

Book gets everyone on speaking terms

Hello South Africa' will help people to communicate in official languages

JeVanne Gibbs

Translations of hundreds of useful phrases into all official languages, with pronunciation tips, are contained in a new book, published in time for the World Cup.

A phrase book has been published to help tourists and South Africans alike to communicate more effectively in the run-up to the World Cup.

Hello South Africa, the phrase book, contains translations of more than 600 phrases in 30 topics in each of the country's official languages, making it a useful communication tool to help people converse on a basic level. The phrase book concisely sums up South Africa's diversity, while making communications in its official languages easier.

It was developed over 18 months by graphic designer Mark Macdonald and his wife, Michelle, a voice and English pronunciation coach, with contributions from leaders in linguistics and social anthropology in South Africa.

"While the product was originally developed to help people communicate with each other during the World Cup, it has since evolved into something which we believe could have far greater nation-building implications," says Jenny Gautschi, who was involved with the development and marketing of the phrase book.

"Without a doubt, speaking to someone in his or her mother tongue and understanding something about that culture and its traditions, fosters a mutual respect. This phrase book offers a



Professor David Coplan, Mark Macdonald and his wife, Michelle and Jenny Gautschi

simple and effective way for people to achieve this."

The translations have been done by top academics in the African languages departments of South African universities.

"The introduction on the history of language in South Africa [was] written by Professor Rajend Mesthrie, a leader in the field of linguistics; and cultural introductions [were] written by Professor David Coplan, the chair of social anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand."

For example, in Zulu one can confidently ask anything from "What is your

name?" — "Ngubani igama lakho", pronounced "ngoo-bah-nee ee-gah-mah lah-kaw?", to tell somebody you have been bitten by a snake or letting a waiter know the service was excellent.

Languages and topics are also colour-coded to ensure any phrase is readily available.

The book contains photographs, quick-reference language distribution maps which show where a specific language is spoken and practical travel tips to help visitors have a better experience of the World Cup host nation.

The tips section includes information on banking; transport (taxis, buses and trains); internet cafes; shops and markets.

"It also serves as a souvenir of South Africa's rich diversity of languages, cultures and magnificent natural beauty."

Hello South Africa is available at Exclusive Books outlets and selected Van Schaik stores. — www.joburg.org.za

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