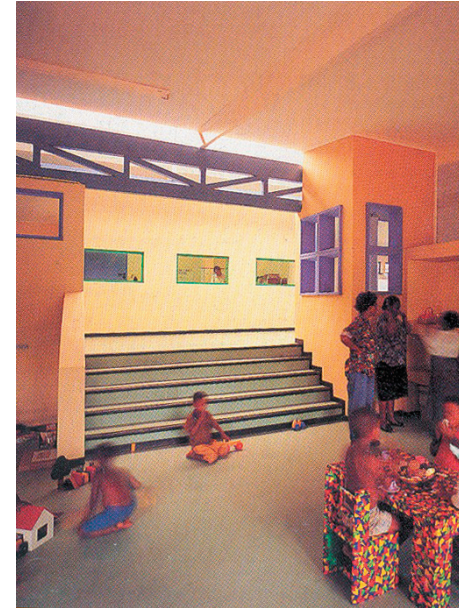


Fig. 37



Fig. 38



Education and Care Centre, Durban  
Liebenberg Masojada

Of the 6.3 million children under the age of six, over eighty percent are black. Pre-school education is relatively unknown to this population group. Research done at the start of this decade indicates that only about two percent had access to pre-school education. The Association for Training and Resources in Early Education (TREE) developed a model facility in Durban to both serve children from the surrounding informal settlements, but also to provide an example to training teachers.

The building is organized along a central spine, from which small alcoves are placed for ideal observation of class room activities. The class rooms are sunk below the level of the movement spine and vary in size, which allow for different groups and activities. The central spine is glazed, which brings light into even the most secluded space. The roof extends beyond the irregular floor plan, creating a number of covered porches for outside activities. Although very simple, the building allows for an interplay between light and shadow which animates the simple construction. The careful consideration for inside, in between and outside spaces create a vibrant and pleasant facility (Slessor 1995, p.35-36)

The variety in spaces created through the irregular floor plan allows for a variety of activities, as well as communicating shelter, intimacy, and individuality. The scale of volumes and places should be considered in light of the emotional value. The use of light, transitional space between indoors and outdoors and color creates a facility which enhances the education of children beyond just that provided by the teachers.

This is a rather modest facility situated next to the Stanza Bopape Health Clinic. The centre consists of a number of classrooms and a communal garden. Despite appearances, the facility manages to produce astonishing results. Initial research for the centre was started in 1991 for a new health clinic. Various groups were involved, including the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the University of Pretoria and the South African Breweries.

Funding has been a major obstacle in the history of the centre. The project was almost halted due to an inability to access the allocated funds. The first courses offered included sewing, juice making, welding and block making. But the last three activities were stop due to a lack of funds. In 1999 the Department of Social Services took over the management of the centre, and since then things have improved greatly. The centre currently offers training in baking-cooking-catering, sewing and urban agriculture. Future programs which are planned for this year includes welding and brick making. Training are offered free of charge to people from Mamelodi. Potential students must be unemployed, are interviewed and enters into a contract with the centre.

One of the main areas of success is the high priority placed on after care. Most students chose not to leave the centre after graduation, but remain at the centre where they are exposed to the whole range of activities involved in running a business. One example of this process is the sewing training. The centre received a tender from the Department of Education to sew uniforms for poor and orphaned children in the area. After training the students are thus employed. They are evolved in all aspects of the process, including the administration, measuring and manufacturing of the uniforms. Through this process the student receives valuable experience, while generating an income.

The involvement of professionals in the centre is of



Fig. 39



Fig. 40



Fig. 41



Fig. 42

note. The Board of Directors and Management consists of qualified persons from the community, including a member of parliament, lawyers, a teacher, a financial advisor and a pastor. With supervision from experts from a wide range of professions the centre is much more capable in its management role.

One of the most important factors for the success of the centre is the community participation and ownership. The community was actively involved in the planning, construction and running of the centre. The facilities are visible and easily accessible. The community therefore feels a strong sense of ownership and responsibility. The lack of serious theft and vandalism in the centre, in an area notorious for crime, is an indication of the high degree of community involvement and regard (Ranuyama 2004).