

PRESS RELEASE

## Big stage for youth empowerment against xenophobia: Dr. Auma Obama and Friedrichstadt-Palast present 2015 Act Now Youth Awards in Berlin

Berlin, 10 September 2015



The Kenyan Germanist, sociologist, journalist and author Dr. Auma Obama and the Friedrichstadt-Palast are extending an invitation to the Act Now Youth Awards, which will be presented in Berlin for the first time on 2 November 2015. With five categories of awards, the Sauti Kuu Foundation and Europe's largest show theatre together with prominent public figures will honour young people whose actions and commitment are helping to make our world a better place.

'We are also speaking out for humanity and integration, and above all against hatred and hostility towards foreigners,' explained Dr. Auma Obama at the international press conference at Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin. She is the founder and chairwoman of the Sauti Kuu Foundation. The charitable organisation aims to provide a voice for disadvantaged children and young people all over the world, while fostering and engaging their potential. Sauti Kuu is Swahili for 'strong voices'.

Organisations, initiatives, associations and school classes from across Germany have responded to the call to nominate young people aged 12-25 for their voluntary work. Nominations can be submitted until 30 September 2015 at [www.actnow-award.de/nominierung](http://www.actnow-award.de/nominierung).

In October, submissions will be considered by a jury comprising aid worker Janina Otto, television journalist Sibylle Bassler, German MP Wolfgang Bosbach, businesswoman Renata Jacobs, Dr. Auma Obama, and Dr. Berndt Schmidt (theatre director) and Tafara Plauschinat (member of the Young Ensemble) from the Friedrichstadt-Palast. In each category, three nominees plus accompanying guests will be invited to the award ceremony in Berlin. Designer Jette Joop has created a trophy especially for the awards.

Among those who have confirmed their attendance on 2 November are rock legend Udo Lindenberg (presenter of the Innovation award), football icon Jens Lehmann (presenter of the Hero award), YouTube stars Y-Titty (presenters of the Inspiration award) and the singer Nena (presenter of the Sustainability award), who is one of the most successful female artists in German music history. Familiar TV faces Christine Henning

PRESS CONTACT

André Puchta  
Head of Press &  
Public Relations

T +49 30 2326 2-201  
M +49 175 4319 092

puchta@palast.berlin  
www.palast.berlin



Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin  
Europe's Show Palace

Friedrichstrasse 107  
10117 Berlin-Mitte  
In the East End Theatre District

Theatre Director/General Director:  
Dr. Berndt Schmidt

Chairman of the Supervisory Board:  
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and Alexander Mazza will be hosting the awards ceremony, with some 1,900 guests from media, sport, culture, politics, business and social organisations.

'Children and young people in particular need to be aware of their own potential. That is what our foundation hopes to achieve. The Palast unambiguously advocates freedom and tolerance. This makes it an ideal partner in this extraordinary alliance,' says Dr. Auma Obama, describing the partnership with Friedrichstadt-Palast. Following in the footsteps of Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Margot Käßmann, Dieter Zetsche, Roman Herzog and the Dalai Lama, tomorrow in Munich Obama will receive the 2015 German Speakers Award – awarded by the German Speakers Association (GSA) – for her passionate commitment to helping disadvantaged young people.

Sebastian Hämer has written the song 'Raise Your Voices' (*Erhebt Eure Stimme*) exclusively for the evening gala. Sung by young people and celebrity stars, it will provide a musical backdrop and theme for all the award winners' appearances, and accompany the emotional finale. The song expresses perfectly what many children and young people experience, and especially what refugee children are currently going through. The song was created in collaboration with hit producer Christian Lohr (Gianna Nannini, Adoro, Christina Stürmer, Joss Stone). Coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the Young Ensemble – with 250 children and teenagers aged between 7 and 16 from more than 20 nations – the largest children's and youth ensemble in Europe will play an impressive part in the stage finale.

'The awards encourage young people to have the confidence to stand up to negative treatment. Because of the refugee debate, the call to speak out has become even more relevant recently, to make sure that the majority don't just stay silent and instead take a moral stand against hate speech,' says theatre director Dr. Berndt Schmidt about the partnership. Patron of the 2015 Act Now Youth Awards is football goalkeeper and World Cup champion Manuel Neuer: 'We all share the same basic idea, which is also true of my own foundation: we want to help make it possible for children and young people to live good lives, give them courage, and broaden their horizons. Voluntary social work strengthens social skills and is what makes a person a social being.'

Fashion chain C&A are raising their voice too, as the main sponsor. In around 500 stores in Germany and in their online shop, they are selling 'Do your own thing!' (*Mach Dein Ding!*) bags, designed by Udo Lindenberg for the awards, to benefit the Kuu Foundation and Udo Lindenberg Stiftung. 'As a socially responsible company, we make it a priority to support young people who do voluntary work in social, humanitarian and environmental projects. In addition to financial support through sales, we provide the necessary visibility and awareness,' affirms company spokesperson Thorsten Rolfes.

### Act Now Youth Awards

Monday 2 November 2015

Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin, Friedrichstrasse 107, 10117 Berlin-Mitte

Admission / red carpet: 5.30 p.m.

Start: 7 p.m.

[www.actnow-award.de](http://www.actnow-award.de)

[www.facebook.com/actnowaward](https://www.facebook.com/actnowaward)

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