

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Stories, Our Voices

Girls to produce own documentaries for television broadcast

February 2006 – UNICEF, The National Prosecuting Authority and the South African Broadcasting Corporation have announced a new project to train and empower 45 young girls between the ages of 14 to 18 in life skills and the production of a documentary television series on violence against children, that is expected to reach some 2 million viewers when it is broadcast later this year.

The project was launched at the Sitenghi film and television market by Macharia Kamau, UNICEF Representative, Mvuso Mbele, SABC's Chief Executive, Content Hub and Cheryl Gillwald, South Africa's Deputy Minister of Correctional Services.

The young people have already begun workshops to prepare them for their new tasks on the exciting co-production of the nine-part reality series, as agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and the SABC signed at Sitenghi.

Informed by South Africa's strategy to combat the serious escalation in gender-based violence against women and children, the documentaries to be made by the young people hope to draw attention to the scale, scope and complexities of the crisis. In addition, story lines will go beyond the doom and gloom of the issue by showcasing good practices emerging from communities, children and young people in combating violence and abuse.

The documentaries will also give voice to and provide a channel for communication to those most vulnerable and will represent a call to action for all stakeholders to strengthen service delivery and prevention initiatives to children and families.

Because of the dearth of skills in highly technical fields such as film and television production, particularly in relation to the girl child, serious attention is being given to the design and

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structure of the training program to enable the participants to produce high quality air worthy programmes.

In the next phase of the activity, the girls will be trained in TV production (story telling, camera and sound work, etc). It will begin in all nine provinces in March, and continue for 6 days during school holidays. At the end of the training, the participants, some of whom are survivors of violence and abuse themselves, will make 9 one hour shows in their voice and from their own perspective.

Shooting will begin in June and July; while post production will take place in mid-August and end in October. The programs will go to air from the middle of November 2006, during the annual observance of 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children.

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