

## PRESS RELEASE

### **South Africa's youth share visions through film at One Minute Workshop**

*There is laughter and chatter in the dimly lit conference room where a screen displays the title "OneMinuteJr". Lineo Shabalala walks to the front of the room and opens the evening's proceedings with a poem she has written. Her voice is melodious and strong and her words remind all present about the need to be strong and morally true. There are loud cheers as she concludes and all the attention moves to the screen behind her where the first one minute video - written, acted, directed and produced by the young people in the audience – begins.*

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8 April 2009... There were hoots and cheers as children participating in the second One Minute Jr film workshop in Simons Town screened finished products for the first time in front of an important audience of critics – their peers.

The sixteen videos shown on the last day of the One Minute Junior workshop made it hard to believe that only 6 days prior to this evening, none of these young people had ever operated a video camera or explored the skills and techniques of filmmaking.

The short films – one minute in length – focused on food security and agriculture provided insight into the views and beliefs of a generation of young South Africans. Some of the mini productions were thought-provoking and serious; others were equally insightful but sparked laughter and amusement.

The One Minute Jr. is a global foundation which, together with UNICEF, hosts workshops around the world to provide children from impoverished backgrounds the opportunity to explore issues close to their hearts through the medium of film. This was the second One Minute workshop to be held in South Africa. Participants were selected from all around the country and on 3 April, gathered in Simon's Town, Western Cape, to embark on their film adventure.

With guidance from the facilitators, the children learnt how to develop storyboards, use a video camera and to use camera angles to convey emotions. Their videos will be entered into an international One Minute competition in which finalists will fly to Europe for the awards ceremony.

#### **Exploring feelings on social issues through the medium of film**

Responses from the participants reflected personal highlights from the workshop – from the development of story ideas, to directing, acting and working in groups with children from other schools and age groups.

"I enjoyed working with other youngsters, learning how to use a camera, how to shoot video and basics of using camera filming techniques," says Sikelelwa Matwa (17) from Khayelitsha. She described the workshop as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity which has made her consider going into the filming industry. Exploring her feelings on social issues through the medium of film was a challenging which required her to concentrate "hard" during the filming and editing, she said.

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### **Making a film “just the way you want it”**

Agnetha van Syfer (16), from Worcester, enthused about her experience, “Editing is fun, I did it before dinner. I worked with Emile, who helped me to fit everything in. Emile is a great facilitator because he helps you to make your film perfect the way you want it.”

Marthinus Goliath, a school teacher and chaperone during the workshop was equally animated, “I hope the learners will go back into their communities and get them involved in trying to solve problems through this medium and share the knowledge which they have acquired this week.”

“The kids are really great and we have had a lot of fun working with them” said Scott Behr who along with Emile Zile and Merel van t’ Hullenaar, hailing from UNICEF Headquarters and the One Minute Foundation, facilitated the workshop and edited the children’s videos in time for the final evening.

### **Taking the Experience forward**

Once the films and the distribution of certificates were over and the laughter and tears of joy had ceased, Nokuthula Prusent, Programme Officer for Adolescent Development at UNICEF reminded the children that, “The skills you have learnt here will remain with you when you go home. Work hard and look for opportunities to develop your talents and interests further.”

As the group gathered for photographs, there was a breath of sadness in the air as newfound friends prepared to go their separate ways. However, all looked forward to sharing their experiences with their families back home, receiving their videos on DVD in the coming weeks, and perhaps even traveling to the global One Minute Jr competition later this year.

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