

imagina el mundo NOBO DIGONTER KOLPONA

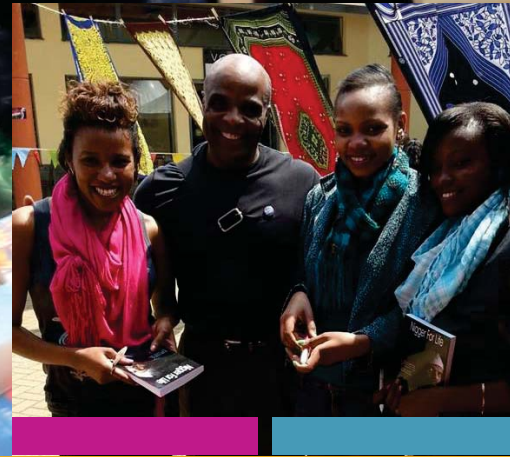
تَحَيَّلُ الْعَالَمِ *imagine the world* কল্পনায় জগত

logathe patti chindikyuga *képzeld el a világot*

कल्पना दुनिया की DYCHMYGWCH Y BYD *waza dunia*

FESTIVAL REPORT


STORYMOJA  
HAY FESTIVAL  
NAIROBI  
2013



HAYFESTIVAL.ORG

<sup>1</sup>AFRICA AMERICAS ASIA EUROPE MIDDLE EAST

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# Introduction



*“Ask any local book enthusiast about the Storymoja Hay Festival and you will see their eyes light up. It is slowly becoming a pilgrimage of sorts. Every September, book lovers, young and old, flock to listen to legends speak their minds.”*

*– The Star*

Our fifth annual Storymoja Hay Festival was slated to be held from 19<sup>TH</sup> to 22<sup>ND</sup> September 2013. The Festival has fast gained a reputation for being a vibrant gathering of the greatest minds in Kenya and beyond, celebrating ideas and culture. This year was no different. Writers, poets, storytellers, performers and thinkers from all over the world converged in Nairobi. Kenyan audiences were treated to a series of masterclasses, provocative debates, premier film screenings, lectures, performances and more. As the only Hay Festival on the African continent, within a network of Hay Festivals spanning 15 countries, the Storymoja Hay Festival has carved a niche showcasing African writers, and bringing books alive for local audiences.

The Nairobi National Museum provided the perfect living backdrop to explore our theme, ‘Imagine the World’. It houses the fossil of a 2-million-year-old elephant found in the Great Rift Valley, the Louis Leakey Auditorium, two open air amphitheatres, a magical botanical garden and majestic courtyard. The Festival venues added cultural ambiance to the celebration of stories from the past, contemporary narratives and those yet to be dreamt up.

*“Since its inception in 2008, the festival has never fallen short of creativity and diversity and seems to be getting bigger and better. Where else can you find complete fusion and representation of the literary and creative world? This festival is the only one of its kind in the whole of Africa.”*

*– A Different World*

*“If you want to see the literature scene in the region there is no better place than the Storymoja Hay Festival. It is THE must attend literary event for the region.”*

*–James Murua,  
Nairobi Living*

In between events, Festival goers had an opportunity to go on special guided tours of the museum led by the curators, and to explore the exhibits.

On the morning of Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September, the Festival got off to a spectacular start. At noon on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September, Al Shabaab terrorists attacked the Westgate Mall, which is about a mile from the National Museum. The Ghanaian poet and author, Professor Kofi Awoonor, our most eminent guest at the 2013 Festival, tragically lost his life during that horrendous attack. Shocked and devastated by his loss and the horrors of the unfolding events at Westgate, we shut down the Festival later that afternoon.

As one of the most vital poetic voices in the world, Professor Awoonor’s passing away is an enormous loss for the African continent, but he leaves behind a rich literary legacy. As Poet Nii Parkes said, *‘Absent heroes are powerful because their legacy is not influenced by them, we are drawn to the elements that resonate and that, ultimately, serves both hero and devotee best.’* His death has strengthened our determination to honour him by becoming the most important gathering of African writers in the world.

# Schools Programme (19th –20th Sept)



The schools programme is at the core of what the Storymoja Hay Festival is about. It seeks to awaken a hunger in children for reading books and is designed to be interactive, creative, imaginative, fun and enriching – all the better to manifest our message that ‘Reading is Cool!’

## Attendance

*“It is exciting to see and hear Storymoja’s passion for children and for the opportunity to share our wisdom with them. It is important for Africans to teach Africans.”*

*–Professor Kofi Awoonor*

*‘Thousands of children lined up at the Nairobi National Museum in Nairobi, Kenya to experience the Storymoja Hay Festival 2013. Clad in school uniform, and armed with open minds to ‘imagine the world’ – Bingwa Magazine*

A specially designed schools programme ran for the first two days of the Festival. Thousands of children poured in from all corners of Nairobi. We were delighted by the outstanding turn-out. On Friday morning, there was a veritable traffic jam as buses lined up waiting to enter the Museum.

*“What impresses me most about Storymoja is its dogged commitment to youth, to the encouragement of school age children in creative thought, art and literary confidence. Over three thousand children*

*“The first thing I saw was a parking lot full of school buses – Kids! Kids! Kids! They were all over and in uniform. For a moment there I felt out of place. After asking what the event plan for the weekend was and why there were like a gazillion school children ... I got to understand and nikaanza mwenjoyo.”*

*– Shiko Ngure*

*were at the Festival on Friday to listen to writers talk about their work, to meet authors. They had an excursion that celebrates literature. Three thousand is more than double the number they had last year. This is remarkable and wonderful.” – Kwame Dawes, poet.*

## **Museum Tours**

There were special guided tours of the Museum, where children had a chance to explore the Museum exhibits, as part of the Festival’s drive to bring new audiences to the Museum, and bring to life the rich heritage that is housed there.

## **Workshops**

Ghanaian Nii Parkes led poetry workshops for teens, incorporating a blend of word play, rap and hip hop, debunking that myth that poetry is boring. Storymoja’s own Storyhippo authors carried out writing and illustration workshops teaching children how to create heroes and villains. Fedelis Kyalo, from the incredibly popular satirical puppet show *XYZ*, conducted a puppet making workshop. Daniel Muli from ‘Just a Band’ carried out an animation workshop for teens.

## **Theatre**

The Theatre Company (TTC) outdid themselves this year. During their popular show, *Attack of the Shidas*, where several children leapt onto the amphitheatre stage. Afterwards, the performers led a discussion on the evils of tribalism, the core theme of the show. During the schools programme, TTC also ran several performance and cultural dance workshops for children of all ages. Their sessions were loud, interactive, and exhausting fun!

Mara and Isla Menzies from Toto Tales were perhaps the most memorable for the younger children. Their spectacular show *Starbird* – a musical storytelling show inspired by Ben Okri’s *Starbook*, dazzled with the colourful costumes, props, music from

*A young pupil simply asked, “Why are people so cruel?” I could find no easy answer ... Suddenly in front of my African audience, I found understanding. For me being able to share my personal story of evil and good, and the redemptive power of forgiveness, was the lifting of an immense burden.”*

– Dr Mukesh Kapila.

*“I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire team at Storymoja. Aarna still talks about it in school and to all her friends. The overall experience for us was incredible. It was an exceptional event, in all ways. You truly have a special team there.”*

– Hemesh Lakhani

around the world, dance and puppetry. It was a difficult task to ‘evict’ children from the venue after the show – they wanted to watch it again and again!

## **Innovation**

The University of Nairobi Fab Lab team thrilled with their robotics, as did the Secret Science Society with their kitchen experiments that often ended in a big colourful bang. Innovate Kenya carried out innovation hackathons for groups of savvy teens.

## **Stimulating talks**

Dr Auma Obama, author and activist for children, and Olympian, Catherine Ndereba, both talked about the role of sports to bring about social change. The former Head of United Nations to Sudan, Dr Mukesh Kapila, talked about the horrors of Darfur and challenged teenagers to engage in the fight for human rights around the world.

## **Storytelling**

Nigerian author of the much loved *Anna Hibiscus* and *No 1 Car Spotter* series, Atinuke mesmerized children with her storytelling. They kept her on her toes with their sharp questions. Norwegian author Johan Harstad discussed his latest science fiction/horror novel. British writer, Jenny Valentine, who won the Guardian Prize for Children’s Fiction, was absolutely delighted to be mobbed by scores of self-professed fans, who couldn’t believe their favourite author had come all the way to Kenya to meet them. Local storytellers and children’s authors who wowed students included Karimi Gatimi, Cliff Olouch, Wangari Grace, Reeves Kibet and Muthoni Garland.

In the family programme, 6 year old Aarna Lakhani launched her book, and 11 year old Joseph Bokea discussed the ongoing development of his. Their parents discussed their role as parents in nurturing young talent.

*“When I am old and replaying the better snapshots of my life, the Kawangware Public Primary School Girls’ Choir will be there, singing. It is the sweetest spring I ever heard.”*

*– Jenny Valentine*

## **Start a Library: Jaza Matatu na Vitabu (Fill a matatu with books)**

Storymoja initiated the corporate social responsibility project, [www.startalibrary.org](http://www.startalibrary.org) to stock needy schools with libraries. In a country where only about 2% of public schools have libraries, Storymoja is at the forefront of increasing children’s access to culturally appropriate books that will ignite that fire to read for pleasure. An average of 20% of all premium event ticket proceeds went to Start a Library. We also launched our latest campaign dubbed, *Jaza Matatu na Vitabu* book drive, encouraging Festival goers to come with books to donate to schools.

The campaign was launched just before the Festival at the Kawangware Primary School. Visiting international authors treated the children to stories from around the world. In turn, the children sang for the visitors.

## **Read Aloud to break a World Record: Warm-up**

For many students, the highlight of the Festival was popular music group Sauti Sol, our newest reading ambassadors, popping in to join the lunchtime Read Aloud session. For the last three years, Storymoja has been conducting Read Aloud days, where children around the country all read out loud from the same text, on the same day.

Our hope is that in 2014, we will attempt to break the Guinness World Record and put to death a popular saying that ‘if you want to hide something from an African put it in a book’. How inspiring to break a record in reading, and for each child participating to be a Guinness World Record holder! About 3,000 children joined Sauti Sol and Muthoni Garland in the Museum courtyard, as they led the reading from the book, *The Matatu from Watamu Drove into the Sea*. This was followed by an impromptu concert by Sauti Sol.



# Masterclass Series



*‘There are few people that can make a first impression so lasting that it makes you see your craft in a whole new light.’*

*– Mugendi Nyagah,  
participant in Professor  
Kofi Awoonor’s  
Masterclass*

The Storymoja Hay Festival is committed to strengthening literature in all its forms here in East Africa, and as part of this, we are particularly proud of our Masterclass Series which provides budding and emerging writers the opportunity to workshop with and interrogate issues of craft with some of the most popular local and internationally renowned writers, including Booker and Pulitzer Prize winning writers. This year, we were particularly fortunate to have: Professor Kofi Awoonor, Dr Neal Hall, Kwame Dawes and Tony Mochama lead poetry workshops, and Teju Cole lead a #smallfates short fiction workshop. Commonwealth Short Story shortlisted writers Dilman Dila and Alexander Ikawah conducted a short story surgery. Popular blogger and columnist Jackson Biko delivered a creative writing masterclass.

*“I attended a creative writing session by Biko Zulu ... which I felt compelled to ask to extend by another two hours.”*

South African writer Zukiswa Wanner, who was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize, led a humour writing workshop. British author Richard Crompton led a short story workshop. Kenyan writer and IT guru, Alexander Nderitu, conducted a self-branding and self-publishing seminar. Norwegian author Johan Harstad led a writing-for-young-adults workshop, whilst Kenyan

*“Dr Neal Hall’s Poetry Masterclass at the Storymoja Hay Festival was a complete eye opener. Finally, someone taught us to appreciate our own view of life and use it to find our own voice!”*

*– Hay Festival Wire*

*”As a budding writer, it is difficult to get constructive criticism. So what I found particularly valuable was the fact that over the course of the year, I received such useful feedback on my work.”*

*– Linda Musita,  
Storymoja Festival Fellow*

illustrator and animator Kwame Nyong’o led an illustration workshop.

Complimentary passes were provided to young writers through university outreach and other writers groups such as POWO and PAWA 254.

Professor Kofi Awoonor’s Masterclass entitled, *The Responsibility of the African Writer*, was eerily apt as it was to be the last public session he ever conducted. He challenged a room full of young African writers to champion African literature. During the masterclass, Awoonor discussed mortality, claiming he was unafraid of death. He said that anybody who did not believe in God or their ancestors are fools. That his ancestors took him everywhere he went.

*“Here was a man who had written longer than my country had been independent. He represented a link with the past, with the age-old traditions of singing and performing poetry that are now classified dryly as ‘Oral Literature’. The fact that these poems and songs of Africa have influenced genres as varied as spoken word, hip hop and rap show that African literature has a profound contribution to make to the rest of the world.”* – Mugendi Nyagah, participant in Professor Kofi Awoonor’s Masterclass.

## Storymoja Festival Fellows

Born out of a Masterclass at the 2012 Festival, the Storymoja Festival Fellows programme was initiated by Caine-nominated Kenyan author, Lily Mabura, who is also an Assistant Professor of English at the American University of Sharjah. Over a one-year period, Lily actively mentored and taught four young Kenyan writers who had attended her fiction masterclass. During the Festival, the Storymoja Festival Fellows – Ruth Kenyah, Wanjeri Gakuru, Nduta Waweru and Linda Musita – read from their work, and shared insights about the impact of female voices in Kenyan literature.

# Programme Highlights

## Wangari Maathai Memorial Lecture

This year's lecture was given by Mukesh Kapila, the former Head of the United Nations in Sudan and author of *Against A Tide Of Evil*. He revealed the shocking depths of evil plumbed by those who designed and orchestrated 'the final solution' in Darfur and why so many good men stood by and did nothing. He explored what empowers a man to make a stand to confront global indifference and venality. It was ironic that at the time of the Westgate terror attack, Mukesh Kapila was delivering the lecture about why humans have such potential for cruelty.

## Discussions

In a poetry panel with award winning poets, Warsan Shire (Somalia/UK), Dr Neal Hall (USA), Dr Mongane Wally Serote (South Africa) and Njeri Wangari (Kenya), readings were interspersed with discussions around love, loss, borders, insanity, race, identity and inequality. As Dr. Hall said to a captivated audience, "There is no freedom; only varying degrees of tyranny."

Zimbabwean author of *The Fear* and PEN (USA) President, Peter Godwin, discussed his travels through his home country after the 2008 elections, and the torture bases, the burned villages, the death squads, the opposition leaders in hiding, the last white farmers, the churchmen and the diplomats putting their own lives on the line to stop the carnage.

Comic artist and animation entrepreneur Chief Nyamweya (Kenya) launched his comic book *Roba vs the Poachers*, and talked with Natalie Logan about the many unexpected lessons learned while trying to re-invent an industry in Kenya.

Nigerian author Teju Cole and John Sibi-Okumu discussed Cole's latest novel *Open City* which has been referred to as 'a powerful

*"To me the Storymoja Hay Festival was the shimmer of a silver lining peeping through the clouds over what was such a devastating weekend."*

*– Ruth Kenyah,  
Storymoja Festival Fellow*

and unnerving inquiry into the human soul'. At the same time, the Commonwealth writers conversation presented an engaging panel discussion on the power of silence.

The Bloggers Association of Kenya award winners engaged audiences with their passions on and offline. This session was particularly popular, which reflected how Kenyans are increasingly consuming stories online.

In a touching showcase of East meets West poetry, moderated by Beverly Nambozo (Uganda), Kwame Dawes and Nii Parkes of Ghana, Clifton Gachagua of Kenya, and the Ugandan BN Poetry Award winners shared and discussed their work. Professor Awoonor was due to join the panel, but sadly, was caught out in the deadly attack at the Westgate mall.

## Film Screenings

The Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies presented the Kenyan premiere of five conservation films, followed by discussions with the film makers on the art of science storytelling.

The short film 'Yellow Fever' by Ng'endo Mukii was screened, followed by an engaging discussion on the shades of discrimination arising from our convoluted ideas around beauty and skin colour. Ng'endo was joined by panelists Tazim Elkington, Renee Mboya and Zukiswa Wanner.

The Kenyan premiere of the Commonwealth Short Film 'New Year's Eve' was followed by a discussion with film maker Wanjiru Kairu, Anthony Olouch and Eric Gitari on the challenges of storytelling in capturing gay life stories.

## Performances

### *Starbird*

Mara Menzies and Isla Menzies of *Toto Tales* were mobbed on stage after their incredible performance of *Starbird*, inspired by Ben Okri's *Starbook*. The show was a gorgeous blend of world music, puppetry and storytelling brought to life by colourful costumes.

### *The Theatre Company*

The Theatre Company staged two performances – the dramatic interpretation of the Storymoja published *Attack of the Shidas* as well as their new show *Kimbia* inspired by Kenyan athletes. The performances by The Theatre Company have become one of the most anticipated features at the Storymoja Hay Festival.

### *#OccupyNairobi*

Naked Pizza hosted a sneak preview of the #OccupyNairobi poetry performance, as part of the Stir-Up, which in its third year became the largest, most exciting poetry show in East Africa, and a showcase for local and international poets. Unfortunately, due to the premature cancellation of the Festival, this year's major Stir-Up did not happen on the Saturday night.

### *Imagine the World Music Concert*

Despite the thunderstorms on Friday evening, *Sarabi* set the stage alight with a blazing performance, thrilling audiences, and setting the stage for a fiery Afro-Fusion music concert featuring *Fena, Stan, Sarabi, Jemedari, H\_art Band* and *Kiu*.

## Party with Stars

*“It was an outstanding evening”*

*– James Murua  
blogging at [www.jamesmurua.com/tag/teju-cole/](http://www.jamesmurua.com/tag/teju-cole/)*

At the Festival launch ‘Party with Stars’, 2013 Festival Director Dr Paula Kahumbu and her *Hands off our Elephants* campaign team played a starring role.

*“It made me feel like I was in any major capital in the world as we were treated to speeches from actress Bai Ling and model Christie Brinkley. Bai Ling informed us that she had adopted three new babies – elephant babies. I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry ... Brinkley on her part, seeing as she had an audience of writers, went on to give us story ideas that would work in Hollywood. Story 1. A sort of Elephant model for Finding Nemo. Story 2. A sort of Harrison Ford investigating the trail that the elephants ivory industry.*

*Storymoja supremo Muthoni Garland ran us through the evening with little fun anecdotes and introducing people like the British High Commissioner, Dr Christian Turner with his short and to-the-point remarks about the Festival. Also on the programme was a taste of Sitawa Namwalie’s newest work *Silence is a Woman* with a rendition by Mumbi Kaigwa. And Dr Auma Obama Q&A with Muthoni leaving me to wonder if perhaps writers too want to become the next David Frost now that he has left us.*

*– James Murua*

# Storymoja Hay Mini-Festival



Several events were held in November 2013 to make up for the Storymoja Hay Festival days cut short because of the westgate attack.

## ICC Witness Project

In a haunting performance, Mshai Mwangola, Renee Mboya and Keguro Macharia delivered powerful readings from ‘Their Justice Shall Be Our Justice: A Dialogue on the ICC Witness Project’, imagining and amplifying the voices of some of the missing witnesses for the ICC trial, to make sure the victims and survivors of the post-election violence that rocked Kenya in 2008 are not forgotten.

*‘The most scintillating performance of the day came after dark when a band of six storytellers told tall and tantalising tales with a combination of flare, swag and ferocity that often electrified the audience.’*

*– The Saturday Nation*

There were several discussions on the very timely issue of Art and Activism, from the Kwani? election panel featuring editorial cartoonist Gaddo. There was a wide ranging debate between Mshai Mwangola, Wambui Mwangi and Keguro Macharia on the value of art in promoting social change. Richard Crompton and Kinyanjui Kombani talked about their own novels inspired by horrific incidences of tribal violence in Kenya, and the power of fiction in uncovering and stimulating reflection about our history.

*“By turns poignant and painful, uproariously funny and deliciously sexy, it was a celebration and appreciation of the wonder, mystery and beauty of vaginas and femininity. These women command our attention, they command our respect, they showed us the huge, hidden power of women; they titillated, they cajoled and convinced, they raged and railed, they appealed to our sense, they appealed to our humanity. They declared ‘Enough is enough!’ They had us applauding, shrieking, and ululating.”*

*– Annie Eagleton,  
audience member and  
blogger*

## The Vagina Monologues

The Storymoja Hay Festival was granted special permission to stage this performance Eve Ensler’s play. It was directed by Mumbi Kaigwa. The award-winning play is based on V-Day Founder/playwright Eve Ensler’s interviews with more than 200 women.

*“Although many members of the audience may have seen the show before, what was new about that production was the women’s passion and professionalism. Their eloquent storytelling consistently struck a chord which elicited either laughter or tears for the torturous injustices that have been inflicted on women historically and up to now.”*

*– The Nation*

## Silence is a Woman

Sitawa Namwalie premiered her new show *Silence is a Woman* to a packed audience. It followed on the footsteps of the success of her show *Cut off My Tongue*, based on her first poetry anthology which toured internationally. *Silence is a Woman* chronicles the journey of a woman, and the journey of Kenya as they both move through history, telling, re-telling and experiencing narratives that continue to haunt this nation.

*“Sitawa Namwalie’s Silence is a Woman continued to prove that Kenyan theatre is finally producing shows that are highly original and innovative. It was witty, wily and quite wonderful to behold.”*

*– The Nation*

## Nyef Nyef Stories to Disturb the Mind

From creation myths to fables, from true life stories to twisted fiction, the evening presented the first Nyef Nyef night of stories by top Storymoja storytellers: Ernest Wanboye, Ogotu Muraya, Aleya Kassam, Nahabi Wandera, Muthoni Garland and Mugambi Nthiga.



# Conversations



Over the years, audiences have requested that the conversations held at the Storymoja Hay Festival be kept alive over the course of the year. This year, we fulfilled that promise with:

## Ideagasms

A meeting of minds held once a month, where an invited participant brings forth an idea, a provocation which the 20 or so others, from different fields, play with and write about: [storymojahayfestival.com/ideagasms](http://storymojahayfestival.com/ideagasms)

## SMHayFest Conversations

Our blog, where invited writers continue the conversations online here: <http://storymojahayfestival.com/category/conversations/>

## Hay Festival News Wire

Our team of writers gives you their impressions of the sessions from the Festival here: <http://storymojahayfestival.com/category/blog/>

Read or pay tribute to the late Professor Kofi

Awoonor here: [storymojahayfestival.com/portfolio/tribute-kofi-awoonor/](http://storymojahayfestival.com/portfolio/tribute-kofi-awoonor/)

## Hay Festival Guest Wire

Visiting authors' blog about their Storymoja Hay Festival experience here: [www.blog.hayfestival.org](http://www.blog.hayfestival.org)

## Hay Festival Podcasts

Festival audiences are always torn between the wonderful sessions happening simultaneously, so for those that missed out on any sessions, podcasts are available to listen to for free here: [www.hayfestival.com/storymoja](http://www.hayfestival.com/storymoja)

## Storymoja Mini-Festival

Celebrated Canadian author, M G Vassanji, will be visiting Kenya over a week towards the end of January 2014. Storymoja is organising a mini-festival on Saturday 25th January, two public talks at the University of Nairobi and at Kenyatta University, and a reception in honour of him, hosted by the Canadian Embassy. Save the date!

# The Festival in Pictures



# The Festival in Numbers

4,100  
students

134  
blogs mentioned on

14 countries

122 events

52 volunteers

6,000  
attendees

205 artists

212,866  
Facebook accounts reached

11,707,587  
Kshs local publicity

25,896  
website hits

9  
venues

# The Festival in Words

*“I was deeply inspired by Storymoja – a true meeting of creative minds.” – Juliet Barnes*

*@mawazo\_mengi Cannot adequately express how excited I am that the sure-to-be-amazing @SMHayFest starts tomorrow! This is my 4th year to attend! Woop! – @Mawazo\_Mengi*

*“I loved most the diversity of people who took part in many ways at the Storymoja Hay Festival” – Monica Opole*

*“I got the energy to write again ... the flame inside was set ablaze. It was just mind opening and inspiring. Rarely do you get a chance to interact with those who opened the doors to literature in Africa and abroad.” – Atandi Anyona*

*“Facing up to dictators is easy compared to sharp questioning by 200+ bright-eyed teens @SMHayFest #AgainstATideOfEvil pic.twitter.com/ZfkuG0XoTo.” – @MukeshKapila*

*“I am comforted that Kofi Awoonor was on top form in his masterclass at @SMHayFest, awakening a new generation to his undeniable legacy #RIP” – @BlueBirdTail (Nii Parkes)*

*“I am so deeply humbled, honoured and thankful for so many firsts. It has been an experience I should always cherish and remember. Thank you Nairobi! Thank you Storymoja Hay Festival.” – Neal Hall, M D, Poet*

*“This year’s StoryMoja Hay Festival boasted a fantastic line-up of renowned African authors and poets.” – The Star*

*“The festival was a raving success especially at a personal level because I met Kwame Dawes. What a profound poet. A genius. A man. I met Warsan Shire. Glorious. Gifted. Dr Neal Hall. Strong. Convicted. Teju Cole. Enigmatic. I was able to reach my own depths and rip out the enemies of success, or at least discover where they lay. A Lot of the sessions amongst poems carried sentiments on healing and forgiveness and how poetry plays a role in dealing with trauma. It resonates heavily after the terrorist attack.”*  
– Beverley Nambozo

*“The National Museum of Kenya played host to a cultural whirlwind of story telling, spoken word artistry and some hard-hitting, honest and witty discussions for adults and children alike later this month. This is the fifth edition of the annual Festival aimed at promoting the culture of reading in Kenya.”* – British Council blog

*“This year’s Storymoja event was planned for poets to experience what is close to literary heaven, with carefully selected poets like Prof Kofi Awoonor, Nii Parkes, Prof Kwame Dawes, Fatou Were, Clifton Gachagua, Warsan Shire, Dr Neal Hall, Sitawa Namwalie, Mongane Wally Serote and Michael Onsando.”* – BN Poetry Award

*“The Festival as with every other year since its inception is one of those events that show Storymoja Hay Festival at its best; intelligent, literary madness and witty conversations, fine readings and an enthusiastic audience. This was destined to be a Festival of records.”* –Belinda Ogolla

*“I was deeply inspired by Storymoja – a true meeting of creative minds. I was also proud to be a part of an event where the strength and courage of the performers continued to be an inspiration for as long as was possible, in the face of the Westgate tragedy.”* – Jenny Valentine

# Festival in the Media

## Television

### *K24*

Breakfast Show – Peter Godwin  
Breakfast Show – H\_ART the Band

### *NTV*

The Trend – Sarabi  
News – Kofi Awoonor Memorial

### *KTN*

Sunrise Live – Mukesh Kapila & Neal Hall  
Sunrise Live – Samo & Akil – Occupy Nairobi

## Radio

### *One FM – KIU*

### *Capital FM*

The Jam – Festival Promo  
Spot Ads/Classifieds

### *XFM*

Classifieds

### *Kiss FM*

Memorial tribute

## Local Print

### *The Star*

Making Hay while the sun shines  
Diary – Storymoja Hay Festival Nairobi

Actress Bai Ling and Supermodel Christie Brinkley for Storymoja Hay Festival

The Storymoja Big Bash with the Stars

Storymoja Tribute to Kofi Awoonor

Your Malls have a foul smell – Kofi Awoonor

One on One with Temo Buliro

Freedom and Oppression – Hay Festival

The Vogue Café, National Museums of Kenya

When one accord became one accord

Columbia meets Kenya: El Colegio Del Cuerpo

Up close and candid with Teju Cole

Kofi Awoonor – A literary icon

Jane Bussman is back with two new shows in Nairobi

Captivating Vagina Monologues

### *The People*

Hay Festival

Literary community bids farewell to fallen giant

Fun writing and reading

Young authors should follow footsteps of departed writers

### *The East African Magazine*

The menu at Storymoja Hay Festival

Death at the Mall: Will tragedy end tribalism and greed?

A big tree has fallen in Ghana

Sad ending to a happy event

Where is the female voice in writing?

*The Standard*

Ghanaian poet, TV anchor die in attack  
 'I'm unafraid of death,' Awoonor at a literary event

We must be alert to defend ourselves from terrorists

A president's challenge and bid to reward creative writing

If you get a second chance, grab it with both hands

*The Nation*

Westgate terror attack and Teju Cole's tale of an open city

The terrorists will die, but Kofi Awoonor will live in our hearts forever

Bloodied but unbowed

Ghanaian writer Kofi is gone but he left us the wiser

Playwrights shift focus to females on stage

Ghanaian poet on quest to nurture African writers

A feast of talent in theatre

*Business Daily*

Mini Storymoja Hay Festival

International print articles:

*The Telegraph*

*Wall Street Journal*

*New Yorker*

*Guardian*



# Kofi Awoonor Memorial



Kofi Awoonor Memorial Tribute held on Monday 23rd September 2013

“The tribute last night at the museum was moving, so in keeping with the depth, height, breadth and weight of the late professor’s writing. The siege at Westgate is still ongoing and a climate of fear permeates the air, but about 150 people showed up. Love and respect were palpable in the room. Two of Professor Awoonor’s sons, his daughter and niece, the Ghanaian High Commission and several Ghanaians came. We sang the Kenyan and Ghanaian national anthems. Most of us read from his works, many of which are elegies, hauntingly beautiful funeral songs inspired by his Ewe traditions. Kwame Dawes’ and John Sibi-Okumu’s tributes moved us to sorrow-tinged laughter. Tears threatened to overcome Nii Parkes, Paula Kahumbu and Warsan Shire during their tributes. Several others read from Professor Awoonor’s work including the Occupy Nairobi poets, Teju Cole, Michael Onsando and Aghan Odero of the Kenya Cultural Centre, Njeri Wangari who served as MC, Binyavanga and Billy Kahora of Kwani, myself (Muthoni Garland) and others.

One of the outcomes of his passing is a surge of interest in Professor Awoonor’s work – younger poets, in particular,



demand we get his work to Kenya. The irony is that Africa is where it is most difficult to access books by Africans, even the most prominent! The Ghanaian High Commissioner said to me, 'Next year, I will bring you more writers from my country. That is what Kofi Awoonor would have wanted.' Auma Obama not only sent a tribute that we read, but she also confirmed that she is ready to be our next Storymoja Hay Festival Director to rally our spirits and ensure that the greater cause is not buried under by this tragedy. Nii Parkes, Teju Cole, Atinuke and Jenny Valentine insist they want to be on the SMHF programme next year. As Aleya Kassam said, 'Just when we were feeling way too overwhelmed to imagine continuing on this journey, it seems we must.' – Muthoni Garland, author and founder member, Storymoja

*'Something has happened to me ... The things so great I cannot weep' from 'Songs of Sorrow' by Ghana's Kofi Awoonor.*

Something has happened. And we will write about it, we will write something beautiful. Something that will help those who are struck down with grief to keep hope alive. And we will celebrate those who have been taken from us. And we will continue to make the world more beautiful.

Kofi Awoonor was murdered by terrorists in Nairobi while attending the Storymoja Hay festival. And the Festival was cut short this year. But it will come back. Again and again and again. And I will come back to it with stories, and with hope. Because four thousand children eagerly attended the Festival during its three short days; children who deserve to be inspired; children who deserve to express themselves creatively and passionately as they grow; children who deserve to dream and hope and laugh. Those children deserve to be free from terror. We all do. And they deserve to read as much as they want of the best of books that there are, to open their eyes and hearts to the whole wide world. This is what Hay Festivals worldwide are about. An opposite to

*Sadly in taking his life, those who did this also took away a part of their own heritage. Because what Prof Awoonor gave with his work was not exclusive to his homeland Ghana, nor to the African continent. It was and is a contribution to the enrichment of our world as a whole.*

– Auma Obama

terror. And Storymoja Hay Festival will continue, beautifully, hopefully, creatively. In memory of Kofi Awoonor and all those who died this weekend, I end with this poem:

“It goes on, this world, stupid and brutal.

But I do not.

I do not.” From *Revolution* a novel for young adults by Jennifer Donnelly. – Atinuke, author of Nigerian and Welsh heritage

*I listened as Awoonor praised the diversity of African writers on the bill: “... together we are discussing the birthing pains of countries.” None of us realised then how painfully prescient this statement would become. For this type of mourning, silence was not an option. Four days earlier, Storymoja founder Muthoni Garland had introduced the Festival as ‘an unadulterated, unapologetic celebration of writing’. She showed the same strength by hosting an evening of reading and remembrance for Awoonor on the Festival site on Monday, while the siege was still ongoing a short drive away. More than 150 people came, read, lit candles, a glimmer of hope that something good could come out of the atrocities that had so recently occurred.*

– Alice Vincent, *The Telegraph* UK



# Looking Forward

## Wole Soyinka, Nobel laureate

*After the deadly calling card of these primitives, the rest of the (Storymoja Hay) Nairobi Festival was cancelled. Understandably, but sadly, I have however written to the organizers not to even bother to renew my invitation for next year's edition – life permitting, I shall be there. We must all be there. And we must learn to smother loss in advance, not just for that Festival but for all Festivals of Life and Creativity wherever in the world.'*

– Wole Soyinka ([www.chidoonumah.com](http://www.chidoonumah.com))

## BN Poetry Foundation

*The BN Poetry Foundation will continue working with Storymoja. In 2014, the poetry award will include all poets from the continent, and the winner will be announced at the Festival in Nairobi. We will continue with literature's celebration, poetry's manifestation and honour the lives of those who paved the way like Prof Awoonor, Okot p' Bitek and many others.'*

– Beverly Nambozo, BNPA

## South African High Commission

*I trust that despite the tragic loss, you will continue with the good work you have been doing to promote literature and reading in the country and region. The High Commission looks forward to working together with you*

*in the near future. In the words of Nelson Mandela, 'A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special.'*

– The South African High Commissioner to Kenya, Ndumiso Ntshinga

## Commonwealth Writers

*Storymoja is the most wonderful inspirational Festival and deserves to go from strength to strength. Your team, the writers, the school children, the audience, all blew me away. We definitely want to come back to Storymoja.*

– Emma D'Costa, Commonwealth Writers

## African Poetry Book Fund

*May these events not discourage the Storymoja Festival. Muthoni Garland and her amazing team, be encouraged: the work you do must continue.*

– Kwame Dawes

# Celebrating Partnerships

*Hay Festival (UK): This is the partner whose footsteps Storymoja has shadowed, sometimes clumsily, learning and benefitting from their experience and connections. In 2013, we were particularly grateful to have Lyndy Cooke's enormous shoulders to lean on and Peter Florence at the end of the phone to mentor us as we dealt with the consequences of the Westgate terrorist attack.*

– Muthoni Garland

The Storymoja Hay Festival this year enjoyed a diverse range of partnerships and collaborations, some new and others going back several years.

**HIVOS:** A three-year partnership to support the sustainability of the Storymoja Hay Festival as part of their Cultural Productions focus.

**National Museums of Kenya:** This is the second year of our partnership with the National Museums of Kenya, as the Nairobi National Museum plays host to the Festival. We are particularly excited about the opportunity of this partnership to widen audiences to the Museum, and bring to life exhibitions in Festival programming.

**African Poetry Book Fund:** The African Poetry Book Fund is committed to promoting and advancing the development and publication of the poetic arts through this collaboration with the Storymoja Hay Festival. The African Poetry Book Fund, established in June 2012 under the leadership of Ghanaian/Jamaican Kwame Dawes through the University of Nebraska, is made possible through seed funding from philanthropists Laura and Robert F X Sillerman. This year, they sponsored Kwame Dawes, Kofi Awoonor and Warsan Shire to participate at the Festival.

**British Council:** As partners from the very first Storymoja Hay Festival, the British Council have been key in bringing exciting writers to Nairobi to be part of the Festival, this year bringing poet and novelist Nii Parkes.

**Van Horn Consulting:** This partnership is in its third year, and the firm has been responsible for supporting Beth Lisick, Arline Klatte and Precious Williams to attend the Festival in years before. This year, they supported the featuring of Teju Cole.

*Commonwealth Writers:* In this second year of partnership, Commonwealth Writers supported the Short Story Surgery conducted by Commonwealth Short Story shortlisted nominees Alexander Ikawah and Dilman Dila. In addition, the first Commonwealth Conversation in Nairobi was an engaging discussion around the Untold Story and the Power of Silence. The Commonwealth Short 'New Year's Eve' also premiered at the Festival, including a discussion with the film maker Wanjiru Kairu.

*NORLA:* Norwegian Literature Abroad have in the past supported Norwegian authors and illustrators to participate at the Storymoja Hay Festival. This year, they supported award winning short story writer, novelist and playwright Johan Harstad.

*South African Embassy:* In our first year partnering together, we were delighted to have Dr Wally Mongane Serote, award winning South African poet and novelist attend the Festival with the support of the South African Embassy.

*Embassy of Colombia:* Also in our first year partnering together, the Embassy of Colombia and Storymoja Hay Festival sought to celebrate the Hay Festival in Cartagena and the Storymoja Hay Festival in Nairobi with the participation of acclaimed dancer Alvaro Restrepo who was going to engage in a Kenyan-Colombian exchange. Unfortunately, due to the Westgate incident, this had to be postponed to 2014. Insha Allah

*Canadian High Commission:* As partners for the last three years, the Canadian High Commission has supported the LGBTI conversation at the Festival, as one of the few open public spaces where such discussions can take place in Nairobi.

*Arts Council Wales:* As part of the schools programme, Arts Council Wales supported Nigerian/Welsh children's author and storyteller Atinuke to participate at the Festival.

*Keringet:* Our official water partner for the Storymoja Hay Festival, who we would like to thank for supporting the outdoor marketing of the Festival.

*IPSOS Synovate:* This year, we celebrated a revolutionary partnership with IPSOS Synovate as our media research partners. They enabled SMHF to track the local media coverage garnered over the course of the Festival.

*EasatB.COM:* Our wireless internet partners, EasatB.Com, ensured that the twitter crazy Kenyan audiences were able to live tweet and post updates from the Festival, for all those people who were unable to make it to the site. Teju Cole's arrival at JKIA airport set twitter ablaze!

*GoDown Arts Centre:* In celebration of the recent NaiNiWho Festival, the GoDown Arts Centre curated a conversation bringing forth the most interesting participants from the NaiNiWho Festival, to continue the conversation around our residential neighbourhoods.

*The Theatre Company (TTC):* Long time partners, TTC brought to life their recent productions and collaborated on the schools programme during the Festival and promised to continue doing so in future.

*Urban Bites:* Long time partners, Urban Bites brought to life the 'Imagine the World' concert that featured the hottest upcoming urban Afro-fusion bands, with Sarabi setting the audience on fire, despite the thunderstorms in the evening.

*EABL:* Tusker Malt Lager was our official beer partner, supporting the 'Imagine the World' concert, as well as the cocktail sundowner evening with H\_Art followed by the Nyef Nyef storytelling show.

*Capital FM:* Our official radio partners this year were Capital FM.

*UP Magazine:* As long time partners of the Festival, UP Magazine co-curated a conversation during the mini-festival looking at the state of security in our city post-Westgate. Their shop, selling second-hand books during the Festival was one of the hottest spaces to be.

*BN Poetry Award:* We celebrate the longstanding partnership with the BN Poetry Award in Uganda, who support the winners of the Award to attend the Storymoja Hay Festival as part of their prize.

*Femwrite:* We were delighted to welcome more literary friends from Uganda, with a group from Femwrite travelling to attend the Storymoja Hay Festival.

*Deaf Aid:* As first time partners, Deaf Aid supported a group of children with hearing disability to come and participate at the Festival, alongside Sign Language interpreters.

*KAACR:* As first time partners, KAACR supported a group of children to come and participate in Storymoja's signature Publish Your Own Book session, where children get to go home with their own books that they published in a record two hours!

*Westhouse:* Our accommodation partners, Westhouse, hosted the international guests during their stay in Nairobi, strengthening their reputation as supporters of arts and culture in the city.

*Bunson Travel:* Our official travel partners, Bunson were instrumental in getting the Festival onto travel networks, so that people from all over the region could come down and enjoy the Festival.

*Naked Pizza:* As cheerleaders to the #OccupyNairobi poetry performance, Naked Pizza hosted an exclusive evening where the Occupy Poets dazzled with a sneak preview performance before the Festival.

*Kwani?:* Long term partners Kwani? hosted various sessions during the Storymoja Hay Festival. Unfortunately, the popular Kwani? Sunday Salon at the Festival had to be cancelled due to the Westgate siege.

*Elimu:* Children were treated to an interactive demonstration with Elimu's enhanced learning platform that is changing the way children in Kenya learn.

*BAKE:* We celebrate our first year's partnership with the Bloggers Association of Kenya, which brought together the winners of the 2013 BAKE Awards together to discuss their passions on and offline.

*PAWA 254:* This Creative Collaborative Hub for social change, housed a lounge during the Festival to showcase their programmes, and engage with Festival goers.

*POWO:* Partnering with the Poets and Writers Online to enable POWO members to get complimentary passes to writers' workshops during the Festival.

*Arterial Network:* This was our first year partnering with this regional network of individuals, organisations, donors, companies and institutions engaged in the African creative and cultural sector. Arterial Network Kenya held their monthly Catch-Up focused on publishing, within the Festival.

*Hands off our Elephants:* Storymoja Hay Festival is proud to be part of this important campaign.

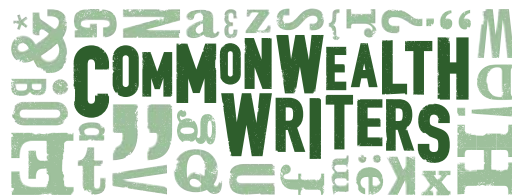
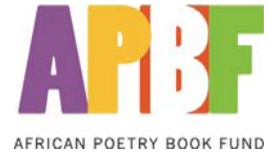
*Innovate Kenya:* Storymoja Hay Festival was delighted to showcase the winners of the Innovate Kenya competitions, and also provide the space for Innovate Kenya to conduct their innovation hackathons.

*Enzi Media:* These were our official documentary partners, making sure your favourite moments of the Festival were captured.

*Tre-ba:* Content specialists Tre-ba curated the 'Imagine the World' concert which made the Kenya's trending topics on twitter as a result of the hype around it. Tre-ba also curated the #OccupyNairobi Poetry evening.

With thanks to the *Golden Baobab Prize* and the *Caine Prize*.





Home of Researchers





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## IN MEMORY OF KOFI AWOONOR

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### THOSE GONE AHEAD

*I dreamt again this recurrent dream  
of my father  
taller ever than he has ever been  
in the dream  
I traveled on the seventh night  
to Awlime, the land of spirits  
to visit my people,  
those I know and those who know me*

*On a mat in a corner  
under a shady Gbaflo tree  
lay my sister Comfort*

*A bit leaner, her beautiful  
smile, frozen by death  
as radiant ever*

*Oh, how I recall  
her capacity to turn  
an insipid rabbit  
into a festival of delight  
the lowly partridge seared  
in the oils and onions  
of the field  
her generosity of spirit  
stamped upon her willingness to give  
of herself  
large and relentless,  
kindness was her middle name  
When the night fell on her  
her startled eyes  
of enquiry, set upon me  
and I, helpless as the leaf  
in the storm  
could not save her  
nor give answers  
to her terrible questions*

*I believe a love  
died here some years ago.  
across a bay I can  
hear the distant music  
haunting, sweet remembrance  
of good happy days  
of innocence hung in a bar  
at Osu;  
of the girl who fainted in my room  
out of sheer joy*

*There is surely a living time  
when the recollection of death  
slightly shudders  
especially when I remember the  
burial ground  
where the house now stands  
among mimosa and nim.  
the second gnarled  
the first tender  
as the first day  
the second the companion  
of death and dying  
sinewy, arrogant, persistent*

*Truth, long my friend  
does not deny  
and ah, what matters  
the despair, the disaffection  
of this engagement  
when liars, bums  
ambitious mountebanks  
and certified crooks  
short on memory  
and basic decency hold sway.*

*They say misery it is  
who acquaints man*

*with strange bedfellows.  
In my case it is not misery.  
When I die, I believe  
the sun will rise  
the morning after,  
radiant;  
it could be wet  
in the afternoon  
a cool breeze  
meandering through the trees  
regular;  
what will they be saying  
when I am gone:  
quite a bit;  
that I was a son of a bitch  
arrogant, intolerant*

*But I shall go  
perhaps to seek the lost rest  
roam the wide vistas  
of my afterlife.  
savour the welcomed  
boredom of eternity  
where they say the skies  
are pure blue,  
and rivers never run dry  
and the day lingers on  
and on and on  
and no-one hungers  
after food or righteousness  
Will I see loved ones  
gone ahead  
relatives and kinsmen?  
I expect the boatman  
will carry me over  
without a fee, my companion and minder  
on the road to the place of rest*