

Theatre4Youth Forum a platform to create dialogue

Approximately 120 artists, educators, government officials, funders as well as other supporting bodies are expected to converge for the ASSITEJ South Africa Theatre4Youth Forum at the Goethe Institute in Johannesburg, on 6 December 2012.

The Theatre4Youth National Forum aims to create an active dialogue between artists, educators, government, funders and other supporting bodies in order to engage in how theatre and the arts can serve and support the education system.

The forum is the first of its kind and intends to bring together all stakeholders to discuss the following topics:

- The actual and possible roles of theatre and the arts in the new national curriculum;
- Educational challenges, needs & possibilities for external support;
- The role of ASSITEJ SA in bridging the gaps between theatre and education;
- Theatre4Youth concept, outcomes and impact;
- Resources needed to implement Theatre4Youth programmes; and
- The potential impact of this programme for the theatre industry at large.

"The forum will pay attention to the needs of educators, learners, theatre companies and artists, as well as to the current obstacles to this engagement," says Yvette Hardie, director of ASSITEJ SA and current president of ASSITEJ International. "This event goes to the heart of what ASSITEJ SA is all about, namely working to ensure that all children have access to the arts."

Forum for success

The Theatre4Youth Forum has generated interest and excitement across many sectors as there is clearly a need to support theatre for young audiences in South Africa. Unless children are given the opportunity to fall in love with the theatre experience, South Africa will have no theatre industry in the future.

"Theatre and dramatic arts offer young people a creative, energetic and imaginative forum for success," says Professor Jonathan Jansen, vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State. "We know from research that not all children do well in the same subject fields. We also know that children who experience success in fields like drama and the arts carry over the confidence gained to other subject areas and we certainly know that children who do well in what excites them become self-assured human beings motivated to participate fully in the lives of communities."

A serious mistake

"One of the serious mistakes we make in our country is to narrow the achievement landscape of children and youth to regulate school subjects like Science and Mathematics, not recognising that there are many other ways in which young people can experience the joy and satisfaction of personal and motivation. We measure test scores in traditional subjects - this is a mistake," says Professor Jansen.

Presentations, workshops and recommendations will be used for on-going research purposes and as a tool for strengthening the concept of theatre as a vehicle of education and training. The report emerging from the Theatre4Youth Forum will be sent to the relevant stakeholders to advocate for policy priorities and implementation strategies.

Those interested to present at or attend the forum can express their interests by completing the online application form at the link go here. The deadline for proposals to present is 15 November 2012.

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