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# FESTIVAL REPORT



## STORYMOJA HAY FESTIVAL **Nairobi** 1–3 October 2010



IDEAS



MUSIC



EDUCATION

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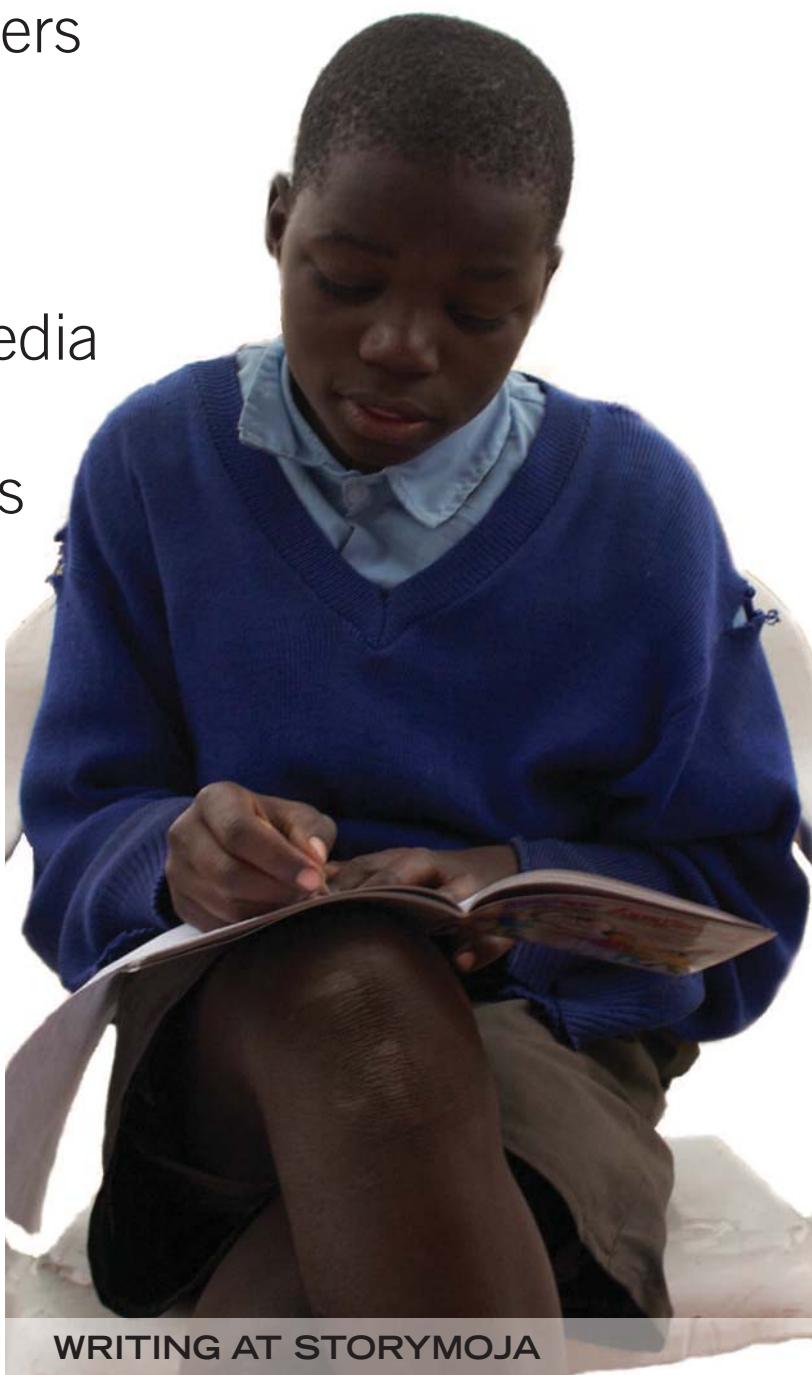
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Thank You



WRITING AT STORYMOJA

# STORYMOJA HAY FESTIVAL NAIROBI 2010

Storymoja Hay Festival is a collaboration between Kenyan publishers, Storymoja and Hay Festival to create a forum for sharing great literature, poetry and ideas in the country's capital, Nairobi.

The Festival took place at the Railways Sports Club in the heart of Nairobi from 1–3 October. This second edition of the festival brought together African writers from Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda, together with writers and film-makers from the USA, Germany, UK, Sweden and France.

The Festival is supported by the British Council, the US Embassy, Africog (Africa Centre for Open Governance), Transparency International, Arts Council of England, Welsh Assembly Government, Alliance Française, Kenya Human Rights Commission, Kenya Library Service and many others.

## ABOUT STORYMOJA

Storymoja is a publishing company based in Nairobi. Five writers, committed to spreading the gospel of reading, writing and ideas formed the company in 2007. Their mission is to get a book in every hand in Kenya. [www.storymojafrica.co.ke](http://www.storymojafrica.co.ke)



AUDIENCE ON SITE

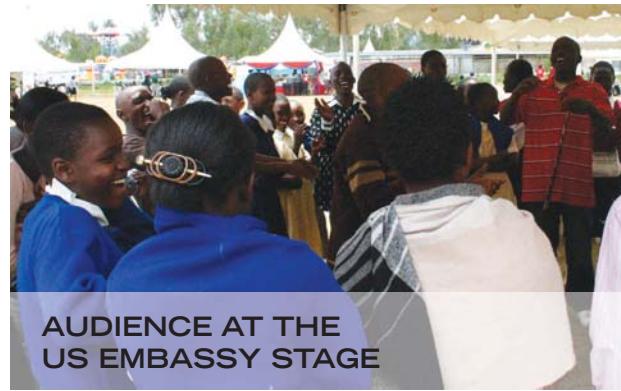


UHURU PARK, NAIROBI, SITE OF THE FESTIVAL

# THE EVENTS

**Benjamin Zephaniah** gave an inspired poetry performance about life as a black person living in the UK and how he made his way from troubled juvenile to acclaimed performance poet in a non-academic environment, breaking down barriers to poetry and reaching a diverse and young new audience in the process.

His life experiences of gang culture were a surprise to some in the audience and it came as a comfort to all to know he was able to find new directions for his energy and charisma, which were close to being channelled in a very different direction. He very quickly became a figure the young people in the audience could identify with and be inspired by.



AUDIENCE AT THE  
US EMBASSY STAGE

The new Kenyan constitution has been received with cautious optimism in Nairobi, and the festival took the opportunity to discuss the legislation with **Ibrahim Mwathane** on land reform and **Kwamchesti Makokha** on future impacts. Politics in Kenya cannot be discussed without mention of political corruption, and **Michela Wrong**'s story of Kenyan whistle-blower John Githongo generated a very lively debate about the impact corruption has on how Kenya operates internally and how it is perceived on an international stage. Michela shared her experiences with Zimbabwean lawyer and writer **Petina Gappah**, whose book *An Elegy for Easterly* describes life during Zimbabwe's own chaotic attempt at land reform and consequent decline, and Kenyan film-maker **Judy Kibinge** on her story of Kenya's other famous whistle blower David Munyakei.



PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP WITH THE KENYA DRAMA COLLECTIVE

**Rob Macaire**, the British High Commissioner to Kenya, chaired a debate with advocate **Ahmednasir Abdullahi** and CEO of Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance **Hassan Ole Naado** on the potential for a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West, examining the lives of Muslims in Britain and those living in Kenya.



TANZANIAN POET  
SANDRA MUSHI

New media and technology are influencing the way we communicate and creating new opportunities for writers to share their work. Writer and journalist **Anita Sethi** is using these new channels to great effect and shared her ideas with an audience of young entrepreneurs on the Creative Enterprise panel, and as chair and judge of the hugely successful Twitter competition that received 26,000 entries.

For children, the festival's **Storyhippo Village** was a sea of colourful costumes and joyful singing. The children created their very own books in two hours with enthusiastic tuition by **Ryan Lewis**, who travelled to Kenya from San Francisco-based 826 National, set up by Dave Eggers.



# STORYTELLING

Storytelling is a vital part of Kenyan culture and Storymoja co-ordinates a Nairobi-wide competition to find the best young storyteller. The competition heats were held in 40 colleges and universities in Nairobi; over 350 students participated in the preliminary rounds and 77 delegates made it into the final events which were programmed over the three days of the festival.

UK storytellers **Katrice Horsley** and **Cat Weatherill** performed, held masterclasses and judged the Storytelling finale for teenagers, with the winner receiving a travel bursary to the USA sponsored by the US Embassy in Kenya.

The festival aims to be a catalyst for debate in Kenya, stimulating a reading culture and bringing great writers to new audiences.



COMPETITION JUDGES

# THE FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS

**3** days

**72** festival events

**130** participating authors

Over **3,000** attendees

**500** students funded by the British Council

**40** colleges competed in the Storytelling competition

**26,000** Twitter competition entries



# THE FESTIVAL IN WORDS

“THE VERY FIRST TIME I ATTENDED the annual Storymoja Hay Festival, I was shocked by the number of people who turned up...many literary minds were present, from poets to publishers and journalists, where they met readers from all age groups and interacted well.”

***Young Nation***



**FACE PAINTING**

“AT THE HAY FEST, WE WERE CHATTIN WIT Kiriamiti (of da life in crime fame) who usedta bust banks wit real kalashnikovz. We hope Lady Muto Garland gets G4s guys and represent’tive rapper-type krappes, Sonko to ‘boost the talk’ next year.”

***Pulse, The Standard***

“I ATTENDED TWO DAYS OF THE STORYMOJA Hay Festival, which is two more than some of y’all, and it was lovely.” ***Nairobi Star***

“THE STORYMOJA HAY FESTIVAL IS A vibrant gathering of passionate people. Whether they are passionate about politics or poetry, social change or storytelling, the audiences engage with full-throated vigour, and the guests and performers cannot help but respond to their joyous energy.”

Performing at this festival was both an honour and an adventure. There is great potential here, backed up by solid commitment from the organising team. There is no shortage of vision and their determination to make it happen is formidable.” ***Cat Weatherill, professional storyteller***



**POSITIVE RESPONSE**



**MUTHONI GARLAND,  
ANITA SETHI AND  
BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH**

# THE FESTIVAL IN THE MEDIA

STORYMOJA HAY FESTIVAL 2010 ACHIEVED A WIDE RANGE of media coverage, including reviews in major magazines, both national and regional newspapers, online and on national and international broadcast media.

## NATIONAL & REGIONAL COVERAGE INCLUDED:

*The Star, The Standard, Daily Nation and the LA Times*

## ONLINE COVERAGE INCLUDED:

Minimum of 2,000 articles/festival mentions on websites, blogs relating to arts and culture, travel and literature as well as social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

## TELEVISION COVERAGE INCLUDED:

Citizen TV, KTN, KBC, K24 (Features & News), GBS (News), Express Media (News)



## RADIO COVERAGE INCLUDED:

BBC Radio, Capital FM, French Radio, Kiss FM (News), Classic FM (News), East FM (News), X FM, Homeboyz Radio, Metro FM (News)

Total advertising value of approx.  
Ksh. 18 Million (£134,000 sterling).



# THE FESTIVAL IN IMAGES



[WWW.HAYFESTIVALSWORLDWIDE.ORG](http://WWW.HAYFESTIVALSWORLDWIDE.ORG)



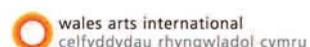
# MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The Hay Festival programme at Storymoja 2010 was supported by:

## GLOBAL PARTNERS



## MAJOR SUPPORTERS



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Tandaa  
Transparency International  
US Embassy  
Wales for Africa  
Welsh Assembly Government

**PHOTOGRAPHY** Densu Moseti; Justin Griffiths Williams; Brian McMorrow

# THANK YOU

