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**Gambia: LRR Stakeholders Capacitated On Child Protection Issues**

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By Salifu .m .touray in Lrr

At least 60 stakeholders drawn from various conventional and Arabic schools within the Lower River Region were recently trained on Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children at the Trans-Gambia Lodge in Pakalinding Village.

Organised by Child Protection Alliance with support from Save the Children International, the four-day sensitisation forum attracted headmasters, teachers, school Cluster Monitors and members of School Management Committee in the Region.

The awareness forum is part of CPA's programme of activities to promote positive discipline in everyday parenting as well as promote positive discipline in everyday teaching of children in schools across The Gambia.

In his introductory remarks, Lamin Fatty, a programme officer at the Child Protection Alliance, stated that the objective of the interface was meant to improve and create a better understanding of participants on matters relating to child rights concerns and to encourage professionalism in care of children in our communities and the Gambia in particular.

"I must also say that this gathering today is also part of CPA's wider efforts to strengthen child protection services at regional level because together we can ensure and make our communities are free of violence against Children. Physical and humiliating punishment has negative impacts and consequence on the welfare of Child and that cannot be justify, thus the need for us all to be aware that such act or practice violates human rights," he said.

He added; "Since all of you present here are stakeholders working in communities and come into direct contact with children on daily basis, we deem it important to organise this awareness forum on Child Rights and Child Protection so that together we can make a difference in the life of children," he stated.

For his part, Njundu Drammeh, the National Coordinator the Child Protection Alliance, underscored the importance of the forum, saying issues relating to the protection of children is of national interest.

According to him, the move forms part of the country's obligation in adhering to international legal instruments and standard practices.

"We as a country must do it and in doing so we must also do it right collectively. We are here not to teach because we are not teachers; rather we are here to discuss issues relating to child rights and child protection," he added.

Drammeh reminded participants that The Gambia like other nations are signatory to many international protocols, citing the Convention on the Rights of Children and that of the African Chartered, which all recognise the rights of the child to be respect for his or her human dignity, physical integrity and equal protection under the law among a host of others.

Ebrima Keita, a participant at the forum from Region Four Educational directorate in Mansakonko, thanked CPA and partners for the initiative.

Keita described the awareness forum as important and thus urged fellow participants to make the best use of the forum.

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