

What young people are saying... “Media: Market, Audience and Values”

The driving force is profit, thus young people are left in a world of uncertainties as they try to seek an identity in a world filled with controversy...if young people are given a chance to say, edit, censor and produce what they want then we will say we have impacted on the media. At the end of it all we shall have given one of the rights a chance: The right to participate in matters that affect us.

boy, 18, Kenya

Over 300 young people from around the world joined in the second week of Voices of Youth's 4th World Summit on Media e-dialogues to discuss the theme “Media: Market, Audience and Values”.

“Media is motivated by money Children are motivated by curiosity”

Young people feel the media is overly influenced by a drive for profit. As a result, media professionals tend not to take into consideration the impact programming decisions can have on children.

“Don't shun real life issues, deal with them”

Children and adolescents feel that as a consequence of the preoccupation with finances, the media does not give enough attention to real world issues impacting, and relevant to, young people. By providing information and acting as a window to the world and its issues, the media can make a substantive contribution to adolescent development and to the growth of young people into leaders. The media can also help raise awareness among decision makers who might also forget that “*we are the future...*”

“Take responsibility for your impact”

The media has an enormous impact on young people. Children and adolescents emulate what they see and hear, and turn to the media for help in understanding who they are – and who they have the potential to become. As such, the media should be cognizant of the impact too much violence and sex can have on its young viewers, especially in countries with high youth unemployment and few opportunities: “*Media violence is one issue where by young people here [in Kenya] tend to be high adopters, especially now that jobs are hard to get and idling is high...*”(girl, >21, Kenya)

“Parents should watch what their kids watch”

In a world where the media is not always driven by the best interest of the child, parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring their children's exposure to the media. Guardians should lobby for more responsible programming, but to do this effectively, they need to partner with young people to accurately advocate for what young people feel is the best balance of entertainment and education in the media.

Young people as partners

Young people are the key to identifying programming that simultaneously appeals to youth and is profitable. They ask for a voice in programming and policies decisions as they are both educated consumers and effective media makers. **They ask Summit delegates to partner with them to find concrete suggestions substantive youth participation.**

UNICEF's interactive websites, Voices of Youth (www.unicef.org/voy/) and MAGIC (www.unicef.org/magic/), jointly hosted four weeks of e-discussions for young people globally in preparation for the 4th World Summit on Media. This is the summary of what was discussed.