



IMVELO

(a place for skills development)
Construction Centre: Mamelodi

Professionals in construction industry in partnership with local community
in job creation, upliftment and sustainable environment.

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ABSTRACT

The design that is substantiated by this discourse is a Construction Centre in Mamelodi Township. The objective is to provide training and skills for those individuals who are unemployed and exhibit talent and skills in arts and other crafts related works. It will provide technical skills to people who want to improve their informal housing. But due to their background, need financial support and opportunity in order to acquire these skills. The centre will also provide research and development facilities in low cost housing and alternative materials in the construction industry.

Funding for this project will come from the University of Pretoria (the client), the Department of Science and Technology, and other private organizations interested or involved in construction. The common aim is to contribute to the new Government policy on housing delivery '**Breaking New Ground, 2004**' which advocates quality of housing rather than quantity as in previous schemes of the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP). The project's purpose is to re-direct professional efforts towards the needs of the poor in informal settlements in urban areas.

The objective of the centre is not only to educate and train students in the applied arts, crafts and construction field but also to provide them with skills to make a feasible living of it. It also aims to market them by establishing small-medium enterprises. In this way, successful students can have some source of income to finish subsidy housing units or improve their informal housing. Thus, the aim is bridging the idea of art and architecture with the more practical economic business education and improving the built environment. The works produced by students would be marketed and sold by them on the site and in various local enterprises outposts.

The training and research development will be provided by renowned and respected artists and craftsmen in order to pass on cultural skills to a younger generation. Professionals, students from University of Pretoria and allied institutions will provide technical and academic research. The research will be on new technology and methods of improving informal housing and low cost housing. Technical assistance will also be provided by former students who return to the centre to teach whilst supporting the idea of giving back to the community what they have been taught.

The design is aimed at integrating African applied arts, crafts and local building techniques with Western construction technology, within the urbanized context of Mamelodi.

Exhibitions, flea market activities, art and construction workshops as well as performances for children and adults are among the envisaged for the Centre. These would eventually serve to increase public awareness on applied arts, crafts and new building technologies in construction industry within local community.

Additionally, the Centre will contribute to the upliftment of the poor and disadvantaged communities through involving them in the construction of the centre itself and assuming that the training facilities in arts, crafts and construction skills provided at the centre can be used by them for use in constructing subsidised houses. It will also help community members in formalising the existing informal construction industries (for example, Zozos and welding workshops) to small-medium construction enterprises in the community. The construction industry will have another source of skilled labour from the graduates of the Centre.

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