

# Why STEM is nothing without a flower...

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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A major emphasis has been placed on the education of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) in recent years, while creativity and the Arts have been all but completely forgotten. Curro Holdings is looking to change that within its group of schools through CurroCreate - an initiative launched in partnership with Wordsmith's Theatre Factory, one of the oldest and most successful self-sustaining theatre companies in the country.



Wordsmith's Theatre Factory's director/playwright, Hennie van Greunen

CurroCreate aims to give all Curro learners the opportunity to showcase their creativity across a broad scope of disciplines, with the help and guidance of Wordsmith's Theatre Factory's director/playwright Hennie van Greunen and actor/musician/television presenter Pedro Kruger.

In the first year, the CurroCreate initiative will comprise of three main components, all managed by the Wordsmith's Theatre Factory team. These components include the Curro Arts Showcase (CAS); a commemorative concert making use of Curro learners to celebrate the education group's 20th birthday this year; and the Adopt-a-School project.

We chatted with van Greunen further about the project, Wordsmith's Theatre Factory's involvement and what it means to be creative...

## ***Tell us a little about CurroCreate and the inspiration behind the initiative...***

CurroCreate is a project that aims to establish creativity as a skill in the Curro family of schools. I often say that the worldwide system of education often works against creativity – CurroCreate is a home for those the learners who love to make things, to perform, to engage with social media and to ask questions. We trust that it will grow exponentially in every successive year.



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■ **What was the motivation for the Wordsmith's Theatre Factory's involvement in the project?**

I started my career as a teacher and saw first-hand how creative skills can allow learners to grow. Pedro Kruger, who is a partner in the Theatre Factory, and I have done various professional-standard youth theatre productions, ranging from plays to musicals to cabaret and we also noted how the theatre arts function as a nation-building tool, which excites us. I have a strong belief that we get to know each other by sharing our stories and by noticing the similarities in those stories. We also love the passion that Curro's entire management has for nurturing creativity in their learners.

■ **In an education system pushing STEM, why is it so important to include the Arts and creativity in the curriculum?**

“ A STEM is nothing without a flower. What I'm trying to say is that you can have all the knowledge in the world, but if you cannot apply that knowledge in a way that is new, and enquiring, chances are that you will remain a recipient of knowledge and not a creator of new information. Creativity is the spark to the kindling that is knowledge. ”

■ **Tell us about the Curro Arts showcase and why there is such a broad range of category options...**

We try to involve as many learners as possible. Imagine that you teach a group of animals: an orangutan, a fish, a lion and a snake. Exam time comes and the paper reads: 'Climb that tree for 300 points.' Chances are the orangutan will get an A+, the Snake probably a B, the Lion will get there with a D or and E, but the fish will sadly have to repeat the year. CAS (Curro Arts Superheroes, because creativity takes courage) aims to be a home to kids whose creativity burns with different colours and at different temperatures, so if you know a lot about youth issues, you can enter a Video Blog. If you love Instagram, you can curate a collection of your 10 best Insta photographs and enter those. You can write a song, make a sculpture, shoot a music video. There's only one rule: Create!



Actor, musician and television presenter, Pedro Kruger (left) from Wordsmith's Theatre Factory, auditions Curro Aurora learner, Alicia Angel Ferguson (right), in preparation for Curro's upcoming 20th birthday CURPage concert. The concert will entail a special musical play, and is set to be performed on 21 July 2018.

■ **What is the Adopt-a-School project, and what criteria are you looking at during the selection process?**

As from August we will adopt a school in the Curro fold - we will audition any and all high school pupils who want to perform, we will polish those skills and performances and end the year with a showcase, proving the effect that the performing arts have on group dynamics, personal development, empathy creation and just a whole lot of having fun. We will, based on the lessons of this experience, then create a model that can be followed by other schools. We have already chosen a school that is passionate, vibrant and open to embracing creativity: Meridian Pinehurst in Cape Town.



## Why we need to bring creativity back into education

Clint White 10 Jan 2017



### ■ *How are we as teachers and parents stifling our children's creative spirit, and what can we do to change this?*

We call it a uniform because that is what we want the learners to be: uniform. Write between the lines. Give back the knowledge I gave you. Clouds are fluffy and white, not triangular and green. Every kid has a spark. That spark is what should give them meaning and positive feedback. As parents and teachers, we often disregard that spark, because it's not necessarily what we would want it to be, or because we don't understand it, or simply because we don't see it. CurroCreate aims at getting that spark to grow, to heat, and to roar. Parents and teachers should do the same.

## ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

Shan Radcliffe is the editor of Bizcommunity HR, Education and Legal.

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