

Children's and Young People's Media in Africa: Evolving Markets, Producers and Audiences

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Conference organised by the Africa Media Centre, Arab Media Centre, Media Policy Group, Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), University of Westminster, UK

Date: 11-12 March 2011

It is widely believed that the mass media have taken over the role of storytelling, something which traditionally was performed by grandmothers and grandfathers in most of Africa. If so, who today are storytellers in Africa? What stories do they tell, when, where and with what effect to children and young people? The answers to these questions are not clearly established because there is currently not much information about how children and young people in Africa are targeted by the mass media. This is a call for papers for a conference on production and reception strategies for children's and young people's media in Africa. Papers are invited on media in the whole continent of Africa: north, south, east and west, whether individual countries, groups of countries or the regions of North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The conference will focus on how children and young people engage with the mass media on a continent where there is still a strong traditional culture and where media choices are often limited. Television, music, film, radio and newspapers, books and more recently, internet and mobile phones, have helped children and young people enjoy their right to entertainment. Every year many children's media and related initiatives emerge but this also opens many social, cultural and economic questions about the production and distribution of the content. The mass media reflect and affect social change in and of the media for children and young people in Africa.

Across Africa, attempts to produce media more suitable for children and young people have not always succeeded. Equally important are the growing debates about how children and young people in Africa are influenced by what they receive. African mass media for children and young people are seen as necessary, but also as spheres of great concern. That media for children and young people use both local and foreign formats, languages and styles also raises many questions.

The conference will feature panel debates by invited industry practitioners, educationists and policy-makers. Some sessions will be devoted to presentation of academic research. The organisers also plan to include some screenings of prize-winning broadcast material. By bringing scholars together with executives and experts from all parts of the children's media landscape, the conference aims to explore, among other things.

Papers may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Production of mass media for children and young people in Africa
- Storytelling for children in African media
- Formats and themes adopted by African broadcasters Funding and its implications for media content
- Children and young people's music in African media
- African children and young people's books and magazines
- Interactive and other digital media and their reception by children and young people in Africa?

Please e-mail your 200-word abstract to Helen Cohen at: journalism@westminster.ac.uk

All submissions must include the title of the conference, the suggested topic, an abstract and should list the author's full name, with contact information and affiliation. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 5 November 2010 and those whose abstracts are accepted will be notified by 5 December 2010.

Conference Fees:

- Unwaged/Students: £40
- Waged/Non-Students: £100

Fees cover registration, conference pack, lunch, coffee/tea and wine reception

Background to the Event:

The conference reflects three specialist areas of research being developed within the University of Westminster's Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), namely Africa media, Arab media and the ecology of media production for children. In its 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, the UK's Higher Education Funding Council ranked CAMRI as the best media and communication research centre in the country, with all of its submissions rated as being of international standard, including 60 per cent classified as 'world leading' and a further 30 per cent as 'internationally excellent'.

CAMRI runs numerous international conferences every year. In September 2008 it held a conference on "Making Television for Young Children: Future Prospects and Issues". In March 2009 it held another on "Arab and African Audiences: Shared Agendas for Research" and "Racism, Ethnicity and the Media in Africa" was the topic for the annual African media event in 2010. Strong interest in the recent Arab Media Centre conference on Children's TV in the Arab World (June 2010) has prompted us to create a slot for papers and screenings related to North Africa in the coming African Media Centre event.

Conference Team: Winston Mano, Naomi Sakr, Jeanette Steemers, Tarik Sabry, Jane Thorburn, Maria Way, Colin Sparks, Helen Cohen, Peter Goodwin and Brilliant Mhlanga