

Promoting Children's Rights Through the New Media: The Nigerian Experience

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ABSTRACT The mass media has been used extensively for promoting child rights and development agenda in Nigeria largely through media advocacy and public sensitisation campaigns. However, the emergence of the new media has heralded new opportunities for expanding media mobilisation for child development interventions in the country. Using a human rights analytical perspective, the paper argues that the new media holds considerable prospects for empowering young people to becoming informed and active advocates of their rights while reducing the tokenism that has characterised their engagement in child rights advocacy programming. Deployed appropriately, new media tools are essential in promoting access to, and utilisation of key health and social services needed for the fulfilment of children rights. But other experts have cautioned against 'cyber utopianism and internet-centricism' in relation to the role of new media in social and political development. The new media also comes with considerable challenges especially related to some of their dysfunctional effects which need further research and analysis. The paper proposes a symbiotic relationship between the 'new' and the 'old' media in dealing with entrenched forms of child rights violations in order to achieve cultural, systemic and policy changes needed for maximum realisation of children's rights.