

MEMEZA STREET FESTIVAL INVADES HARARE'S FIRST STREET WITH A BANG.

Saturday 20 June saw scores of people coming to witness the maiden edition of Memeza Street Festival which was organised by the Zimbabwe Poets for Human Rights (ZPHR) with support from the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe. Held in First Street Shopping Mall to commemorate the Day of the African child the festival sought to remind people about the plight of the African child who find themselves engulfed in a myriad of social, economic and political problems which could have been avoided if they had been given an opportunity to speak out on issues that affect them and proffer solutions to those problems.

Madiz performing at Memeza Street Festival



Addressing hundreds of people who had come to witness the Memeza Street Festival, the Advocacy Officer of MISA Zimbabwe Mr. Tabani Moyo said “For young people’s voices to be heard there is need to open up the airwaves and other forms of media so that their voices can be amplified and they can speak for themselves, we just need to free the airwaves for the benefit of the African child and the continent at large.” Many a times young people have been spoken for and their participation in decision making processes has been at best minimal as many adults still believe that young people are not mature and are unable to have a reasonable opinion or to make a good decision about what they want.

“As we embark on the constitutional making process in Zimbabwe we saw it fit through Memeza Street Festival to bring young people together so that we could reaffirm what we said through the People’s Charter; that young female and male represent the present and the future of our country and that all those in positions of leadership nationally and locally must remain true to the fact that our country shall be passed on from one generation to the next.” remarked Michael Mabwe the Coordinator of Zimbabwe Poets for Human Rights as he thanked members of the public for showing solidarity to young people’s cause by attending Memeza.

Part of the crowd that thronged First Street for Memeza



The crowd was kept on their feet by different young artists such as Hope and Kakuwe, the sensational Alexio Kawara, John Pfumojena and Munandi band, Madiz, Calabash of the “Sorry ndanga ndakadhakwa fame” and Tru Bantu Crew led by Taku Mafika. Not to be out done where the evergreen Magesh dance group that mesmerized people with their kwaito dances which were complemented by Highfields based Shooting stars dance group. To spice up the show were theatre skits from Street theatre gurus Apiri, Kapfupi and poets such as Mutumwapavi, internationally acclaimed Julius Chingono, Semalo, Flow Child, Godobori and Shoeslambada of the Maoparesoni and Makomishoni jingle.

Alexio Kawara performing in front of a police cabin during Memeza Street Festival



Memeza Street Festival is set to become an annual event and in the long run an international street festival bringing together young artists from different parts of Africa to tell their stories in a language that people will not only understand but enjoy listening to. It will also be an opportunity to examine progress towards health, education, equality and security for all African children and on the implementation of the regional African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Bringing many young people's organisations and organisations working with children and young people to work together and have a multi sector approach to dealing with their issues and thus stay true to the their demands as enshrined in the Zimbabwe People's Charter is the burden which Memeza will carry forward.

ZPHR INFORMATION DEPARTMENT