

DAKKIE YAM STUDIOS

by Azlan Makalima

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Dakkie Yam Studios was formed in August 2013 as one of the Music Art and Entertainment legacy projects, with the vision of an independent label with music playing on national radio stations (e.g. Umhlobo Wenene fm) and to produce high performing talented artists that can be seen by major companies. Part of our vision is to do community outreach in terms of health programmes, education and humanitarian cause.

Dakkie Yam Studios Entertainment is an organization of fourteen young artists from the age of 20 to 28 years, males and females, inter-

acting with Makana artists in general by providing resources and a platform to uplift the performing art and cultural activities. Providing services that will enhance the development of art and culture within the municipality by any means necessary. We saw a need to eradicate the silence during the absence of National Art Festival, in terms of art.

In doing so, we created a platform of self-expression through spoken word and rhythm; we initiated an event named Food For Thought Grahamstown Hip Hop Session every Sunday afternoon to showcase a hip hop and poetry culture within our community. Amongst the



activities we offer, we also provide a sound engineering service in terms of musical art, we compose, record, mix and master music composition. In addition, we also do image and video photography, graphic design creating posters, banners, stickers etc. To even broaden our activities, we consulted the schools and communities to participate in our movement, we created events for beauty contests such as Mr and Miss Fingo, Mr and Miss Jean-Clash of the schools. Where we developed even a larger audience for art and cultural live performances.

With a minimum wage earned from the part-time jobs of our few members, we afforded to sacrifice a little we had to purchase equipment which meet a certain standard of development. A Sound System which consist of a laptop, two dynamic microphones, two speakers and a wheelbarrow for transport kept us going from venue to venue, hiring Municipality Halls or using the streets as a venue. Using the same sound system and adding USB Condenser microphone, one pair of headphones and a personal bedroom, a graphic design and a recording studio was utilized. With the door takes from the shows and a little we earned from the stu-



dio recorded copies, we managed to register as a company and opened a company bank account with no helping hand from any financing institution.

It is after the absence of the National Arts Festival in Makana where the art and culture remained the pride of the town and it was during this period when art and entertainment emerged as a singular unifying factor. Immediately after the 2013 National Arts Festival, each and every space that is, there is a group of youths that is seen recording music with the hope of performing in one of the big events and stages in future. Clearly a new spirit of hope and desire to rise to stardom has emerged among the youth of Makana. Unfortunately, this desire and zeal to conquer and become one of the national artists is not nurtured, supervised and coordinated accordingly.

Dakkie Yam Studios on the other hand was recommended with an aim to play a part in transforming the lives of the community as there are many youths who want to defy the challenges associated with the world of today where unemployment, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS has reduced the youths to level of desperation and thereby losing hope. Many youths have buried their talents and have indulged in drug abuse, gangsterism and banditry. It is in that context that Dakkie Yam Studios was established to deal exactly with that.

Our next aim is to register as a music publisher with South African Music Rights Organization, to help Makana Music composers to earn all of their composition rights from SAMRO and music users. With the Music publishing company within the municipality, Makana music art can reach a standard of works being playlisted on National and Commercial Radio stations, on movies soundtracks, commercial ads etc. We also aim at providing festivals and



workshops on Musical Rights, Music Business, Radio Compiling Consultancies, Quality Music Composing, Recording, Mixing and Mastering, Digital Distribution. A festival where many art and cultural activities take place in an educative manner for the development of Makana Artists in general.

THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANISATION

The enthusiasm for music industry is tremendous and is growing day by day in Grahamstown, hence Dakkie Yam Studios will be an answer in searching and honing the skills of young talent and prepare them for a professional levels.

Dakkie Yam Studios wishes to provide necessary basic skills to the talented local youth of Grahamstown and its major focus will be on:

- Supplementing school and community sports development programmes.
- Preparing youth for better performance.

The organisation will be operated by its members who will be using unique organisation tools

and resources to provide advanced administration, facilitating and project management.

Dakkie Yam Studios is a local music and entertainment organisation, with an aim to play a major role in music and entertainment development. Since music was played in Grahamstown, there has been never sufficient and coordinated training and education of music industry. Searching for an answer to the challenges facing the region, the organisation management came up with an idea of the one stop shop organisation where both development of music and community outreach will be focused at. Through consultation, researching and interviewing artists, this document was compiled and reviewed.

Dakkie Yam Studios assisted by its partners promises to be the prime music industry and community development centre in the district by providing first class programmes in developing youth.

MUSIC

Dakkie Yam Studios will offer an opportunity for maximal development of talent in youth through workshops and nurturing of young talent in music industry. We will engage youth in physical and moral education with a view to reduce crime rate, drug abuse and fight against HIV/AIDS.

The aim is to identify talent in young people and giving them a chance in making a career and to establish exchange visit programmes between the organisation and other institutions. We also want to establish Makana as a heart of music industry in the district.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We are tackling social developmental issues such as health, education, environmental and poverty. Our vision is to provide a platform for Makana Youth to perform on big events and stages in the country and to produce national and international artists. The mission of the organisation is to enrich the youth's quality of life by offering first class education.

CHALLENGES

The organisation cannot execute its planned functions and thereby attain its goals. This is due to financial constraints. On the other hand we lack partners who can join hands with us in changing lives of our youths, we need partners that can join us in changing scars in the eyes of our youth into stars

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Out of the 105 000 population in Grahamstown, a total of 20 000 are at school going age. Most parents of these kids cannot afford to send them to music institutions such as provincial and national academies that specialize on music de-

SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

For the organisation to achieve its objectives and be sustainable, it will have to build on its strengths and enlarging its brand, services, administrators and artists. Many projects in our areas come and go, and this is due to lack of planning and support from relevant stakeholders. To ensure the sustainability of this organisation, the following measures will be taken:

- Monthly reports will be drawn and provided to Makana Arts Council sponsors, donors and partners.
- Close relations to Local Arts Council
- Quarterly newsletter will be provided as to ensure direct accountability to the community.
- Produce policies that will act as a guide for the organisation.

As to ensure that, our plans stay on track, we executive committee will:

- Meet quarterly with partners as to review our aims and objectives.
- The committee will regularly discuss, appraise and suggest improvements to individual steps within the plan.
- In each and every AGM agenda, our business plan will be an item.
- The committee will always measure performance against targets

velopment due to finances, distance and most importantly their ages.

Dakkie Yam Studios would like to work on improving on the basic skills of independent artists as we believe this is an area that has largely been neglected and thereby enhancing artist performance in order for them to achieve requi-

red skills as to address gaps in the development programmes.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The anticipated outcomes of our activities can be noted on various facets as spelt out below; we hope to achieve the following:

- Reveal hidden talents in young people
- Encourage the spirit of competition and self-challenge in all participation.
- Foster friendship ties and encourage national integration.
- Provide stepping stone for our youth to a professional career.
- Instill sense of responsibility and respect to participants.
- Attract national and international major labels.
- Improve in social development

OUR GOAL

Most importantly, getting youth involved in music and entertainment industry pays dividends to the entire community. However, not every parent can afford the expense, it is for that reason this organisation plans to work closely with other institutions (government and non-governmental) to ensure that every kid with the dream taking on music as a career is provided a fair chance and provided a chance to participate regardless of his/her parent's economic means.

Fostering a love for music and entertainment in the community and helping youth with talent development will ensure that our youth does not engage in negative activities such as drug abuse and crime and thereby bring stability in Grahamstown.

