

LEVERAGING ON THE POWER OF MEDIA TO PROMOTE ECD IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

*SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT*

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TAJ PAMODZI HOTEL – LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

Henry Kabwe

Executive Director – Media Network on Child Rights and Development
(MNCRD)

Chairperson – Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC)

INTRODUCTION

- Media plays a crosscutting role in its duty to inform, educate and entertain
- Without media, there would be no governance or interventions
- Thus, media covers all the components of ECD and promotes integration when the media players are empowered do to so
- Advocacy about policy should be accompanied by awareness for citizens to place demand; justice should be seen to be done

BACKGROUND TO THE ZAMBIAN EXPERIENCE

- In Zambia, the provision of ECCDE/ECD/ECE was mainly through the private sector which was guided by pre-independence legal systems
- In 2008, the government was formed by a political party that elaborated access to ECCDE/ECE in its manifesto
- It promised to “provide and facilitate early childhood education centers and teachers in all local government wards in Zambia”
- Directorate of ECE, harmonized curriculum and centers in various primary schools opened
- However, media in Zambia is hugely politicized and civil society in ECD do not know how to engage them though some improvements are there

BACKGROUND TO THE ZAMBIAN EXPERIENCE, CONT'D

- As the world establishes itself in the information age, media is increasingly becoming a dependable source of information, education and entertainment
- The introduction of digital media has further broken physical barriers that analogue media was affected by
- In order to contribute to improved access to ECE, MNCRD, as a member of the ECCDE thematic committee of ZANEC partnered with the Ministry of (Education) to sensitize people on the importance of ECE through bus campaigns, ran radio shows, has produced a documentary, which was aired on TV stations and is working on producing IRI with DODE (EBS)

BACKGROUND TO THE ZAMBIAN EXPERIENCE, CONT'D

- From 2012, media, civil society (ZANEC), musicians mobilized to conduct sensitization, (district levels) and advocacy (national)
- Courtesy calls where made to government officials, traditional leaders, local government officials and district education senior most staff before public shows
- Journalists covered the shows; CSOs spoke to government, traditional leaders, general public and on local radio/television (programs); musicians entertained and spread messages during public rallies;
- Commitment cards shared with all target groups, including policymakers, for their pledge to support ECDE

BACKGROUND TO THE ZAMBIAN EXPERIENCE, CONT'D

- Apart from the radio shows that were done alongside the bus campaigns, a number of radio shows were done on Radio Two, Radio One and Radio Phoenix
- Radio Two targeted the people that understand English but are spread across the nation
- Radio One targeted people in remote areas that may not understand English
- Radio Phoenix targeted people in cities where decision makers are found
- There was an overwhelming response particularly with Radio One where out of 21 programs, over 100 calls would be recorded for a 40 minute program

RESULTS

- Increase in coverage in print and electronic media has resulted in increased awareness; relationships created between ECD actors and media
- Over 1,000 signed the commitment cards handed to the Ministry of General Education
- Coordinated civil society to ensure continuously pressuring government through media (enhanced relationships between media and CSOs)
- Campaigns contributed to the increase in demand, access and budgetary allocations to ECE – it is a topical issue

RESULTS, CONT'D

- The media has been able to influence people's attitudes and actions
- The media has reached the most vulnerable sectors of society with ECE messages through local languages
- Buy-in from MPs to enable rural children to connect to radio through national coverage(planned private members' motion
- Further engagements with the Ministry of Education for the production of Interactive Radio Instructions/IRI
- Sustained reminders/interactions with government to fulfil promises (accountability)

LESSONS LEARNT

- Mass movements can move politicians to fulfill their promises
- Use of local languages on through radio and public forums can create a mass of supporters that can demand for services and move policymakers to act on their promises
- Two tier approach – messages/channels for duty bearers (advocacy); messages/channels for rights holders (awareness)
- Civil society dealing in development issues should compete for space in media
- Education gets less attention because of less publicity of its importance (Compare with health)

NEXT STEPS

- Promotion of EBS Radio to cover the whole country (MPs already engaged)
- Provincial media bus campaigns
- Calls for financial increased support to ECD
- Translation of lessons to cover all the main languages in Zambia
- Mobilization of media players to promote ECD

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Galvanizing media, civil society, government, musicians, drama groups to engage the public to ensure that they understood the messages from different perspectives
- This was done after capacity development for the partners involved to speak with one voice
- Evidence, non-provocative approaches can make technocrats work with CSOs to place demand on politicians
- Use of correct messages for particular audiences (demographics)
- Communication strategy is key to achieving results

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONT'D

- Social media is a platform where political players can be engaged
- Produce newsworthy press statements
- Use of global media can only be possible if we engaged global leaders (sources, newsmakers) – prominence
- Form media networks within countries to promote child rights especially ECD
- BUDGET, BUDGET, BUDGET

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Holy writ says:
- “How can they hear if they are not preached to?”
- We say, “How can they use the nurturing care framework if it is only shared amongst ourselves?”

- A people informed is a people reformed and a people not informed is a people deformed

Obrigado
Merci beaucoup
Asante
Thank you