

## STREETWISE DESIGN

THE YOUR STREET CHALLENGE AIMS TO BRING DESIGN BACK INTO UNDERPRIVILEGED COMMUNITIES THROUGH FORM AND FUNCTION

TEXT HEATHER FORMBY

Interactive Africa launched the Your Street project under the umbrella of the Design Indaba in an effort to introduce design to streets in underprivileged communities. While the Design Indaba is mostly a conference for discussion and ideas and the expo a platform for the local design industry, Your Street is considered to be a vehicle for making a difference in underprivileged communities. "It is important for us to support design in all aspects of our community," says Interactive Africa MD Ravi Naidoo.

For the project, the design community was invited to use creativity and innovation to improve the quality of life in selected streets. "We invited designers to improve domestic happiness at street level," Naidoo says. The projects were evaluated according to criteria such as impact, innovation and international standards of excellence and a winner and three runners-up were chosen. The winner of the competition was the Acre Road project in Kensington, Cape Town which turned a garbage dump into a soccer field and performance space with stadium seating. "In this instance, design was used to empower people," Naidoo says.

The other three projects included: Violets' Walk in Woodstock, a demarcated walking route with resting

benches for the elderly; Urban Mosaic, an aesthetically pleasing way to solve the problem of shack fires by painting shack exteriors with a fire resistant paint; and Let us Grow, an urban farming project supplying fresh produce to urban dwellers while also creating employment.

The prize money for winning the award was R100 000, while the three runners-up each received R50 000, and the money was used to implement the project though the winners were encouraged to raise additional funding. "The Your Street project fulfils Design Indaba's mandate of creative activism," Naidoo says.

Because of the success of the project, it has been extended to other cities and Design Indaba has launched Your Street in KZN and Gauteng. It is also discussing the possibility of introducing the project in Eindhoven in the Netherlands, as well as in cities in the US. Naidoo says the project has received "global renown" and companies like Philips, for example, have agreed to donate street lights to Acre Road. "What started as an idea on a cold winter night in Cape Town, has now received international recognition and is being launched in many places of the world."

Your Street Challenge, [www.designindaba.com/yourstreet](http://www.designindaba.com/yourstreet)



Above: Acre Road community in Cape Town. Hannah Williams, member of the winning team for Your Street CT

## THROUGH A CHILD'S EYE



## SANTAM TASKED WITH TEACHING ART

TEXT HEATHER FORMBY

The Santam Child Art Programme incorporates a national child art competition, informal art classes, an annual art calendar and a web-based exhibition. The main part of the programme is to train art teachers, 90% of whom have had no formal training, to teach art to grade 4 to 6 students. The programme began in the Western Cape and has been extended to Limpopo and the Eastern Cape. So far, 1 435 teachers have attended workshops. It has also been approached by "special needs schools" and is in consultation with KZN schools to roll out programmes in that province during 2012/2013, to around 4 500 teachers.

The teaching programme is held in collaboration with the Ibhathane Project, which conducts the countrywide workshops, held for 10 hours over two Saturdays. Teachers are shown how to teach students some of the projects covered in the schools arts curriculum using mostly recycled material. Local community artists have been trained as facilitators making communities aware of their own artists and providing teaching skills and income for these artists.

Santam believes its contribution is to help government increase the quality of training of teachers, and therefore the



teaching of children. "By training teachers, in partnership with Ibhathane, we enable children to express their creativity," says Santam's Tersia Mdunge. "We would like to be seen as a partner with the Department of Education in developing teachers and education. A lot of other companies lean more towards maths and science skills but we hope we offer an alternative with our focus on the arts."

Mdunge says other elements have developed alongside the arts teaching programme. One of these is the children's art competition that received 6 000 entries this year compared to 3 000 last year. And though the programme has focused mostly on visual arts, Mdunge believes this could be extended to the performing arts such as music. "In the future, we hope to cover all elements of the arts," she says.

Santam Child Art Programme, [www.santamchildart.co.za](http://www.santamchildart.co.za)

Above: Helping the insects by Ker-Hsin Chang (age group 7-8) from Eezet Fourie Art School in Bloemfontein. Left: Arts and culture workshop for teachers



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