

LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION FOR AFRICAN GIRL- CHILD AND WOMEN

Report Of Awareness And Mentoring Programme

Title: Catch Them Young!

Venue: Ronik International School Hall, Lagos, Nigeria.

Date of Event: October 27, 2015.

Over the years, a lot of attention had been given to the teenage girl- child and their life issues. Much support had been given to transform them and make them better persons. However, not much support had been given to them in their early childhood stage and that could be one of the reasons for the challenges some of them are facing. We had a meeting with our young girls within the ages of 6 and 11, although the boys within these ages' categories were present as well. We didn't reject anyone in our programme because we believe information gives knowledge and knowledge can be strength to some people. If the boys would create awareness on behalf of the girls and the issues militating against the girl-child are reduced or completely eradicated, we would appreciate that. The programme revealed so much and we realised that it would be good to start early with them as this would support them in many areas.

The programme was organised by Leadership Foundation For African Girl – Child and Women in collaboration with the Parents' Teachers Association (P.T.A) of Ronik International Schools, Lagos, Nigeria. The Executive Director of this Non- Governmental Organisation, Mrs. Viola Okoro, addressed the children on what they were expected to do during the programme period and the benefits of the programme. She emphasised so much on how their sincere contribution can support other children through the Foundation's platform. The children set the ball rolling by performing activities such as dance and drama. Attendance was well over 280 pupils, excluding the teachers and facilitators of the programme.

The programme was mainly focussed on creating awareness on child abuse and building self- esteem. The children were mentored on forms of child abuse, how to identify an abused person and the support to give at the moment before informing appropriate person or authority and how to handle the situation, the appropriate authority to call and the role of parents, teachers, guardians and leaders, among others in giving support to person in such situations.

The role of self- perception which has to do with self- esteem was also emphasised for them to be able to take decision that can promote them in life. We also discussed those who could abuse a child which led to their own input during the programme and it became an interactive session during which we got more of them talking.

To assess their level of assimilation, a Question & Answer session was introduced as well. To get their full attention, active prizes were introduced and given to the most active participants. We were amazed at the level of information these children had access to. They had a lot of questions to ask in order to have a proper understanding of child abuse and other life-related issues and it appeared the appropriate people were yet to be found or maybe they were not sure of who to meet for appropriate information.

The teachers were not left out in our mentoring session as they were able to learn something new from the programme and acknowledged the programme as worthy of repeat. The programme came to an end after all the questions were answered and explained to them. It is worth noting that schools, parents and organisations, among others that have something to do with children should consider this programme with any appropriate authority of their choice. It was real fun with them!

In conclusion, we are appealing to any change-maker to catch them young, may be it would help us to actualise our goals in developing them on time so that their output would be maximised especially, the girl-child who has a lot of challenges to face before becoming an adult. Thank you!