

CITY OF BULAWAYO

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

REVIEW OF BULAWAYO ARTS FESTIVAL (BAF) 2023 EDITION

Introduction

On the 2nd of October 2019, Council at its sitting resolved to declare the 1st to the 5th of June the arts festival week. This was done after some lobbying by stakeholders in the creative sector. The objectives of the Bulawayo Arts Festival were to promote the city's arts and heritage. This was also meant to boost the creative industry's economy. This year, the festival was held on the first week of June as scheduled. The festival was a commemoration of the historical importance of Bulawayo Day. This year the festival also included a clean-up campaign, sports gala and craft fair.

Official launch

Stanley hall in Makokoba hosted the official launch of the festival. The hall is a heritage site of strategic significance in the history of the city and nation. The official opening ceremony was preceded by an educational heritage tour of Makokoba. This was done in partnership with Bulawayo Makokoba Township Tourism Trail, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe as well as the Makokoba community. This was meant to promote community development through heritage tourism. Celebrations were marked by entertainment from various groups and council primary schools, that provided gospel and traditional songs as well as contemporary dance and poetry. Key note speakers were lined up to share information including an in-depth history of Makokoba and its contribution to the City of Bulawayo's development. The photograph below shows BAF delegates on tour at Mkambo market in Makokoba en-route to Stanley Hall



Delegates tour Mkambo market in Makokoba

Clean up campaign

The Bulawayo Arts Festival partnered with Little Lambs nursery school, EMA, business community and other stakeholders on a clean-up campaign which was held under the theme “129 Years of a Clean Bulawayo”. The event was capped with a march from City Hall to the National Gallery. The day coincided with the June National Clean-up Day. The objective of the clean-up was to promote and restore the culture of cleanliness in the city as well as to inculcate the culture of cleanliness amongst young children.



Little Lamb Nursery school and other delegates being addressed by the Director of Housing and Community Services at the City hall

Sports gala

A sports gala was held on the 3rd of June at White City stadium. The sporting activities that were undertaken included 5km fun run, netball, volley ball and soccer. The objectives of adding sports to the festival programme were to amplify the point that BAF can be commemorated in other activities besides arts, culture and heritage. Sports carry recreational, economic and healthy values. The main aim of the sports gala was to reach out to young people and discourage social ills such as drug and substance abuse. At the same time the gala encouraged health and fitness as well as social responsibility.

Craft fair

A craft fair spanning two days was held in the form of open market exhibitions. Several individuals and craft producers from the city exhibited their cultural and historical vintage wares. The objective of the craft fair was for creatives to showcase their products. The event was held at the City Hall car park.

The table below shows some of the handcrafts that were on display and craft exhibitors.



Conclusion

This year's festival was a success, although it was at a smaller scale, proportionate to the available resources. The incorporation of a sports gala, craft fair and a clean-up campaign added a unique dimension to the festival. Bulawayo Arts Festival and Council are grateful for the goodwill gesture from the artistes, residents, business community, service providers and other stakeholders who played a part in ensuring that the festival was a success. It is anticipated that future editions of the festival will draw lessons from this year's addition and improve on it.