

# ‘Sahara Group and I Have a Mission to Empower the African Girl-Child’

*Sahara Group is partnering with Zuriel Oduwole, a young film maker and avowed girl-child empowerment advocate to promote girl-child education & gender equality*

LAGOS, LAGOS, NIGERIA, January 12, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With 28 million girls between the ages of about six and 15 out of school in Africa, a wind of empowerment would do girls on the continent a world of good. Leading African and energy conglomerate, Sahara Group is partnering with Zuriel Oduwole, a young film maker and avowed girl-child empowerment advocate to promote girl-child education and gender equality. This partnership is being implemented under Sahara Group’s Grooming Film Extrapreneurs initiative; the target being to empower 90 girls in three African countries- Nigeria, Ghana and Cote D’Ivoire in the art of film making. Peter Uzoho was there



What would you say are the most pressing issues the girl-child of today has to contend with particularly with respect to what you have discovered from your trips to various African nations?

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Ultimately, the goal is to give these girls who are mostly from underserved communities the power, skills and platform to tell their stories and make a living through film making.”

*Zuriel Oduwole, DUSUSU Foundation*

Okay, first, their society doesn’t think they are equal to boys, or can do what boys do, so it means they have to fight every day once they wake up till they go to bed, just from that alone. If that is already a fight, then everything else is a struggle. That’s so sad, and unfair.

How would you rate the progress made with respect to the SDGs that speak to the girl-child?

For me, I think a lot of work needs to be done. Just like the example I gave above. It would mean the SDG’s have to change the mind set of people, and that is very hard to do. I

met President Salva Kiir because South Sudan has one of the highest rates of Girls Marriage in Africa. Eventually, he said he would speak to the Elders once he gets back home. It’s hard to change peoples’ mind-sets.

Who are your role models and how have they influenced your work?

My mom first, because she is a very strong woman, and she works full time, and still has time to do some of our home school work with us. That's so cool.

What is the focus of your partnership with Sahara Foundation?

I like that they see some value in what I am doing with Girls Education all across the world, and just like the African proverb, if you want to go fast, go alone, and if you want to go far, go together. I think I have gone very fast in the last five years, since I started my project at age 10. Sahara has shown they are serious about Girls Education, so it's easy for me to create a partnership, so we can do more together, for Girls Education in Africa, and also around the world. That

would be so cool to do. Through the partnership with Sahara Foundation, we will be empowering young ladies in Nigeria, Ghana and Cote d' Ivoire who will be guided and mentored to create replicas of themselves for greater impact. Ultimately, the goal is to give these girls who are mostly from underserved communities the power, skills and platform to tell their stories and make a living through film making. The training sessions are scheduled to run from January 5-17 across the three locations.

How would you describe the importance of the project for the girl-child especially in Africa?

They are running in a race with one leg, when the boys are running with two legs. So, I really think it is important that we create opportunities so girls can run with both legs too. That's how important the project is. It is expected that the Grooming Film Extrapreneurs Season II themed 'Empowering the Girl-child in Africa' will be provide a unique opportunity for the 90 girls in the three selected African countries and more importantly equip them with film making skills which have been partly responsible for thrusting me into global limelight.

What outcomes are you looking forward to achieving with Sahara Foundation on this project?

For us to reach more people and let them, especially girls, know that they can do and achieve anything, and I mean anything they want to do or achieve. It is so possible. I am doing some cool stuff, and I am only 15. At least all those magazines and TV shows think I am. I believe so too. People believe more when they see things, instead of when people just tell them.

Sustainability of any project is vital for continued impact. What is the plan for ensuring the girls empowered by the project are monitored and mentored for long-term impact?

Firstly, the progress of the beneficiaries and conversations will be driven through the through the Sahara Hub via a dedicated #saharazuriel which will be synonymous to SDGS 4 and 5. This will also allow them to continue learning a little more about film making. Secondly, we will encourage them to



In line with our commitment to sustainable development, Sahara Group will be partnering with Zuriel Oduwole's DUSUSU Foundation to empower girls in the art of film making.

Schedule:  
Nigeria: January 8th-9th  
Ghana: January 11th-12th  
Cote d'Ivoire: January 15th-16th

#SaharaZuriel90  
#GirlFilmMakers  
#AVoiceForTheGirlChild



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form a small support group for each other on social media, and I can reach out to them on specific times and schedules, to see how they are doing, and share ideas and solutions to any challenges they have.

If there was one outcome you could achieve from this partnership with Sahara Foundation, what would it be?

It would be to encourage more corporations around the world to create partnerships with small groups; so many more people can be reached to empower people to be self-employed, instead of waiting for people to employ them, especially in this new economy of e-commerce and digital media and the green economy happening from now too.

You have interviewed over 24 presidents and other distinguished personalities. How has this shaped your opinion about the world? Does this give you hopes for girls around the world?

First, it lets me know how difficult it is to be President of any country. So like Nigeria, there are 180 million opinions, so that's a difficult start already for the President. Sadly, Girls have never been priority for many governments, so me talking to the Presidents is making a difference in places like Tanzania and Namibia and Cape Verde, and hopefully, Nigeria soon too.

Your work with the United Nations is somewhat demanding for a young teen. Are there times when you feel like giving up?

No way. Instead, I want people in the UN to decide faster so I can do more. They take too long, but I'm glad they listen to my ideas, and take me very seriously. I really like that.

How do you cope with managing your foundation, school and growing up?

By praying a lot and asking for wisdom, and by surrounding myself with people who believe in me, starting with my parents. I am so grateful.

What are your targets for the New Year?

Doing a little bit more, than I did last year, and asking the Lord for the wisdom to accomplish it.

Source: ThisDay Live

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