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Culture: Film

Street Kids United: a smash at Berlin film festival

by Speroforum

Monday, February 21, 2011

Street Kids United, a film about the Street Child World Cup premiered to a sell-out audience at the Berlin Film Festival on February 17. An audience of 1000 people attended the special screening and world premiere of this new documentary feature.

The film is an uplifting story of the Umthombo Young Stars – a football team of South African street children representing their country in the inaugural Street Child World Cup in 2010. Directed by award winning filmmaker Tim Pritchard, the documentary explores how a simple sporting event can change lives and raise the hopes of an international group of homeless children.

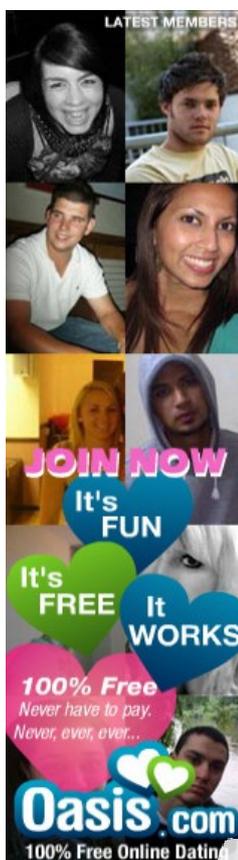
Umthombo football coach Vuyani "Biza" Madolo, who was at the premiere, said: "Our kids need more than fancy footwork to make it through selection. They also have to survive life on the streets."

Street Kids United was screened at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt Kino where Director Tim Pritchard introduced the film to festival goers. Vuyani "Biza" Madolo and Bulelwa Ngantweni-Hewitt, co-founder of Umthombo Street Children, took part in a Q&A following the screening. Both Biza and Bulelwa lived on the streets of South Africa as children. After meeting cinema-goers, Biza commented "I never expected to be signing autographs. I have gone from nothing to something."

One cinema-goer said of the film: "We got a fascinating and moving insight into the Street Child World Cup, and a refreshingly real look at the struggles and the fun of a diverse and characterful group of South African street children. It was great to hear from the kids first hand their thoughts and emotions and to see these children portrayed as individuals rather than as simply numbers in a huge problem."

UK Charity the Amos Trust organised the Street Child World Cup in Durban, South Africa last year. The event was hosted their partner project, Umthombo Street Children. Producers Film and Music Entertainment (F&ME) worked alongside Umthombo and Amos to tell the event's story through the eyes of the host team.

F&ME's Managing Director Mike Downey said: "Football is a truly a globalised phenomenon



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from the glitter and riches of the European leagues to the dreams of children growing up in third world poverty. We hope this film will give a voice to street children all over the world.

Street Child World Cup

In 2010, as South Africa geared up for the World Cup, another football tournament was taking place, away from the glare of the media spotlight and the attentions of big business. The South African city of Durban played host to the first Street Child World Cup bringing together the vulnerable and overlooked – homeless kids from around the world, in search of a better and brighter future. It will take place again in Brazil in 2014 ahead of the FIFA World Cup. It is a joint venture led by Action For Brazil's Children, Amos Trust and Momentum Arts.

Umthombo Street Children is based on Durban, South Africa. They are a partner of The Amos Trust. Umthombo model is pioneering the idea of providing alternatives to street life through engagement and therapeutic interventions, focusing on the traumas associated with the children's experiences. Umthombo has actively been part of the development of a new national policy on street children with the South African Department of Social Development.

Amos Trust is a small UK based charity that promotes human rights and nurtures local responses to injustice. Amos partners Umthombo Street Children in Durban South Africa; community development projects in rural Nicaragua, peace and reconciliation initiatives in Palestine and Israel; and in Tamil Nadu, India, human rights activists who are Dalits (formerly know as 'untouchables'). Amos Trust is based at All Hallows on the Wall Church in the city of London.

For more information see:

<http://www.amostrust.org>

<http://www.umthombo.org>

<http://www.streetchildworldcup.org>

To see a trailer of StreetKids United see: <http://www.vimeo.com/15666328>

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