**Day of the African child**

Abandoned. Neglected. Endangered and almost forgotten ‘boy child’ can now have his smile back thanks to Polycom Development Project (PDP), A community based non profit making organization empowering adolescent girls within Kibera informal settlement to realize their full potential. To be in tandem with this year’s theme for The International Day of The African Child, “Leave No Child Behind in Development,” We are celebrating over 4000 children who have benefitted from our programme in the last three months, and we felt that we should invite boys as well to celebrate with us’. Said Jane Anyango, Founder of Polycom Development Project at Lutheran church grounds, Kibera, Nairobi. ‘We mainly work with adolescent girls, but we are happy to have you (boys) on board’. Added the Kenyan Ambassador Female Wave of Change. In as much as PDP is based in Kibera informal settlement, it also works in Kawangware, Kiambiu, Mathare and Mukuru slums. Currently, PDP is the sole convener of Urban Thinkers Campus, which brings different actors together to discuss the ‘City We Need’ and security is top on their agenda. In recent times, Polycom Development Project has participated in two major events, World Urban Forum and Commission on Status of Women (CSW) in Malaysia and New York respectively. Polycom Development Project continues to touch and transform lives of many a girl. Through its G-Pende Programme, PDP has rolled out activities on Hygiene and sanitation, Educate Her, Sports and Talking Boxes, a concept where girls share their problems anonymously, which has brought to the fore some of the most frightening incidents that girls undergo in the hands of their care givers. In a choral verse dubbed ‘Confusion’ by Raila Educational Centre- fathers, teachers, pastors and generally all men stand indicted of rape, defilement, incest, gender based violence and transmission of STIs and HIV/AIDS to innocent girls. ‘Men have lost their control. Chicken, goats and cows are not safe either’ girls warned on renewed immorality. Determined to succeed where many have failed, Jane Anyango has partnered with UNFPA and reached out to 50 schools within her catchment area. In addition, she has formed 5 organized groups that are engaging young women on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), life skills, HIV/AIDS and gender based violence. Through UNFPA support, Polycom Development Project has been able to publish a book, The Power of Love, a collection of real life stories as seen through the lenses of Kibera school girls. It captures poetic descriptions of love, and how the girls are overcoming the challenges and optimizing limited opportunities available to realize their full potential. The highly successful event was presided over by founder, Kenya Medical Women Association, Dr. Christine Sadia, an orphan brought up by church but has broken the ceiling to be where she is today. In fact, she has championed the struggle that has changed the narrative of women enrollment in Med School. ‘In 1983 when we formed our association, there were few girls than boys enrolling for medicine and our objective was to reverse those statistics, and I am now able to report that out of all the medical schools that we have in the nation, 52 percent are women and only 48 are men’, Dr. Sadia said. She however went on to urge all the concerned authorities to relook at the issues of the ‘boy child’ through male engagement partnerships to achieve gender parity. The June 16th Day of The African Child is celebrated continentally in commemoration of the bloody ‘Soweto Uprising, where students holding peaceful demonstrations were descended upon by armed police by then Apartheid South African government in 1971, leading to several fatalities and severe injuries. Decades later, that painful incident continues to prick the Black Consciousness and invokes memories of untold suffering meted on The African Child. If marking it will bring some reparations, restitutions or some form of closure to that injustice and address the plight of The African Child, so be it. If you have an event and need sound, videography, photography, stage and live stream services kindly inbox