

#Defyhatenow Drills Journalists On Conflict Sensitive Reporting

By Clextus Abong

Some twenty five media practitioners drawn from Limbe, Tiko, Buea and Kumba have successfully undergone a 3 day workshop aimed at drilling them with knowledge on the benefits and risks involved in functioning media and the role of professional journalism in terms of conflict resolution as well as filtering hate speech given that journalists can provoke or prevent violence arising from a conflict situation.

Organised by #defyhatenow in partnership with Africa Knowledge and Policy Center – AKPC, and in collaboration with UNESCO, under the theme “catalyzing the media for peace and justice”, the 25 journalists during the three days had intense exchanges with the experts on the subject matter.

According to the organizers, the choice of the theme is motivated by the role news media plays in “influencing” and “controlling” crisis situation in every society through their reporting as they can easily inform, educate and mobilise civic engagement toward a #HateFreeCameroon, as well reach their target audience, far easily than one-on-one campaign can do.

It is worth nothing since the escalation of the Anglophone crisis, journalists and media organs in the country have been accused of fanning hatred and division, as well as promoting a climate of fear, suspicion, and hopelessness in the arm conflict.



SW Media Practitioners Pose For Family Photo During Workshop

The workshop that took place at the Seme Beach Hotel from June 24-26, 2021 was an opportunity for these media practitioners to sharpen their skills on conflict sensitive reporting in a crisis ridden region embattled by the ongoing war conflict between government forces and pro-independence fighters.

According to Eugene Nforngwa of the Africa Knowledge and Policy Centre, AKPC conflict sensitive reporting goes far beyond mere principles of objectivity, impartiality and fair balance.

To him, conflict sensitive reporting is all about truth and accuracy, with emphasis on reporting only what happened.

During the training that took the form of an exchange of ideas between the experts and the reporters, the media men and women were cautioned to think beyond the fact of the story and its impact in a conflict situation.

In this light, they were called to use their tools as journalists to create change in the society by understanding the basic standards of journalism which centred on accuracy, truth, objectivity, fairness and be responsible in order to protect the vulnerable (women and children) in a war situation.

Blaise Abong on his presentation on fact-checking, hate speech and peace convergence, told the journalists to always provide accuracy and unbiased analysis of statements made in public in order to correct misperceptions and increase knowledge of important issues as fact-checking contribute to peace by correcting misinformation.

Discussions were equally based on the detrimental effects of hate speech to the society. Being a phenomenon that promotes violence and violations by reinforcing false beliefs about others, directing anger and blame at certain groups and pitting them against each other, the media men and women were urged to promote peace by filtering hate speech in their report ing.

To Hague Ndi the Project Manager of UNESCO for Central Africa hate speech could be detrimental to the society and the living together and harmony of people in the country.

“We all had the memories of the Rwandan genocide which was triggered and felt by people behind the radio”, he mentioned.

According to Desmond Ngala, from DefyHateNow West and Central Africa, the mentorship workshop is the first in a series of three workshops to hold between June and August 2021, targeting journalists serving English speaking audiences, mostly hit by the Anglophone crisis. This he said is part of the organizations move to build pacesetters of conflict sensitive reporting.

Children MPs Task Govt To End Of War In NW/SW

By Elias Ngalame

Children parliamentarians have called on government to end the war in the NW/SW as well as the surging violence in schools.

The 180 children parliamentarians who took part in the 22nd session of the children's Parliament at the National Assembly this Saturday June 26 2021 passed their message across during a question and answer session with some members of government.

The 2021 session convened at a time when the country is worried against ongoing killings in the NW/SW regions and about the surging level of violence meted on children and the growing social violence portrayed on social media, did not leave the children indifferent of the realities of their country.

« We are really disturbed by the ongoing unrest and killings in the two Anglophone regions and have called for an

end to the war » says Jaques Brian Ayuk from the South West Region who also wondered what meaningful efforts are being made to fight violence against the girl child.

« The war has kept many children wondering in the streets and out of school » she told the minister of education.

Government however assured them that everything was being done to bring the unrest in the two regions under control.

Hon. Cavaye Yeguie Djibril, Speaker of the National Assembly who chaired the session called on all government departments engaged in social activities to strongly intensify the fight against violence on youths.

For Social Affairs Minister, Pauline Irene Nguene « it is more important to build a strong coalition to fight violence against children in Cameroon.

Members of government were very open to

the varied questions posed by the children.

Questions also came from children parliamentarians of the Centre region who were participating from the Yaoundé Conference Centre and those from the other regions participating via video conference.

Minister Marie Therese Abena Ondoa of Women's Empowerment and Family said the ministry is creating awareness among parents and the educational community to educate children at a tender level on the dangers of violence.

When asked about the falling rate of education of children in the minority groups of the Northern regions such as the Mbororo, the Ministry of Basic Education said they are carrying out educational programs to raise awareness on the importance of education in these communities.

