

Barcelona, 28 July 2011 - The right to read and write is one of the priorities the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) has closest to its heart. Being able to read and write empowers AMWCY's grassroots associations to duly interact with the outside world. In order to teach children these essential abilities in life, mechanisms are put in place in 22 African countries.

With the permission of parents and guardians, children attend classes on Friday and Saturdays or Sundays.

Before lessons begin, participant WCY associations are provided with the necessary material such as exercise books, pens, pencils, bags and text books to motivate attendance. Premises where lessons are taught are provided through local partnerships. In Ghana, for instance, the local WCY reached an agreement with a local School Principal who offered his school classrooms for these special lessons.

This simple programme, in turn, motivates those WCY youth who have successfully completed their basic education as they are the ones conducting the lectures and teaching their peers to read and write.

Results so far are remarkable with the majority of participants having considerably improved their ability to read and write.

These basic literacy lessons are addressed to children and youth of all ages and the WCY has already taken the necessary steps to enroll about 290 school-age WCY in next year's academic course, due to start in September.

***Black Panthers encourage ☐ in Nairobi***

Following a technical support visit from the representatives of the AMWCY in 2010, a Nairobi-based WCY created the Black Panthers Group to fight illiteracy and ignorance and teach children and youth about their rights. Black Panthers helps young children by encouraging them and providing the social and financial support they need for their businesses. Furthermore, the Group also carries out drug-prevention initiatives in an attempt to keep children away from substance abuse and live a healthy life.

In addition to empowering children, the group also works on raising awareness within families and the community that children should be looked after and be cared for.

On their visit, AMWCY representatives brought professionals from different trades to help local children explore their potential and talents.

Since the group was born, 35 children (21 boys and 14 girls) aged 14 to 24 have been recruited, some of whom are in school and some others work in barbershops, transport or are shop-assistants.

With the support of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth, the Black Panthers are working on producing a song on the 12 WCY rights that is expected to be released in December this year.

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