

Bakwena's Drama for Change project aimed at youth along its routes

Learners from 17 schools in communities' close to the N1N4 route explored the dangers associated with social challenges (drugs, alcohol, peer pressure, teenage pregnancy) as part of Bakwena Platinum Corridor Concessionaire's Drama for Change initiative.

Now in its fifth year, this highly successful educational drama project culminated in two final events in September. The first event saw schools from Madibeng and Kgetlengrivier perform their plays at the Borolelo Community Hall in Swartruggens. At the second event, schools in Dinokana and Zeerust gathered at Shalimar Park in Ramotshere Moiloa to conduct their performances.

Charmaine van Wyk, Public Relations manager at Bakwena says the campaign provides a platform for young people to convey powerful social messages through dramatic enactments at their schools and in their communities. "The main objective of the campaign is to engage youth in discussions about the risks related to social challenges, as well as the importance of making responsible decisions while still young."

Bakwena collaborated with Rare Arts Productions to provide the drama training and peer education, thereby empowering learners to identify the most pressing social issues that affect young people in their communities.

This year, the Drama Pioneers, who had previously been involved in the drama project, assisted with arranging drama workshops for the learners as well as providing peer education and drama skills. Mentorship was provided by Monde Mayephu of Rare Arts Productions.

The learners rose to the occasion and the major themes of plays included sexual abuse, children abuse, crime, teenage pregnancy and human trafficking.

Adjudicators from the Department of Arts and Culture selected the best performances of the day. At the Swartruggens event, Swartruggens Intermediate was the overall winner, with Reebone coming in as runner-up for the second consecutive year. In Zeerust, Zeerust Hoerskool walked off with the winning trophy and Ngotwane was runner-up.

Best individual performances were also recognised. Tshepang Chapman from Ikageleng Secondary, Lethabo Tabane from Zeerust Hoerskool, Moatshe Keskese from Reebone and Omphemetse Ithhabanyeng from Swartruggens Intermedia received trophies for their outstanding performance.

Participating schools included Michael Modisakeng, Mogale, Johane Mokolobetsi, St Teresa, Machadam Combined, Moedwil, Reebone, Swartruggens Intermediate, Thuto ke Maatla, Ramatu, Ikageleng, NR Mandela, Zeerust Combined, Ngotwane, Zeerust Hoërskool, Ramotshere and Ntebogang.

Van Wyk says the teams involved in the project will conduct outreach initiatives in their communities to convey their messages. “Bakwena Drama for Change is a powerful initiative that allows young people to explore the issues that affect them most in a deeply personal way. Our greatest desire is that the project encourages young people to make affirming decisions about their lives rather than self-destructive ones.

“It must also be said that the performances by learners were insightful and thought provoking. They highlighted the many issues that South Africa’s youth need to deal with. I raise my hat to the schools and their talented young actors and actresses, as well as all the people who helped to make the project a success,” concludes van Wyk.