

Press release

Theater show Water4Life emphasises importance of clean water in South Africa

Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 8 October 2019 - In the framework of the Amsterdam International WaterWeek, which will be held from 4 to 8 November 2019, a theatre group from South Africa calls attention to the importance of clean drinking water and sanitation in its homeland. This show is the result of the collaboration between Amsterdam International WaterWeek, Nijhuis Industries, World Waternet and Health Promotion South Africa Trust (HPSA). HPSA's CEO George Arrey even joins the actors!

In Africa there is a rich tradition of storytelling, often including singing and dancing. This inspired the theatre group *Bambisanani* to create the educational play Water4Life. In this short performance the importance of clean drinking water for personal hygiene and health is made clear.

A quarter of the South African population - some five million people - are unemployed and poor. Many of them live in areas where clean drinking water and sanitation facilities are unavailable or inaccessible. This poses an acute health problem for these groups. This is also the case in many other African countries.

Infant mortality due to lack of clean drinking water

We live in 2019, but hundreds of infants and young children still die due to diarrhea infections. These are directly related to lack of clean drinking water and poor sanitation. Improved facilities for clean drinking water and sanitation and access to hygiene and health education would significantly improve the health situation of this vulnerable group.

For many years the South African/ Dutch non-profit organisation Health Promoters has been offering free health and hygiene education in vulnerable communities in and around Cape Town that have few facilities. The results are excellent: participants are queueing up to follow the courses, are positive about what they have learned, put what they have learned into practice and pass on the lifesaving information to future generations.

However, knowledge of health and hygiene is not enough. Health can only be achieved if clean drinking water and good sanitary facilities are available.

The Health Promoters have thought about an effective way to bring this subject to the attention of the local population. Traditionally, information in Africa is mainly shared by storytelling. Therefore, a play about water, sanitation and hygiene was chosen.

Cooperation between the Health Promoters, World Waternet, Amsterdam International WaterWeek and Nijhuis Industries made it possible to invite the theatre company to the Netherlands to draw attention to this urgent problem. Charme Hotels, sponsor of the Health Promoters, provides free shelter for the theatre group.

Water 4 Life

The educational play is called Water 4 Life. The story emphasises how many diseases and deaths are caused by dirty water and inadequate sanitation and how behavioural change can save lives. It comprises themes such as keeping clean water clean, turning dirty water into safe drinking water, saving water, reuse of water and the importance of clean sanitation and other hygiene aspects. The show includes music, dance and humor.

Water 4 Life, which lasts 15 to 20 minutes, was conceived by the South African theatre group *Bambisanani* ("Let's Work Together"), which consists of four artists from Stellenbosch and is complemented by George Arrey, CEO of the Health Promoters.

The familiar setting (townships) and the use of the local language, Xhosa, make the play accessible to the public and makes it more likely that behavioural change will take place within the community.

About Health Promotion South Africa Trust (HPSA)

Still, thousands of people, especially children, die every year from diseases that could have been easily prevented by a good basic hygiene. The Health Promoters give information in the areas of hygiene and health – now including mental health - to local communities in townships in South Africa.

[HPSA earned Barack Obama's presidential endorsement in 2016](#)

[HPSA has been affiliated with the United Nations since May 2019](#)

Note for the editorial board – not for publication

For more information please contact:

Patrick de Leede, Spokesman / Communications Consultant Health Promoters; Founder / Managing Director of Catch of the Day Perception Management BV, tel. +31 (0)6 21 546 995, mail info@catchoftheday.nl

Otto Ferf Jentink, Spokesman Water Waternet, tel. 06 52 480 363, otto.ferf.jentink@waternet.nl

Monique Bekkenutte, Director Koninklijk Nederlands Waternetwerk, tel. 06-31678668 / 070-3222765, monique.bekkenutte@waternetwerk.nl

Menno M. Holterman, CEO Nijhuis Industries, tel. 0314 749012, menno.holterman@nijhuisindustries.com