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**REPORT OF THE FINAL PHASE OF THE
PERFORMANCE PROGRAM OF
“NAKAI” THE GLOBAL MERCURY
AWARENESS PLAY.**

FINAL REPORT

**By
Cont Mhlanga**

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Introduction

After a long and painful 3years of a project that was to be done in 8 months, the final phase of the performance program for Global Mercury awareness play, "Nakai" by Tamuka Theatre kicked off on Saturday the 3rd and winded-off on the 6th Wednesday, 2007.

This time one of the main purposes of the performances was to document the program. Amakhosi Theatre brought a crew from Bulawayo to do the filming job. They worked in close collaboration with a team of 5 people from Zimbabwe Panners Association who facilitated and took care of the training component of the global mercury awareness campaign. They talked of creating a safe environment for small scale miners ...including the use of retorts.

The plan was to perform 7 performances and film and document and record at least 5 of the performances as in some cases the geography would be the same and hence the situation not any different.

This was done as a cost saving measure. The full play to be recorded with two cameras as the initial plan was dropped as inflation and availability of cash at banks became a bigger challenge as Zimbabwe's economy got worse towards the end of the year.

Again they were some slight changes in cast composition from what it was during the previous run of the show.

After rehearsals, funds for four performances were handed over to the Director and treasurer of the group.

We dropped out the Media person to write articles for the press as the full training component of the program had been cancelled.

Tamuka's administration as a group needs serious capacity support as the group is surrounded by a high level of administration incompetence that led to actors leaving the show. The group is how ever full of talent and promise.

If this project was contracted directly to the Zimbabwe Panners Association as one partner and Amakhosi as the other the results of the training and the impact of this program would have been a great success that would have exceeded expectations. How ever it became impossible with Harare partners at UZ to bring together the Community Theater and Training component.

We how ever learnt so much from this project that helped us advance the application of Community Theater is Social Action and Development and more so working with UNIDO as a Social Partner. What an experience!

FRIDAY -2/ 11/ 2007 @ Rimuka Hall; Stakeholders meet at Tamuka Theatre's rehearsal venue. Mr. Evans Rudzidvo, President of Zimbabwe Panner's Association introduced his team to the group while Styx Mhlanga did the same with his colleague from Amakhosi. A five day program of action was spelt out to everyone present before embarking on rehearsals of the play.

SATURDAY – 3 /11/ 2007 @ Mperani Mine; The group's first port of call was at Mperani Mine which is located 5 kilometers away from the town centre. A fairly good presentation was put-up in front of a milling plant by the cast and it was enjoyed by a mixed audience of approximately 500 locals. Rudzidvo introduced the team from Amakhosi and the milling plant management to the audience after the show. His colleague Shamu facilitated the post-performance discussion. *See video.*

SUNDAY -4 /11 / 2007@ Rimuka Bus Terminus: On the second day the performance of Nakai took place before a huge audience of over 2000 people. The whole Rimuka Bus Terminus area came to a standstill. We would like to assume that a large number of gold panners watched this show since Rimuka is the heart of township life in Kadoma and Kumboyedza Hotel is the drinking and hanging out spot for panners. It became difficult to carry-out an after performance discussion because of the audience size. We were not prepared for this...we needed a loudspeaker to address the big audience.

MONDAY 5 /11/ 2007@ The Hall; Members of Tamuka and Amakhosi held a meeting to clear up some administration problems that were beginning to affect the moral of some actors. Up to now actors / actresses were not paid for the two performances and did not know what they were due to be paid at the end. This was so despite the fact that the leader of Tamuka and his finance partner had been paid the full contract amount for the shows after the rehearsals and before the shows begun. This created a lot of fears. A resolution was reached and actors were informed what was due to them. Freelance actors were paid after the meeting.

AFTERNOON @ Rio Tinto Mine; The third show was put-up at Rio Tinto Mine that afternoon and a mixed audience of approximately 1500 people watch the play. We learnt from Mr. Rudzidvo that we had visitors / plain cloth police among the audience. Shamu and the team from Zim Panners Association had to take some precaution...they hanged-up the global mercury project banner during the show so as to make clear the intention of the performance.

TUESDAY 6 / 11/ 2007 @ Waverly Business Centre– Our target audience this time was schoolchildren, but because during this time of the year schools are conducting National examinations, therefore we were unable to put –up performances at schools. We opted for a just before lunch show at Waverly Business Centre that is situated some few metres away from both Waverly Primary and Secondary School. When the play started after the ringing of the end of school bell, we had a huge predominantly student audience of approximately 1000 people. Shamu took care of the training aspect at the end of the performance.

AFTERNOON @ Patchway Mine; Ndumiso Ncube, Amakhosi Theatre camera guy requested to be taken to the really site where the gold panners are at work so that he can capture some shots for the video. Rudzidvo proposed the sites in Patchway and Golden Valley that is approximately 20 kilometres away from the town centre. We went there and meet the local leadership who took us around several mining sites. We then carried out interviews with some gold panners.

The Amakhosi security suspicion that is with by the police got into action. I got a call from Police Commanding Mashonaland West requesting me to come and make a POSA security application to run the remaining number of shows. My basis of refusal was that Theater is not under POSA and law allowed us to perform with no police clearance as these were not political rallies. He said if we choose to go on based on those grounds then we are doing this at our own risk.

This was saw because there is now an order from politicians to clamp down on Amakhosi as it attracts large crowds and does plays with strong social and political messages.

I then just felt I would, may be put the team at risk and the police would say we warned you! I did not communicate this to the team on the ground so that this could not cause panic and attract media attention as this was a UNIDO funded project and was not sure on how I would have to deal with that in the Media on their behalf.

I called off the run and closed the project.

Recommendations:

Transport cost;

Due to current fuel problems facing the country, transport cost has become increasingly high. In our performance itinerary we had distant venues such as Venice Mine, Empress Mine, Sanyati, etc. These sites are situated at an average of 25 kilometres away from Kadoma city center. It cost more than one million to transport one actor to and from Kadoma

National tour of Nakai;

I would like to recommend that Zimbabwe Panners Association be given capacity to coordinate a national tour of the play and conduct training sessions for small scale miners in all provinces in the country.

Training in group administration;

I suggest that as part of capacity building Tamuka Theatre be offered training workshops for administration skills. Despite the fact that the group is not bad in performing skills, their administration is in shambles. Their Director wants to do everything and never give some members of the group a chance to make mistakes and learn. As a result, a lot of duties don't get done or there are executed badly. There is a lack of delegation. Theatre is a highly collaborative industry.

Conclusion

I would like to thank GMP for giving us this opportunity and more so Steve for his support and interest in community theater and the well fare of small scale miners.

I will propose that Steve and GMP should access funds to work with the Zimbabwe Panners Association and Amakhosi Theater to make an impact in improving the life of small scale miners at national level minus some of the partners that where in such a project.



Cont Mhlanga
Amakhosi Theater
Bulawayo

Thursday, January 10, 2008