

Muppets take over Morning Live

A new season of the ‘better-than-ever’ popular children’s TV show *Takalani Sesame* has just been launched, and South Africa’s young viewers are in for a treat.

Tuesday, 27 August, saw the usually sedate *Morning Live* studio invaded by lovable muppets Zuzu and Neno, who even managed to get no-nonsense presenter Leanne Manas to crack a few smiles. And with good reason.

The SABC’s Head of TV content, Pontsho Makhetha, was in the studio prior to the launch of a new season of *Takalani Sesame*, which will run for the next five years on SABC television and radio stations. Ms Makhetha echoed the sentiments of all stakeholders in voicing her excitement about the new format of the show.

Once the interview was over, the real fun got underway at the official launch of Season 5. All six muppets were on hand to entertain the audience, which included children from three local schools and representatives from relevant stakeholders, among them Anita Stewart, Senior Vice President of Sesame Workshop, who had flown in from New York for the event.

Wise words

Anne Livingstone, Chief Executive: Sanlam Sky Solutions, spoke for everyone by saying that when an event promotes preschool education, ‘the smiles on our faces should be even bigger, because we all know a solid early foundation in grasping the essential concepts of numeracy, literacy and life skills in the mother tongue is a prerequisite for a life-long learning experience’.

Sanlam has been the main sponsor of the groundbreaking educational TV programme *Takalani Sesame* ever since its inception in 2000.

Marie-Louise Samuels, Director of Early Childhood Development at the Department of Basic Education, heaped praise on the show’s achievements: ‘*Takalani Sesame* supports the aims of the national curriculum and in so doing, assists us in advancing towards our national educational goals for the early childhood sector.’

Statistics show nearly two thirds of all South African children have interacted with *Takalani Sesame* in some way, making it a vital building block in the education of kids who often aren’t able to benefit from attending a formal pre-primary school.

In the words of Anne Livingstone, *Takalani Sesame* has become ‘an unstoppable educational juggernaut that has helped to bring about notable improvements in the education of more than two million South African children in the areas of literacy, health, numeracy and life skills’.

A bright future

Nothing espouses Sanlam’s motto, ‘Thinking Ahead’, more than our investment in *Takalani Sesame* and the children of our nation. What’s more, related platforms such as the Takalani Sesame Club allow Sanlam to reach thousands of children and their parents and teachers – all of whom are potential clients.

A prosperous and educated nation is vital to Sanlam’s future, and what better way to achieve this than through our continued partnership with *Takalani Sesame*? ■



SEASON 5 IN A NUTSHELL

Pulane Boesak of production company Kwasukasukela shared some in-house secrets ...

- The new series will comprise 450 TV shows (in five official languages) and 650 radio shows in nine of SA’s 11 official languages.
- A new segment called ‘Word on the Street’ will focus on one useful vocabulary item per episode.
- Regular strands featuring celebrities, as well as talent and reality show formats, will make the shows more exciting.
- The show will continue to focus on three core competencies among young learners: numeracy, literacy and life skills, including HIV awareness.

Anita Stewart, Vice-President from Sesame Workshop USA, **Marie-Louise Samuels**, Director of Early Childhood Development at the Department of Basic Education, **Pontsho Makhetha**, Head of TV Content at the SABC, and **Anne Livingstone**, Chief Executive: Sanlam Sky Solutions.



Television schedule

- SABC 2: Monday to Friday at 10:00, from 2 September
 - SABC 1: Monday to Friday at 07:30, from 3 September
- For more information, visit <http://www.takalanisesame.com/>