

## INTRODUCTION TO AMAC

In 2004, twenty-seven years since the formation of the Community Arts Project (CAP) and the subsequent separation of its offspring, Mediaworks, in 1996, the two organisations have made a historic decision to join forces once again to form the Arts and Media Access Centre (AMAC), based in Cape Town's inner-city central improvement district.

### Mission

AMAC is committed to promoting media and cultural diversity in South Africa. This is achieved by providing training and production opportunities in the related media and arts disciplines, to marginalised communities in and around Cape Town, as tools for personal and community empowerment.

Widely acknowledged as a centre of excellence in the field of culture, communication and development, AMAC seeks to build the capacity of other emerging community media and arts centers nationally, with a special focus on the Northern (N), Western (W) and Eastern Cape (E).

### Purpose

- ◊ To create access to skills development and employment in the media, visual and performing arts for previously disadvantaged individuals.
- ◊ To promote media and cultural diversity through support to emerging community media and arts organisations throughout the N, W & E Cape.
- ◊ To build the communications capacity of NGO's to use media and art as instruments for social change.
- ◊ To provide citizens access to the arts and media as a means of promoting citizen participation in community and public life.

### Services

- ◊ **Education and training**, including hands-on production experience and media literacy/cultural studies.
- ◊ **Access to equipment and facilities** under professional mentorship to

- ◊ encourage media and arts production, distribution and income generation.
- ◊ **Support services**, including technical support, organizational development, SMME support, training referrals, job and internship placements and career counselling.
- ◊ Professional **communications services** including, DTP, graphic design, copywriting and editing, web page development, print management and communications consultancy services.

### Some Achievements

- ◊ In 1998 CAP was the first to win the "Cultural Development Organisation of the Year" award, from the Arts and Cultural Trust of the President.
- ◊ In 2003, Mediaworks piloted a Graphic Design Learnership at Level 4 for Create-SA, a partnership between MAPPP-Seta and the Department of Arts and Culture, resulting in organisational accreditation and the accreditation of our core curriculum and trainers.

## PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

### Vocational Programme

The goal of this programme is to promote access to skills development and employment opportunities in the media, visual and performing arts. The programme targets school leavers and unemployed youth who are unable to access work or professional training in the cultural industries. The aim is to facilitate access to further and higher education and/or open career pathways into the industry or independent arts and media production (SMME's). Three key interventions include:

**Foundation Skills Programme:** AMAC offers skills programmes at NQF levels 2-4 in the visual and performing arts including physical theatre, scriptwriting, painting, printmaking and ceramics and a range of media disciplines, including DTP, journalism and photography. Each course recruits up to 20 young people per year. Accreditation for these programmes is currently underway.

**Performing/Visual Arts Professional Development Programme (PDP):** The PDP provides a platform for artists with foundational skills to launch their careers. The aim is to provide access to resources, materials and equipment for the independent production of artworks/theatre with a uniquely South African character. The PDP provides opportunities for mentoring, placements, exposure to artists in residence and experience of mounting exhibitions and touring productions to a range of audiences. Each course recruits up to 15 participants.

**The Job Centre (currently in development):** The Job Centre will offer support to all graduates through career guidance counselling, job and internship placements, further training referrals and SMME information services.

### Production Services

Many learners, once they have graduated, do not have access to production facilities. The Production Services Department provides scheduled access to equipment and facilities in the context of a Digital Access Lab, a Design Studio and Newsroom. Through these opportunities, graduates are in a position to apply and upgrade their skills, produce media/art products and generate an income.

**The Production Studio** offers professional services in design, desktop publishing and print management. The studio takes on interns from the foundation skills programme, giving them valuable professional experience and the opportunity to "earn while you learn".

**The Digital Access Lab** provides access to learners across all programmes to facilities, where they can apply their newly-acquired media and digital arts skills under the mentorship of access lab facilitators. This may include support to emerging community newspapers, CSO's designing a brochure or graduates developing a portfolio, websites or digital art projects.

**The Newsroom** is responsible for the quarterly production of **Just Youth**, a community newspaper produced by and for youth. The newsroom also functions as a news agency, leveraging content produced by learners into the mainstream media.

**Theatre Company in residence:** Currently the 'from the hip: khulumakahle' theatre company is in residence and in return for rehearsal space and infrastructure support, provides input to the Vocational Training performing arts programmes and offers selected graduates internships on an 'earn while you learn' basis.

**Art Studios:** Access is given to emerging and established artists to make use of our painting, printmaking and ceramics studios for either their own projects (on a cost-recovery basis) or teaching/mentoring residences directly feeding into the Vocational programmes.

**Income generation:** We are launching an ambitious archive project which, amongst other things, will give us a range of products- such as posters, T shirts and other memorabilia- for sale at our own premises or through our partners such as D6 and Robben Island Museums.

### Community Arts and Media Programme

The goal of this programme is to promote media and cultural diversity through support to emerging community media and arts initiatives serving the needs of marginalised communities throughout the Northern, Western and Eastern Cape. Target groups include:

**Emerging community media and arts centres:** Interventions are informed by a needs assessment, followed by customised training and support. This usually takes the form of off-site delivery of AMAC's short courses in partnership with

local centres. For emerging centres, AMAC provides capacity-building services, such as participatory planning, research, organizational development and technical support.

**Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):** The aim is to build the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to use media and communications as effective tools for advocacy, marketing and information work. The programme provides customised training on request with follow-up support, including access to facilities for media production and distribution. The programme targets NGOs, CBOs and activist groups in the Northern, Western and Eastern Cape with a special focus on HIV/AIDS and gender issues.

**Schools Media Programme:** The goal of the programme is to provide youth with access to media and communication as a means to promote their participation in school and community life. The programme offers holiday training to young people from previously disadvantaged schools in and around Cape Town followed by Saturday workshops during which learners produce school-based newsletters and contribute to the quarterly edition of Just Youth, a youth newspaper produced by and for youth. AMAC is currently piloting 10 Media Clubs within the schools.

**Prisons Media Programme:** The programme is designed to function as a "demonstration model" with the aim of lobbying the Department of Correctional Services to include media and arts training as an integral aspect of prisoner rehabilitation within South Africa's overcrowded and conflict-ridden prisons. The programme is based on two successful models. At Hawequa (Youth) Correctional Services, media training has been successfully incorporated into the prison based-school curriculum. The Pollsmoor Prison Women's Section boasts its own regular newsletter, produced by and for inmates dealing with prisoners' issues and concerns.

### **Dynamic Periphery**

In addition to our set programmes, AMAC undertakes once off, usually income-generating projects. Current projects or projects in development include:

**The Public Art Project (PaP for the Soul):** A community arts approach to the Expanded Public Works Programme, this project is aimed at skilling emerging community artists and mounting 5 public art installations to promote urban renewal and beautification in communities in and around Cape Town.

**Revolution in Graphics:** The aim of the project is to research, conserve and re-version a collection of images produced by CAP/Mediaworks over 22-years of cultural resistance. The project will result in an archive, a catalogue and a selection of posters and postcards for sale through retail outlets.

**Community Arts Centres Publication:** A publication on the history and current status of community arts centres in South Africa, which would have retention value as a resource for the community arts sector in the future.

## **ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT**

AMAC is registered with the Master of the Supreme Court as a Trust in terms of Section 6 (1) of the Trust Property Control Act of 1998, registration number IT3427/96. The Board of Trustees represents the communities we serve and bring with them the expertise needed for the organisation. Trustees include: Bev Barry, George Bongo, Lucy Alexander, Vuyile Vuyiya, Sedica Davids, Jill Pointer, Yvonne Banning, Mthetheleli Sithole and Gabriel Ergoiti.

AMAC has 20 full-time staff and a pool of freelance trainers. In addition, we work with a large group of South African and international researchers, volunteers and interns each year across all the disciplines and skills areas. The organisation occupies 1,200 square meters of a building owned by the District 6 Museum, which is part of the cultural precinct emerging in the heart of the city centre, close to other important cultural spaces such as the Castle. The building is close to the central train station and the bus/taxi terminus and is easily accessible to participants from outer-lying communities. The building includes a historic church and extensive warehousing space recently renovated to meet our needs.