

Cracking it on the air!

The 'Teen Express' youth radio show at the Radio Atlantis community station scooped an exclusive interview with Orlando Bloom and won the grand prize of the 2013's Unicef and Unilever Young Reporters' Challenge. By Nelia Vivier.

Conducting a live studio interview with Unicef goodwill ambassador Orlando Bloom is one of many highlights young reporters at Radio Atlantis listeners station get to share with their community. As news gatherers and story tellers, the Teen Express team produces weekly inserts, broadcast on Saturday mornings.

"On Monday, Wednesday and Thursday I go to Radio Atlantis when school gets out," blogs* 17-year old Monique Hansen of Proteus Technical High School. "My spirit lifts up, because I'm around all these great guys who come up with creative ideas that we can use to produce our show and broadcast them."

"I love being a part of Teen Express because there are issues young people are facing in our community that we can't ignore any more. Our show gets young and old people to do something, with us, and try to find solutions together."

One of 14 youth radio teams based at community radio stations countrywide, Teen Express uses their weekly slot to tell their generation's stories. They share their own and others' views on issues like gender-based violence in their community and substance abuse. They also renew hope and instil confidence, spreading positive messages about problems faced and overcome.

Involving more than 200 reporters in community radio stations, The Young Reporters Network initiative is a national effort between Unicef, the Children's Radio Foundation and the Department of Basic Education. It gives an authentic voice to almost 40 per cent of the population whose youthful voices are rarely heard or listened to in their own words or language.

The young reporters do the research, writing and production of their stories. Mentored by community radio facilitators, they receive training by interviewing their peers, public and experts. Other specialised techniques include the production of various radio formats such as vox pops and profiles, recording, editing and presenting.



Photo by Antoinette Engel.

They are also encouraged to reach out to their communities. One example is Teen Express advocating for the lifesaving message of hand-washing in preventing disease (this year alone half a million children will die due to deaths that could have been prevented) for which they won the trophy for the 2013 Unicef and Unilever Young Reporters Challenge.

- With 68 projects in five countries in Africa 1300 youth radio reporters broadcast in 25 languages and reach over seven million listeners every week.

**Read Monique's blog post at childrensradiofoundation.org/category/inside-the-studio/a-day-in-the-life/ Share in broadcasts and stories on soundcloud.com/childrensradiofoundation and visit childrensradiofoundation.org, visit facebook.com/childrensradiofoundation and unicef.org/southafrica*



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