

## PRESS RELEASE

### **UKUHLUMA: Revitalizing Indigenous Soundcraft Takes Root in New Payne Location, Mthatha**

New Payne Location, Mthatha | December 2025 – January 2026

A profound act of cultural renewal is unfolding in New Payne Location, Mthatha, where children and youth are reclaiming indigenous sound traditions by building and playing their own musical instruments.

Ukuhluma: Revitalizing Indigenous Soundcraft is a community-based artistic project led by cultural practitioner, multidisciplinary artist, and iGqirha Sisonke Papu (KHNYSA). Supported by the Goethe-Institut Project Space (GPS) programme, the project brings indigenous sound-making into living practice through a series of hands-on workshops, culminating in a free public showcase and concert on 31 January 2026 at the New Payne Location Community Hall.

The project has already reached a significant milestone with the completion of 10 uhadi bows and umntshingo overtone flutes, handmade by young participants and facilitated by KHNYSA. The uhadi, a traditional Xhosa musical bow, holds deep cultural and spiritual significance, carrying ancestral memory through rhythm, vibration, and voice.

Building on this foundation, upcoming workshops will focus on the making and playing of umasengwane, with explorations into marimba and ngoni traditions. These sessions invite participants into a wider African sound conversation while remaining rooted in local knowledge and materials. Instrument-making is woven together with collective singing, listening practices, and embodied learning, positioning sound as both an artistic and relational force.

The project also works closely with Zilondolozé Ntombi, a group of young girls held within inkciyo — a traditional space for feminine care, nurturing, and guidance — as well as a local community choir, strengthening intergenerational and communal participation.

“Ukuhluma is about remembering through making,” says Papu. “When young people shape instruments with their own hands, they are not only learning music, they are learning how knowledge moves through the body, the land, and the breath.”

By taking place entirely in New Payne Location, Ukuhluma centres a community with deep cultural roots yet limited access to formal arts infrastructure. The project reflects the Goethe-Institut Project Space programme’s commitment to decentralised, non-commercial, artist-led cultural production outside South Africa’s major urban centres.

The final showcase and concert on 31 January 2026 will feature performances by workshop participants using the instruments they have built, alongside guest musicians Xhanti Nokwali, Amanda Akhona, and Wandile Hlamvana, joining KHNYSYA in a collective offering of sound, song, and story. The event is free and open to the public, inviting the wider community to witness and celebrate the creative journey.

Ukuhluma, meaning “to sprout” or “to begin growing,” positions indigenous soundcraft not as heritage frozen in the past, but as a contemporary artistic language that continues to evolve through practice, collaboration, and care.

### Project Information

Project Title: Ukuhluma: Revitalizing Indigenous Soundcraft

Project Lead: Sisonke Papu (KHNYSYA)

Venue: New Payne Location Community Hall, Mthatha

Duration: December 2025 – January 2026

Final Showcase & Concert: 31 January 2026

Access: Free and open to the public

Supported by: Goethe-Institut Project Space (GPS)

Collaborators: Zilondolozé Ntombi, Community Choir

Guest Musicians: Xhanti Nokwali, Amanda Akhona, Wandile Hlamvana