

PRESS RELEASE

MEDIA ENCOURAGED TO ADVOCATE OVC ISSUES

Arusha – January 20th, 2015

Media in Tanzania have been encouraged to advocate issues relating to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). Addressing the participants from various media in Arusha during a media workshop on OVC & CHILD RIGHTS ADVOCACY conducted by The Foundation For Tomorrow (TFFT), the Country Director of TFFT, Mr. Kennedy Oulu said the problem of OVC in Tanzania is complex, so the Media should play its role on making these issues and problems surrounding OVCs known so that the community and every stakeholder can participate effectively to address them.

“Currently, it is estimated that there are 1,800,000 OVC in Tanzania (conservative), while among them, 1,300,000 were orphaned as result of HIV/AIDS. The breakdown in traditional family and community structures of support is just one of the contributors of this complex problem. When added to poverty which manifest itself into: lack of access to education services including early childhood education, lack of access to health services and products including sexual and reproductive health, absence of life skills reflected in school curriculum that does not have the requisite capacity and innovations to build such capacity in children, let alone OVC,” said Mr. Oulu. He added

“It is important to note though that there are pockets of good practices and success that have so far been achieved by different players including government in enabling access, building livelihoods of OVC families and influencing attitudes against OVC in communities and thus presenting a foundation for a sustainable response.”

On its part, The Foundation For Tomorrow has been addressing the problem in a number of ways. The organization is applying holistic approaches that reduce OVC vulnerability through household economic strengthening for very poor



households, providing scholarship to ensure access to education, providing health insurance for OVC scholars, building capacity of teachers to enhance teaching and learning in schools, and mainstreaming life skills through curriculum based interventions.

Mr. Oulu said these initiatives plus the voices of OVC should be made known. “The challenges of OVC and their perspectives will help us understand what the best approaches to secure their lives are. These will also help us recognize that ultimately we are all responsible for changing the framing of OVC from wretchedness to understanding that causes of such situations and circumstances are the problems we deal with across Tanzania: health, poverty, education, livelihoods and access to opportunities thereof.”

It should be framed that such situations must be seen as transient when initiatives that are coordinated, build wealth among poor households, enables access to assets and secure rights and child protection, especially with a guarantee of quality education and their active engagement is important for eliminating this problem.

Mr. Oulu further said, “Investigative journalism and objective reporting of issues, solutions, good practices and failed initiatives will therefore help the community understand how best to support, respond and sustain efforts and opportunities to move OVC and their households out of their predicament. Let it be shown that the OVC and the careers/households have the biggest step to make.”

In line with this, the facilitator of the workshop, Mr. Augustine Zacharia advised the media to also observe how the information they publish in media affects these children positively or negatively. Issues relating to OVC should be addressed in a manner that build them up and in a perspective that seeks to address or solve the problem. Though there is freedom of sharing information, but the way the information is shared should first consider that children rights are not violated.



ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR TOMORROW.

The Foundation For Tomorrow envisions a world where orphans and vulnerable children contribute to society as active and empowered citizens free of exclusion, disadvantage, and vulnerability. The NGO's mission is to secure quality education and emotional support for orphaned and vulnerable children so that they may reach their full potential and thrive in their communities.