

# Dynamic new programme on arts for communities

**RISING SUN — SONOPKOMS — LAPHUM'I-LANGA.** The Community Arts Project Arts Festival, 106 Chapel Street, December 1-10.

SINCE 1991 the Community Arts Project has maintained a low profile — which in no way means they've shut up shop. To the contrary. A dynamic new programme is in progress; there are plans for exciting projects; and community involvement is stronger than ever — though in a somewhat altered form. It's to celebrate all this and more that CAP will be hosting an arts festival from today until December 10.

For co-ordinator Zayd Minty and his helpers the past two years has been a time for much soul-searching. With insufficient money or facilities to continue functioning as in the past (no more township art classes for kids, for instance) they had to accept that the curriculum required a more practical orientation.

At the same time there was a desire to provide for community needs and to use art in ways that

would affect and change society. A tall order for an impoverished community centre!

Under the new curriculum energies are now concentrated towards those who want to earn a living through art, as well as on training teachers who will return to their communities and pass on skills and knowledge. To this end Action Research educational programmes (discovery in process) are proving effective tools.

## Innovation

An innovation is the course on basic skills for child educators. This year CAP has already trained 60 people to return to their communities and pass on new skills.

Theatre — in mutated form — plays an important role in the new curriculum. This is theatre that considers communication and information (such as Aids, business skills, issues affecting women) to be more important than performance as an aesthetic activity — for now, at least. Simba Pemhenayi is the theatre co-ordinator. He comes from Zimbabwe where it is common for groups to put on plays dealing with social issues.

Spin-offs have been commissions from companies to present theme shows for staff. And they also get a lot of requests for murals. NedBank, for example, recently commissioned CAP to paint a new firescreen for the Nico.

Such commissions are consistent with the CAPS principle of "learning through doing".

□ There will be a discussion forum today at 5.30pm with the Arts and Culture Development Network and National Arts Coalition. Panelists will speak on the topic: "We asked for a ministry of arts and culture. Well, how's it doing!"

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