of Education.

The workshop, which was held in New Amsterdam, Berbice was aimed to introduce secondary school students to the utilization of school's newsletter as a tool for Human Rights advocacy.

Speaking at the opening ceremony last Thursday, UNICEF Communication Officer Ms Leslyn Thompson said the training would be used as a spring board by the learning institutions, to equip the students and teachers with the essential skills in production of newsletters.

She said that the entire process would enable schools to become media houses, with their own instruments advocating for the rights of students and young people. *"Young people have tremendous capacity to become advocates for their rights. In order to build your capacity to be protagonists in this process, we are encouraging you to use your ability to express your thoughts on issues, using various media, like the newsletter, radio, television and the internet", she said..*

Students attending the seminar, were drawn from eight schools namely Mahaicony , Bush Lot , Fort Wellington, Rosignol Secondary schools in Region Five, and Berbice High, New Amsterdam Multilateral, J.C Chandisingh, and Tutorial Academy in Region Six, all in the secondary level. The student were accompanied by their respective Language/Information Technology teachers, and were all exposed to mini lectures by facilitators Karen Davis, who dealt with writing and editing, Jonelle Dummett who lectured on the use of television and computers and Robert Sam who addressed the issue of production of the newsletters.

Following lectures, which were conducted in an interactive environment, the students, some of whom had stayed overnight, created sample newsletters which were presented and assessed by the facilitators. At the conclusion of the workshop, students shared various views of the programme which they collectively agreed was an 'eye opener' for them, and expressed gratitude to the sponsors.

Nikasssi De Andrade of Tutorial Academy said she is more knowledgeable of the Rights of the Child, in addition of the definition of hard and soft news. Fellow student Danielle Sardinha of Mahaicony Secondary , was so impressed with the workshop that, she is planning a career in journalism, while Shemron Vyphius of Bush Lot Secondary learnt how to create appropriate headlines , and conduct accurate investigations. Another participant Naomi Christie of New Amsterdam Multilateral said the information received would enhance her knowledge, as she has learnt news values. The six former is of the opinion that with the newsletter the voices of youth will be heard creating an impact in their respective schools.

## MEDIA RELEASE

Meanwhile Saraswattie Arikin of Rosignol Secondary was grateful for the exposure in Desktop Publishing and Jeetendra Bhudial of J.C Chandisingh she learnt how to ask the right questions to access information.

Their other colleagues Avinash Rabindranauth of Berbice High School and Talica Bristol of Fort Wellington Secondary, learnt how to interact with the new friends, while also learning about their concerns at their schools and how to store and produce information respectively.

The Newsletter production project began last year with students from two schools in Region 2, Abramszuill and Aurora secondary on the Essequibo Coast and two schools in Region 4, Annandale Secondary and The President's College and saw the production of the first set of news letters for each school. The programme will be expanded to include schools in the other geographic regions of the country.

Among those attending the opening ceremony was Headmistress of the Tutorial Academy Ms Janice John, who also represented the Regional Education Officer. Ms Shirley Ferguson, Coordinator, of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child also addressed the participants.

### **About UNICEF**

*UNICEF is on the ground in 155 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.*

### **For more information:**

**Mr. Johannes Wedenig, Representative, Guyana , Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname**

**Tel. 623 7056; 592 226 7083; 227 3662; 225 9993**

**Fax: 592 226 5894**

**e-mail: [jwedenig@unicef.org](mailto:jwedenig@unicef.org)**

**Leslyn Thompson, Communication Officer**

