

Hello, a festival for and by the people



With the aim to inform, inspire, mobilize and educate community members involved in the arts, the fourth Hello Community Arts Development Programme and Festival was hosted at the Breytenbach Theatre from 16 to 26 August 2017. For many artists, this platform gave them the opportunity to be on a professionally equipped stage in front of an audience for the very first time. DWR Distribution and the SOS Charity fund were proud to stand alongside this heartening festival.



“Hello” is the vision of Hardus Koekemoer and Wandile Mgcodo, educators at the Department of Entertainment Technology at the Tshwane University of Technology. They believe that the arts can change society and contribute towards democracy, and this year opened the gates to not only include the community of Tshwane, but any artistic group within Gauteng.



Wandile Mgcodo

“We were presented with vast talent around Gauteng, and with the introduction of a poetry evening added to the theatre and music productions, we gained a new audience,” explained Wandile Mgcodo. “My highlight is always seeing the groups performing on a professional stage, for which to some, it’s the first time. Of course, we can’t forget the students, who are so passionate that you sometimes forget about all other problems.”



While funds remain a huge challenge, the show went on. Previous government sponsorship has come to a halt. That aside, the Tshwane University of Technology, DWR Distribution and the radio broadcaster 93.6 Tshwane FM, have continued to invest in the project.

“For the students, the Community Arts Development Programme and Festival offers an experimental learning experience outside the box,” said Wandile. “The community groups, on the other hand, appreciate the opportunity given to them. To grow the festival, our plan is to involve more stakeholders in the art fraternity and put more efforts in marketing the project in order to attract more artists and to enlarge the audience.”



Duncan Riley of DWR and the SOS believes it's very important to give back. “So many individuals in our industry went through the doors of Tshwane University of Technology,” said Duncan. “I feel it's important to support Hardus and Wandile who are instilling a passion for the arts and a platform to express it.”

With various art forms on stage, the festival ended with the popular musical production Gug'Othandayo, conceptualized by Gogos (grandmothers) who tell a story of their lives and the issues that come their way.



Hardus Koekemoer assisting students at the start of the festival.

“Thank you to DWR Distribution and the SOS Charity Fund to help us fulfil this great vision,” ended Wandile. “The funds donated assisted with the technical support and covered both the transport costs and logistics of the grandmothers who performed in the production Gug'Othandanyo. I would also like to thank all the groups involved, the students, the Tshwane University of Technology and our partners for your assistance with “Hello”,

a festival for and by the community.”

