

Briefing document

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Real world problem

The world is globalising. The definition of globalising as given by the book *Globalization and Equity* is “widening international flows of trade, finance, and information into a single, integrated global market” (Dinallo 2005:67).

The benefits of globalisation are that it stimulates trade and economic growth, reduces poverty, and contributes to economical and political stability (Dinallo 2005:xiv).

Globalisation has increased rapidly, largely due to the exposure and connectivity that the Internet offers. Internet shopping offers convenience and email is a reliable form of communication, but this ‘cyber-life’ is impersonal and is only available to select portions of the population. Personalisation requires a return to regionalism in order to take place and this can be achieved by activating small communities.

If a small community can be self-sustaining, by producing and selling a unique product that fills a niche in the immediate market, it can grow by expanding its clientele through the Internet.

Dinallo feels that if South Africa improves its economic policies, it could trade more and attract more capital flow, thereby improving the economical and political stability of the country (Dinallo 2005:90).

A number of South African-based companies, such as Monkey Biz, M.J. Visuals and Ardmore, are selling their goods from their websites. This is encouraging for other South African businesses and sets an example of how it can be done.

Skills and development

South Africa has a high unemployment rate. This is due to a lack of skills and business knowledge. Those who have learned unique skills, handed down from generation to generation, do not have the business skills to exploit their talents in order to generate an income.

Dinallo suggests that “given Africa’s comparative advantage in abundance, low-cost unskilled labour, it should concentrate on producing simple, labour intensive- goods” (2005:68). However, if South Africa wishes to extend into the international market, training will be required to increase the quality of the merchandise.

Informal training centres such as Pop-up in Salvokop, Pretoria, provide a platform for training and business guidance for those who are unable to pay for a formal education but wish to gain a skill with which they can generate an income.

Under-utilisation of resources

Although some cities in South Africa started to address the problem of unemployment some time ago, the Tshwane municipality is lagging behind the rest of the country. Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg have all hosted successful festivals that promoted the country’s creative industries including the internationally recognised Design Indaba. At such events there is a notable increasing interest in value-added craft. Audrey D’angelo (www.busrep.co.za) wrote a report earlier this year on the importance of limiting the export of our rich supply of raw materials and rather producing value-added products in South Africa. This article was directed towards the production of jewellery, but the approach can and should be extended to all of our creative industries, including craft. Southern Africa

contains a wealth of precious and semi-precious gemstones that can be used more extensively for the production of value-added craft products (Cairncros 2001:4).

Ineffective marketing of cultural talents

Marketing is crucial for events such as the Design Indaba, Decorex, Woman’s Festival, SA Fashion Week and other art festivals. Exposure is predominantly created via specialist magazines and on the hosting city’s website. These media forms reach a limited cross-section of the population who already attend these events regularly. Many creative people are unable to develop their talent because they are not aware of the opportunities to do so. Tele-advertising and offering accessible free Internet access to sites promoting such events will increase the variety of attendees and thus, promote development in these areas of expertise.

Heritage

South Africans idealise other countries such as America and Britain, but they ignore their own treasures and heritage. Significant buildings are being demolished without any resistance from the local building council. Most owners of historically and architecturally significant buildings are ignorant about their buildings’ value and therefore, make poor choices regarding the maintenance and development of their estate.

A number of heritage buildings have been identified in Pretoria’s central business district. It is the architect’s and the urban designer’s duty to guide entrepreneurs in the choice of sensitive new uses for abandoned and misused heritage buildings to develop our cityscape appropriately.

Problem statement

There is a gap in the local tourist market for value-added goods. Curios are available in abundance at the National Zoological Gardens nearby the Panagos Buildings, but these are of an inferior quality and are unsuitable for export.

A craft node at which the local and tourist communities intersect creates an ideal platform for related activities through which these communities can support each other. At this node, training of local talent for the production and trade of value-added craft products will take place. These activities must be undertaken at the same locale so that each activity can respond quickly to the other activities.

Taxi drivers mainly work in the early morning and later in the afternoon. When conducting personal interviews with some taxi drivers, they expressed a sincere desire to have a secondary source of income for a few hours during the day. Other interviews with informal street vendors brought forward the problem that working mothers' have of keeping their children occupied and out of trouble during the day. Others were simply keeping a friend company at his/her stall as they had no work. These personal interviews revealed the need and the desire to spend their hours productively to develop skills and to relieve boredom.

Proposed development

The chosen site is the Panagos Building on the corner of Paul Kruger and Struben streets. As part of the GAP urban framework proposal for Pretoria's CBD, Paul Kruger Street is highlighted for development into a pedestrian road which will link Church Square with the National Zoological Gardens and a taxi rank to the north. A tram route is designated to run along Paul Kruger Street and a tram station will be situated on the corner of Paul Kruger and Struben streets, diagonally across from the site. These urban design decisions will initiate new opportunities for additional retail activities, creating a commercial precinct. In addition to a retail division, the low level of education of the majority of the population calls for a training facility on the site at which short courses may be attended (Figure 1.1).

Owner/investor profile

The building is currently owned by the Methodist Church of southern Africa.

For the purpose of this project, the owner will be a single landlord who will manage the tenants who in turn will provide services that conform to the business profile of the craft node.

Client/tenant profile

The anchor tenant will be the craft shop, Maano. It will offer value-added traditional and contemporary craft products as well as a selection of topic related books. Maano will also include a coffee bar, coupled with a free Internet café on the first floor of the building to draw people through the shop. Two computer points are provided as well as a Wi-Fi hot spot.

The second tenant will be a bead shop on the street corner. It is through this shop that controlled access to the workshop detailed above will be provided.

In addition to the above described formal retail outlets, two small rentable spaces will be provided along the eastern façade. These spaces will be rented at a moderate rate to afford opportunities for informal craft related traders to upgrade their businesses into semi-formal trade posts. A small area will be made available inside the building where the merchandise, a fold-up table and chairs can be stored at night, and a large display window and double doors will open out onto the street.

User/buyer profile

The user profile that will be responded to is the existing local and tourist populations.

Many small businesses and primary schools are in the immediate vicinity of the site. There are also many tourist destinations in the area. Therefore, a high percentage of local patronage is expected on weekends and after school hours, while tourist patronage is expected during the week.

An onsite workshop will be used for bead jewelry, pearl threading, wire, and mosaic courses throughout the week. An arrangement will be made with nearby schools that students may conduct arts and craft classes at the workshop. When it is not being used for classes, the workshop will be made available to artists.

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Sub-problems



Figure 1.1: Pretoria CBD

Context

The context under investigation is the portion of the Pretoria central business district north of Church Street.

A study which included pedestrian and vehicular movement, the needs of the local population and services provided has been completed and an urban design proposal has been put forward.



Figure 1.2: View of union Buildings from Struben Street

Flexibility

It is important to achieve flexibility in the new design system. It not only contrasts with the permanence of the existing structure, but allows the businesses to adapt to the changing desires of their clients and to change according to the available stock.

Craft

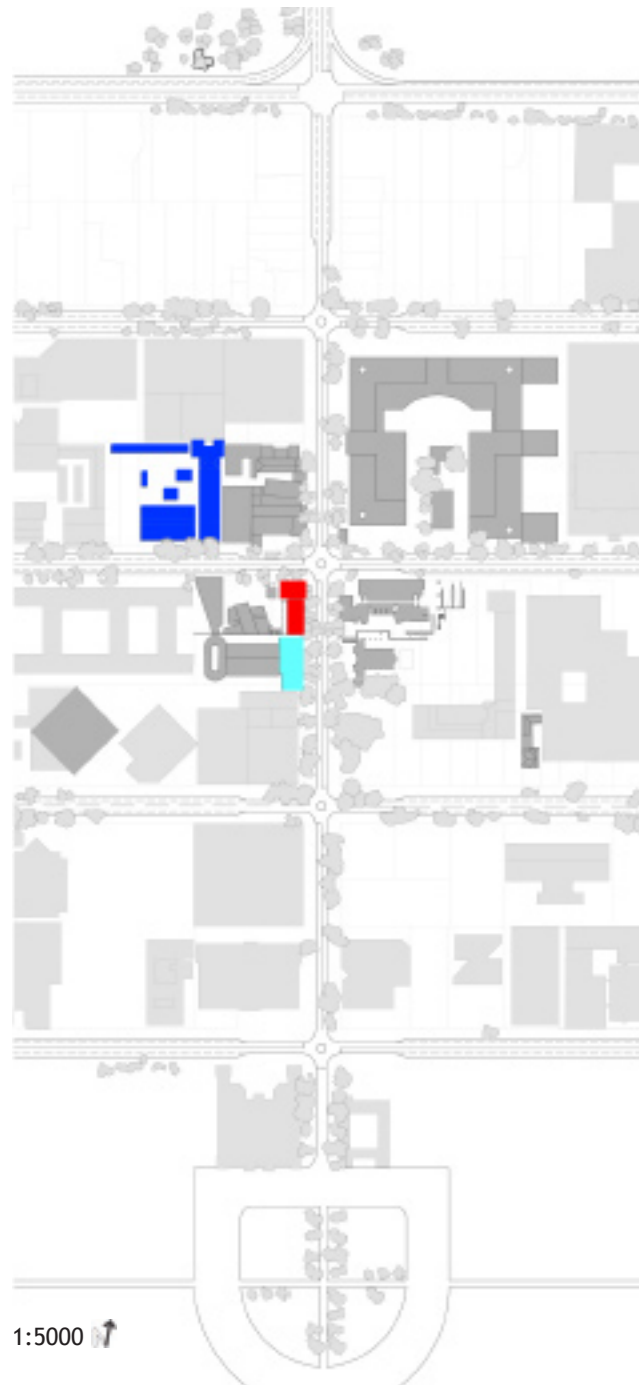
The production of handmade goods is something that is deeply rooted in South Africa's heritage. It is non-discriminatory as it is practised by both men and women and is worn by the rich as well as the poor. Some use it as a source of income while others enjoy it as a hobby, but the dexterity and skill needed must not be underestimated (Figures 1.3-1.4).

This genre of art can be taken to a high level of quality where the boundaries are tested and new, innovative materials and techniques are invented.

South Africa is rich in minerals (Cairncros 2001:4) and we should exploit these to enrich and promote the production of value-added craft.



Figure 1.3: Women making grass baskets (top)
Figure 1.4: Men making wire ornaments (bottom)



Training

Large portions of the local population do not have the finance to further their education. Furthermore, traditional skills are being lost due to the younger generation's disinterest in their heritage. Providing a workshop where school children can learn the skills of their forefathers will introduce them to an alternative career path should they not have the means to further their formal education.

Courses will fall into two categories, basic and advanced. Training will include various day classes designed for hobbyists, who will pay a flat rate for a course and course-kit, and formal courses with weekly classes.

Formal training will focus on teaching local talent to use their new skills to generate an income. Only a registration fee will be required to cover the cost of the equipment. A subsidy will be obtained from the Department of Arts and Culture of South Africa to help cover the costs incurred.

- Panagos Building
- War college (tertiary education)
- Princess college (primary education)

When not in use, the workshop will be rented out on an hourly basis to anyone wishing to use it as a studio or to use the equipment provided. The right environment for studio work will be supplied and thereby, newly trained craftsmen will be encouraged to use their skills without delay to begin generating an income. Interested persons will be able to book telephonically or via the Internet. Those aspiring to become facilitators at the workshop can attend training in this area should a post become available.

Marketing and branding

The value-added products will fill three different marketing profiles, namely local population, tourist population and export.

All marketing and branding will give credit to the designer or craftsman and acknowledge the authenticity of the design and materials used.

The Internet site to be created for the collaboration will facilitate orders and provide exposure to a national and international market.

Heritage

The Panagos Building is one of the oldest buildings still in use in Pretoria, South Africa (Figure 1.6). The design solution will respect the heritage value of the building while at the same time it will re-energise the interior spaces in line with the new functions.

Use of light

The majority of the fenestration is located on the eastern and western façades, resulting in a high concentration of light inside these spaces in the early morning and late evening respectively.

Lights will be installed to supplement the natural light where necessary. Track spotlights are the preferred choice because of their flexibility.

The continual changes in light intensity and quality throughout the day will heighten the experience of passing time and allude to passing time in the life of the building, and therefore, should be retained as far as possible.



Figure 1.6: 1939 Panagos Building

Scope

Definitions

a) Local
“Belonging to, existing in” is the definition of the term ‘local’ given in the Pocket Oxford Dictionary. For the purposes of this dissertation the area to which ‘local’ belongs is the northern part of Pretoria’s central business district (CBD). This area extends from Boom Street to Visagie Street (northern and southern parameters respectively) and Potgieter Street to Du Toit Street (western and eastern parameters respectively).

b) Value-added
The term ‘value-added’ refers to products which are of a higher value than other, similar products. The term is used to describe craft items sold at the shop. They will be of a higher quality than craft items sold at most curio shops and they will be suitable for export.

c) Craft related
The term ‘craft related’ refers to any product or service that has a craft-like character.

d) Panagos Building
What are known as the Panagos Building are in fact two buildings. As this is a commonly used name for the buildings when ever the words Panagos Building is used it refers to both buildings.

e) Corner building
The term corner building is indicative of the northern building which is situated on the corner of Paul Kruger and Struben Streets on erf 102 portion 4.

d) Southern building
The southern building refers to the elongated building built on Paul Kruger Street on erf 102 remainder.

Assumptions

It will be assumed that the Tshwane Inner City Project Spatial Development Framework (TICP SDF) GAPP proposal for Pretoria city centre (defined in Chapter 2.5) will be realised and will be enforceable for the future development of this precinct. This includes the development of Paul Kruger Street into a pedestrian spine.

Delimitations

The craft workshop will be limited to affordable materials only on account of the increased security risk that more expensive materials would impose.

Only craft related products will be sold and craft related activities will be exclusively promoted at the craft node.

Goal

The goal of this proposal is to develop a creative and adaptable platform at which South Africans can develop their skills, start their businesses and showcase their designs.