



RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF YOUTHS, FAMILY AND SOCIETY - THE MILLENNIAL'S RESPONSE

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Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (FACH) Nigeria.

Overview

According to the African Youth Charter, a youth is defined as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years. In Nigeria, it is estimated that about 50% of its population are youths.

Youths form an important part of the society, and are important to the continued existence of society. Youths are the future of every society, the source of its workforce, economic and social development. They are future leaders, with a few already occupying positions of leadership. A great deal of the future of a society is dependent on the values the youths have inculcated and these in turn will positively or negatively impact on society.

Youths are largely in the self-discovery phase of their life and are seeking to find a voice for themselves, seeking self-dependence and self-sufficiency. They are eager to explore and learn. Due to this, they can be motivated easily by the right approaches. It is important to note the role peers have in influencing their fellow youths. Youths get inspired when they see other youths doing amazing things and it spurs them to act.

Youths as a resource

Youths are a valuable resource for any society and a lot of focus should be given to their development, especially by creating opportunities for them to act and decide on matters affecting them and society. Youths should be recognised, heard and empowered with life skills to help them navigate life and its challenges.

Opportunities that cater for their basic welfare, as well as professional growth is very important to the self-actualization for youths, which is linked to the success of their immediate society.

Access to skills, information and networks is very important to equip youths and they are eager to belong to the organizations where the above listed tools can be provided. Youths are also willing to use their talents, skills and voice for a cause they are passionate about. They seek organizations and groups where they can lead and use their talents. This is very valuable for organizations as they can inspire youths to raise awareness on issues and mobilize other youths to join their cause of interest.

Problems the youths face

Today's youths irrespective of their talents and skills have to navigate a variety of issues in life. Such issues include:

- Discordant Homes
- Drugs/Alcohol Abuse
- Materialism and Relativism
- Unemployment/Poverty
- Decline in Values

- Sex, Gender issues, Promiscuity and Abortion
- Marriage Decisions
- Family and Marital Difficulties
- Misguided Information on Love and Relationships
- Peer Pressure

These issues threaten the future of our youths and endanger our society.

Impacting the youths

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for youths to create impact, ten suggestions were given. They include:

- Know your rights
- Learn local issues
- Speak out
- Network
- Spread the word
- Join online campaigns
- Host a youth summit
- Use your creativity
- Join/Create a Youth Organization
- Be an inspiration

With these in mind, certain strategies that provide opportunities for youths in line with the suggestions above will be a way to impact the youths.

Other strategies can include

- A mentor-friendship relationship with other adults.
- Use of peer influence to facilitate peer to peer discussions
- Influencing educators can in turn influence the youths
- Education and Empowerment of the family
- Influencing the Media as youths are largely influenced by TV, Music, Internet and Social Media.

FACH's approach to impact the youths

Foundation For African Cultural Heritage (FACH) is committed to promoting African Cultural Values, especially Pro-Family values. Youths belong to families and would eventually form families of theirs in the future. Thus, it is imperative that FACH must give focus to impacting the youths.

FACH also cultivate and utilize the skills and talents of youths in promoting values. Involving more youths in FACH will ensure the continuity of our work in the future and safeguard the values we are committed to protect.

Strategies FACH adopts to exert impact include:

- Yearly Youth Conference
- FACH Youth and Teenage Arms within the organisation through volunteerism and other programmes

- FACH Youth Fellowship Programmes
- Youth and Teen Academy

Proposed International Youth Conference

A youth conference is proposed to address issues related to **Love, Media and Family**. Love, Media and Family was chosen because these topics always attract youths. This can serve as a medium to kick start the FACH Youth Fellowship Programme. The Youth Conference is proposed to hold in Lagos and Enugu. Proposed dates are; **Lagos: January 23 - 24, 2019 and Enugu: January 29 - 30, 2019**. The theme of this conference is **Responding To The Challenges of Youths, Family and Society - The Millennial's Response**.

Objectives

1. To address issues affecting youths related to Love, Media and Family
2. To create awareness on the existence of FACH and other likeminded Partners
3. To connect with possible FACH youth influencers, volunteers and collaborators
4. To collaborate with the government and policy makers in matters affecting the youth

Target Audience

Youths between the ages of 18 to 35 years are invited to attend the conference for free

Proposed Activities

Activities need to be engaging from start to finish. Speakers will include public figures such as Celebrities, On-Air Personality or Successful individuals.

It is important to have a mix of older adults and youths as speakers from other African countries and beyond.

Youth influencers (young people with a track record of working on pro-family issues like starting an organization, volunteering etc.) with values that are synonymous to FACH will be invited to speak, especially on their work in order to be a source of inspiration.

Panels and Question & Answer sessions will be allowed together with short presentations.

Use of videos in presentations will be highly encouraged.

Collaboration with likeminded Partners

- FACH seeks to collaborate with likeminded partners or groups during this conference to promote values that will help the youths in their personal development and society building. Such values include service,



integrity, courage, resilience, generosity etc. all of which will prepare them to have leadership skills and values.

Taking all the above into consideration, a list of suggested topics for the conference include:

- The Millennial Love Experience in the context of dignity of the human person (Short Presentation and Panel Session)
- Families as models for positive national transformation and bedrock of society
- Internet Dating: Misguided Information on Love and Relationships; Peer Pressure (Short Presentation)
- Listening to the voice of the youth in decision making
- Emerging youth leaders
- Media and Society (Short Presentation)
- Utilizing Media for Social Good (Panel Discussion)
- The Culture of Death - An Attack on the Family
- Let us talk Sex and Sexuality (Panel Discussion)
- Feedback - A Young Person's Perspective on the ills of Abortion (Panel Discussion)
- Youth volunteering experience/opportunities
- Entrepreneurship : Being a role model for the Millennials in the context of Unemployment; Poverty and Decline in Values
- Take a Stand - Action Plan for the Youths (Panel Discussion on the way forward; discussing values, virtues and practical ways to work on the various discussions shared during the course of the event)

Conclusion

FACH plays a very vital role in safeguarding values in our society and wants to involve the youths in the safeguarding of values and speaking out for the protection of pro-family and pro-life values. We would be glad to have a partnership with your organization.

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