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**Unlocking potentials with Born Troway**

By Ovwre Medeme, SNR Reporter, Lagos

**Evoking** belief in the talents that abound in the streets of Nigeria has never come easy, but for a community like Ajegunle, which has constantly been in the news for both positive and negative reasons, the task can be described as herculean. Perceived as a volatile society especially given the high rate of crime in the past, Ajegunle, as has been observed, is undergoing reformation process. It is for the purpose of cashing in on the new wave of events that *Born Troway*, a project designed to discover and hone the skills of children of the community berthed at Tolu Complex.

With a view to offering talented youth artistic the tools to express their artistic skills while promoting peace and unity, the 5-day project featured dance-music and drama workshop for 25 young males and females, culminating in a musical show.

According to Ilaria Chessa, producer of the project, “*Born Troway* is a voluntary initiative that involves artists and positive individuals that believe in arts as a tool for positive change. Instructors and staff are volunteers willing to offer their time and skills for a token fee. *Born Troway* (born throw away) is the theme chosen for the creative workshop in Nigeria.”

A metaphor for the perceptions of our society, our people, life and our surroundings: with prejudice, the project, Ilaria said, seeks to inspire a re-think of the public attitude towards the less privileged. It invites people to re-experience everyday life with all senses open, be better inclined to connect with what happens around us; be less indifferent and in so doing learn something new.

Ilaria further explained that those perceived as the dregs of the society are frequently known to parade a high level of artistic talent. Every child is gifted, she said, but they all require that little push to unlock their potentials.

As a group and individually, the children of the Bola Ige Millenium School, the venue of the project, justified the trust reposed in them by the trainees. Together, they did justice through music, dance, spoken word and drama to issues like the pollution that has constantly greeted the community, hardship and the general negative societal perception that has taken on a pitch of stigma.

“Those abandoned by society are not giving up on themselves or on the idea of a better world, they are not giving up on the idea of change, they embrace it, express it, live it, turning the negative into positive.

“*Born Troway* is a reminder that we, all without exceptions, can make our contribution to see things differently, help each other and make positive change happen,” Ilaria said.

In honing the artistic skill of the children, the teamwork unlock participants' potential through a series of improvisation techniques give them tools to express their voice, encouraging them to share their dreams, fears, hopes and visions with the world. The workshop also reflects on waste, abandoned spaces and places. Figuratively, the abandonment of the mind space also comes into play.

The training team for the 5-day programme includes Petra Kron (Creative Director), Ropo Ewenla (Theatre), Dagga Tolar (Spoken Word / Local Coordinator Ajegunle), Segun Adefila (Dance), Ade Bantu (Creative Director/Music) as well as Ilaria Chessa.

*Born Troway* is a creative arts training initiative with the objective to promote individual self-expression, artistic skills, teamwork and integration through the arts among a group of 25 youths living in marginal areas and selected through a public audition.



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