

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This research report involves an evaluation of a visual arts education programme for street children delivered by Imbali Visual Literacy Project (subsequently referred to as Imbali) a non-government organisation (NGO) based in Johannesburg. The programme involved engaging youth living on the streets of Hillbrow in art-making and related activities. The evaluation focuses on two key research questions:

- 1) What were the perceptions of all stake holders – street youth participants, Imbali facilitators and Twilight care workers - of the reasons for Imbali offering the programme and the participants attending the programme?
- 2) What were the perceptions of all stake holders of what participants gained through engaging in the programme?

Following the evaluation I will make recommendations as to how such programmes could better meet the needs of the participants they aim to help. However, to begin with it is important to position and contextualise the *Imbali Street Children Art Programme*¹. For this reason, I begin by giving a brief background to rationales for art education and selected workshop based art education programmes existing outside of mainstream art institutions in South Africa. This background helps to situate Imbali historically, as well as to identify the ethos and key ideologies that inform its approach. Such an overview concerning South African NGO art education programmes has not been done before.

In subsequent chapters I will introduce Imbali and discuss its approach to art education and visual literacy as well as the shifts that have taken place within the organisation over the past seventeen years. Then, after looking at the *Street Children Art Programme* in detail I present similar programmes both locally and internationally and introduce

¹ This is the name to which the programme is referred throughout this research report. Although many of the participants were not “street children” but in fact “street youth” – some were in their teens and twenties - it has been adopted in this research report because all the official documentation around the intervention uses this name.

Grant Kester's ideas of "dialogical aesthetics" through a critique of one of these programmes. This then paves the way for my illuminative evaluation of the *Imbali Street Children Art Programme*.

A theoretical framework for arts education projects

Rationales for art education

Since the early 19th century, there have been many advocates of the value of art education and its inclusion in school curricula. I have selected three main theorists to discuss: John Dewey, Elliot Eisner and Richard Siegesmund. These individuals by no means exhaust the diversity of ideas and opinions in this area, but I have chosen to focus the discussion on them as their link to progressive education theory is explicit and directly ties in with what I identify as informing Imbali's approach. Also, key members of Imbali are familiar with the ideas and rationales for art education put forward by these three theorists.²

John Dewey was an influential campaigner for the inclusion of art in the school curriculum in the early 1900s. He claimed that art as a form of experience has special, unique and valuable characteristics –it "vivifies life" (Eisner 1972:5). Dewey articulated these ideas in his book *Art As Experience*:

Art is the living and concrete proof that man is capable of restoring consciously, and thus on the plane of meaning, the union of sense, need, impulse and action characteristic of the live creature. The intervention of consciousness adds regulation, power of selection and redispotion. Thus it varies the arts in ways without end. But its intervention also leads in time to the idea of art as a conscious idea –

² It is noted that the three theorists I have chosen to focus on are all American, male and white; this does not mean that there are no British, European, Asian, female or black theorists in this area. As mentioned in the main text, I have focussed on Dewey, Eisner and Siegesmund because their ideas tie in with progressive education theory which I have identified as informing Imbali's approach. Moreover, Dewey, Eisner and Siegesmund's ideas seem to form a continuum, building on each other in a way that makes a brief overview such as this meaningful.

the greatest intellectual achievement in the history of humanity.
(Dewey 1934:25)

Art As Experience was instrumental in expanding the domain and responsibility of art education. It emphasized art as a quality of experience that was meaningful in any realm of human activity. Dewey's ideas constitute what came to be known as "progressive education theory", as he promoted the use of art to provide children with opportunities for creative self-expression (Eisner 1972). To this end the role of the teacher was to unlock the creativity of the child by providing a stimulating environment and the necessary art media. Dewey's ideas, although couched in terms of early twentieth century progressive educational ideology,³ brought a new impetus to both the study of art and education.

Dewey was among the first theorists to advance the idea that artistic activity is a mode of intelligence⁴. Elliot Eisner took this further. Like Dewey, Eisner believed that the goals of art education should be based on what is unique and valuable about art. Eisner began by conceptualising artistic ability as a product of qualitative intelligence (thinking, in his view, is not limited to verbal operations). In contrast to what he called "discursive intelligence"⁵, "qualitative" or "non-discursive" intelligence is that which "is employed in the widest spectrum of activities in living. Indeed whenever we make decisions about the selection and organisation of qualities...we exercise this mode of intelligence" (Eisner 1972: 114). Eisner developed these ideas further, contending that "language (i.e. symbolic systems) functions largely as a surrogate for experience"

³ The Progressives of the 1920s and 1930s were highly criticised in subsequent decades. Their idea that much of educational planning should stem from the *felt needs* of children came under severe scrutiny. By always focussing on the "needs" of childhood they tended to rely too heavily on improvisation, which took the place of long-range planning and bred a spirit of anti-intellectualism (Bode 1938; Greer 1984). Their ideas were also seen as being modernist and essentialist, having a distinctly Western bias. However, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries many of the Progressives' ideas are making a come back (Hamblen 1997; Burton 2001).

⁴ Howard Gardner has theorised extensively on different modalities of intelligences. He sees the arts as providing access to particular types of cognitive intelligence; the arts are tools to develop latent intellectual abilities. He does not however, see the arts as a distinct mode of intelligence (Gardner 1977, 1983, 1990).

⁵ Eisner links discursive intelligence to language and logic. Eisner's use of the word "discursive" suggests that this kind of intelligence is contrary to what art is about. This is an idea couched in a particular view of what constitutes artistic practice, stemming from Progressive education theory. At the Wits School of Art for example, artistic practices are seen to span the realms of both discursive and qualitative intelligence. Often discussions revolve around artistic practice as a discursive practice. (David Andrew, personal comment).

(Eisner 1994:29). He saw the arts as being important because they refine the senses through which we have access to the sensory experiences that expand our consciousness. Our sensory experiences provide ways of knowing the world. So in his view, the arts are products of cognition, not something separate. Eisner saw the arts as an essential element in epistemology (Siegesmund 1998).

Eisner's epistemological viewpoint is far-reaching. For him the senses are part of mind. The arts are a primary means for refining the senses. The arts expand our ability to express our knowledge in forms of representation (Siegesmund 1998). According to Eisner there are forms of representation, previously characterised as aesthetic forms, that provide critical lenses for understanding what we have called empirical forms. It is the aesthetic that illuminates the empirical, just as the empirical gives rise to the aesthetic (Eisner 1993).

Eisner divides justifications for teaching art into two major types: contextualist justifications and essentialist justifications. Contextualist justifications focus on the instrumental consequences of art in work and use the particular needs of the student or society as a major basis for forming educational objectives. Essentialist⁶ justifications focus on the unique contribution that art, and only art, can make to human experience and understanding. These justifications emphasise what is indigenous and unique to art (Eisner 1972)⁷. Both Eisner's and Dewey's views on the importance of art education fall under the latter category.

More recently (Eisner 2002), although still maintaining that the arts promote subtle and complex forms of cognitive development not easily achieved in other disciplines, Eisner

⁶ The term "essentialism" has come under much criticism from poststructuralists in theoretical debates, with regards to the issue of meaning. It is argued that "because meaning is never completely ascertainable, to rely on a concept of fixed and unchanging – essential - meaning for texts rather than to explore the effects of a plurality of meanings imposes restrictions on interpretation that prohibit rather than encourage textual investigations" (Childers & Hentzi 1995:100). An essentialist position runs the risk of being exclusionary. However, if essentialist assumptions are abandoned altogether, the opposite is the case – everything is relative. To negotiate this difficulty some theorists have adopted a position of "strategic essentialism". With strategic essentialism for the purpose of local, limited political activity, an essentialist position is adopted. I think essentialist justifications for art education should be viewed in the light of "strategic essentialism".

⁷ It should be noted that Eisner made this strong division between these two justifications in the early 1970s before the term essentialism had pejorative connotations. In his more recent writings (Eisner 1993, 1994, 1998, 2002) he does not foreground this distinction. I however have chosen to cautiously use it as it provides some useful starting points for looking at and tracking Imbali's approach to art education.

also states “there is no single sacrosanct vision of the aims of arts education” (Eisner 2002:25). He acknowledges that the best approach will vary according to the values and characteristics of a community and the needs of its students. This focus on understanding the “values and characteristics” of a community and “the needs of its students” in order to find the best approach to art education is something that I will return to later in this research report (chapter seven) when I suggest how the *Imbali Street Children Art Programme* could be reconceptualised to more closely meet the needs of that group.

In his 2002 book *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* Eisner writes further on the important role that the arts can play in promoting awareness of many different aspects of the world. He argues that the arts provide permission to engage the imagination as a means of exploring new possibilities (Eisner 2002). He also describes how various forms of thinking are evoked, developed, and refined through the arts. These forms of thinking he says are more helpful in dealing with the ambiguities and uncertainties of daily life than are the formally structured curricula that are employed in schools today.

Richard Siegesmund advances the ideas of Eisner and other theorists. In his paper ‘*Why Do We Teach Art Today?*’ he reviews the major western historical rationales for art education and then “puts forward an argument for where art education might best build a clearly articulated, persuasive and enduring rationale that can sustain art education’s place within the school curriculum” (Siegesmund 1998:199). Siegesmund is concerned that currently the numerous justifications for art education and the absence of a conceptual centre do not serve the discipline well (Siegesmund 1998).

Siegesmund, drawing from Efland (1990), identifies three major intellectual arguments for art education. He groups them into the following “streams of influence”: the expressionist; the reconstructivist and the scientific rationalist. His particular contribution is to the last category, where he suggests a viable way of drawing various arguments together to present a strong conceptual centre for art education.

The expressionist stream views the primary mandate of art education as the nurturing and protecting of the autonomous, imaginative life of the child. Free expression is the desired outcome of art education (Siegesmund 1998). This stream offers no clear

epistemological justification for art education. “To insist that the arts are only realms of expression and play is to denigrate their cognitive function” (Siegesmund 1998:210).

The reconstructivist view holds that art, culture, and creative expression are powerful agents in sharpening educational outcomes. Art education is a tool for historical and moral reconstruction, capable of transforming individuals and society. Art education is explicitly placed in the service of social transformation (Siegesmund 1998). For the reconstructivists, art education should be a principal area of resistance to cultural homogenisation. Students should achieve critical awareness rather than appreciation. This process of critical analysis produces personal understanding and growth. Art becomes an instrument with which to conduct inquiry rather than the subject matter of inquiry⁸. Within the reconstructivist stream art is properly understood as an instrument, not as a discipline (Siegesmund 1998). As with the expressionist stream, this justification does not have an epistemological rationale.

Scientific rationalists look for an empirical base for art education. “They claim art education is a discipline with distinct methods for conducting inquiry and forming judgements. The result of such inquiry and judgement is a broadening of warranted knowledge.” (Siegesmund 1998:204). Siegesmund suggests that “only this third stream of influence offers firm arguments and evidence towards solid epistemological rationales for art education” (Siegesmund 1998:210).

Both Dewey and Eisner’s ideas about art education, I propose, fall into the category of scientific rationalists. Dewey, one of the earliest voices in this field, put forward the idea that art is a unique form of experience and therefore a form of knowledge in its own right. Eisner, during his many years of theorising in the area of art education, extended these ideas by suggesting that art is a form of enquiry which discovers, creates and enlarges knowledge. The arts refine the senses through which we have access to the

⁸ What Eisner identifies as “contextualist justifications” for art education arguably fall under this reconstructivist view. It should be noted that Eisner’s framing of contextualist positions (in the early 1970s) is couched in a seemingly white middle class way of seeing things. This position does not seem to take into account different social realities and how art education can engage these varied contexts. There are instances where the reconstructivists provide very strong justifications for how art education contributes to social transformation. An example of this can be found in the book: *Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education* edited by Cahan and Kocur.

sensory experiences that expand our consciousness. Not only does Eisner claim that the arts have an important epistemological base but that they are part of mind (cognition). The arts are a means of refining the senses; they expand our ability to express our knowledge in forms of representation (Siegesmund 1998).

Siegesmund stresses the importance of art educators understanding the epistemological basis of art education – i.e. how they are teaching students to think. He emphasises that educators need to articulate out of their own values and experience and the curriculum what is worth knowing through the study of art. Art education needs to be perceived as providing a body of knowledge worth knowing. So the important question here according to Siegesmund is “not how art can be used, but what is it that we learn from art?” (Siegesmund 1998:209). Drawing from the scientific rationalists, Siegesmund (1998:209) suggests that the major contribution art education can make is helping students to “learn to reason through perception”.

Siegesmund defines reasoned perception as “the application of reason to create a meaningful and developed sense of perception” (Siegesmund 1998:209). This definition provides art education with an epistemology that fully embraces sense, concept and visual perception. Siegesmund suggests that “the soundest epistemological rationale for art is grounded in the philosophical arguments, curricular structure, and pedagogical methods that increase cognisance of sensory concepts to the end of developing skills in reasoned perception” (Siegesmund 1998:212).

In summing up his position with regards to developing reasoned perception through learning about art, Siegesmund writes:

To expand empirical knowledge to include art, and moving art into the mainstream of disciplined enquiry, may require art to move down from its pedestal. It can no longer claim to be a discrete, objectified realm of knowing outside of rationality or an intelligence adjunct to cognition. Neither is it a neutral instrument for creating social self-awareness. It is, however, a realm of feeling, sensory concepts, and exquisitely varied forms of human representation that give us insight into what it

means to be in, relate to, and comprehend. Or, even more succinctly, to have knowledge of the world. (Siegesmund 1998:212)

Many of Imbali's beliefs about the unique and valuable contribution that learning in and through art can make to the development of both children and adults is rooted in the ideas about the value of art education put forward by the three theorists discussed above. I will expand on this in chapter two where I introduce Imbali. It seems relevant at this point however to make brief mention of some general categories of educational ideologies⁹. This will further help to identify the values and ideologies on which Imbali was founded and continues to operate.

General educational ideologies

Various sociologists and philosophers over the years have made attempts to categorise ideologies of education (Raynor 1972, Cosin 1972, Husen, 1974, Bennett and Jordan 1975.) Roland Meighan and Iram Siraj-Blatchford draw on Davies 1969 in identifying four categories of educational ideologies: conservative, revisionist, romantic and democratic (Meighan and Siraj-Blatchford 1997). I will briefly describe each of these, as they help to contextualise Imbali's ideological and educational approach.

The conservative category is concerned with maintaining the status quo; these positions can range from crude dogmatism to carefully formulated versions of elite culture. In contrast, the revisionist category emphasises improving the system's efficiency in terms of the job requirements of the market. Governments generally opt for an educational system that slants towards the revisionist ideology¹⁰. The romantic category is concerned with individual development and has its roots in the works of Freud, Piaget, Froebel, Steiner and Montessori, among others. This ideology has been central to the establishment of private "progressive" schools. Finally, the democratic category (which I argue is where Imbali's attitudes and values are dominantly positioned) has its roots in

⁹ Ideologies here are defined as a broad interlocked set of ideas and beliefs about the world held by a group of people (Meighan 1981).

¹⁰ The apartheid government's education system in South Africa at first glance typifying a conservative approach, actually slanted towards a revisionist ideology. However, this system was two-tiered. The Bantu education system for black people was geared towards producing unskilled labourers, a mass workforce who would perform cheap manual labour. For the whites there was another system, this geared towards training professionals and managers, i.e. a skilled workforce. This system was well funded and provided many resources such as libraries and sports facilities.

socialist tradition. These ideas stem from socialist and liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century (Marx and Engels, Rousseau, Tolstoy), and strive to uphold equal opportunity and access for all.

A background to workshop based art programmes existing outside of mainstream art institutions in South Africa between the 1950s and 1980s

The projects and programmes that I introduce below all precede Imbali. Providing a brief background to them not only helps to establish the climate of art education into which Imbali entered, but also shows how many of their principles, values and methodologies are carried through in Imbali's liberal democratic ethos. However, it should be noted that while most of the programmes discussed below focus on developing artists, Imbali focuses on developing arts and culture teachers, children and crafts people, with an emphasis on the intrinsic value inherent in art-making processes.

Polly Street Art Centre

Polly Street was the name of an art centre in Polly Street, Johannesburg. Cecil Skotnes, an emerging young South African artist of this period ran the Centre from 1952 until 1966. It was during these years that the centre played an influential role in the development of black South African artists by providing studio space and training. The resources at the centre were limited, and thus training was provided on an ad-hoc basis - Skotnes thought of Polly Street as a "workshop" rather than as a school (Sack 1988). However, during his fourteen years at the centre, Skotnes managed to build up a network of support and launch himself and a number of other artists into successful life-long art careers (Sack 1988). The accessibility of the centre and the exhibitions that were organised for the students enabled black and white artists to meet and work together, sharing ideas and knowledge at a time when the country was divided by apartheid laws along racial lines.

As the Polly Street Art Centre existed outside of mainstream institutions, it could establish its own curriculum, working methods and ethos. Although the students were taught many of the standard western art exercises like still life painting, life drawing, landscape studies and abstract design, they were also encouraged to interpret objects

and their surroundings in expressive ways. There was a lot of freedom. The use of cheap and accessible material for making art was encouraged, and students learnt to work with “alternative” as well as traditional art materials. They were also encouraged to draw inspiration from African sources, and a synthesis between African and western traditions is a defining feature of many Polly Street artists (Sack 1988).

Due to the socio-economic situations of most of the students at Polly Street, they were encouraged to sell work as soon as possible; hence they were free to establish their own individual styles.

In the 1960s the apartheid policy of separate development caused Polly Street to close (the authorities saw no reason to provide art facilities in the city for black people). Centres like the Mofolo Art Centre in Soweto and the Katlehong Art Centre in Katlehong were set up in the townships to provide “cultural facilities”. However, the legacy of the Polly Street centre and Skotnes’s inspiration as a teacher lived on through the many artists who spent their formative years at the centre (e.g. Durant Sihlali, Lucas Sithole, Sydney Kumalo, Ephraim Ngatane) (Sack 1988).

Rorke’s Drift Art and Craft Centre

The Evangelical Lutheran Church Art and Craft Centre at Rorke’s Drift Natal was established in 1962, around the time that the Polly Street centre drew to a close. For the next two decades this centre played a major role in training artists and crafts people who had no access to formal art institutions. Initially started with funding from Sweden, the Rorke’s Drift Art and Crafts Centre had the following aims:

- To nurture the unique artistic heritage of Africa
- To extend this [African] heritage with new influences so that it would find its rightful place in an evolving and changing society
- To ensure that it developed with the changing society and that its arts and crafts would find increasingly profitable outlets

- To assist in raising standards of living by extending its teaching influence through its students and by giving local people work and income. (Sack 1988)¹¹

The centre provided unique opportunities for interaction between Swedish, American and South African teachers and black South African students. This made for a complex set of artistic exchanges and cross cultural influences (Sack 1988). There was, however an awareness among the first teachers¹² at Rorke's Drift that they were white and Western working in an African context, hence they were cautious to "impose as little as possible and concentrate on teaching technique, allowing natural talent to surface" (Sack 1988:20). This perceived "non-interventionist" approach to the art teaching at the Centre does not however go unchallenged. Hobbs and Rankin point out that the Swedish staff members were "inevitably bringing European concepts to the Centre, most obviously in the media they were teaching the students, but no doubt in other ways also." (Hobbs and Rankin 2003:77)

Similar to the Polly Street Centre, teachers at Rorke's Drift were free from institutional bureaucracy and could develop their own curricula to suit the needs of the learners. Printmaking (both relief and intaglio) was a big focus of the art school; Peter and Ulla Gowenius (two of the first teachers at the school) believed strongly that "usefulness" should inform all activities, and graphics are easily translated into illustrations, designs for fabric, posters and other mass produced images. Moreover, the fact that multiple prints could be made from a single block or plate also increased the economic potential of art-making. In addition the multiplicity of prints made them an excellent medium for the dissemination of ideas (Hobbs and Rankin 2003).

The students at Rorke's Drift, like those at the Polly Street Art Centre, were encouraged to sell their work and hence develop a marketable style fairly early on in their training. The teaching style professed by the early teachers at Rorke's Drift – to allow each

¹¹ These aims were taken by Sack from an article written by Walter Battis entitled '*ELC Art and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift*' which was published in *African Arts*, vol. 11, 1977 – 78, pp. 38-42.

¹²The second generation of teachers at Rorke's Drift had a different make up. John Muafangejo (a former student) also returned to Rorke's Drift in 1974 as an artist in residence and had considerable influence on the current students.

student to explore his or her own imagery to find an independent style and content – supported this.

The Art Foundation

The Art Foundation was founded in Johannesburg in the early 1970s by artist and educator Bill Ainslie. Like Polly Street and Rorke's Drift, the Art Foundation provided a place where black students could learn about and make art during a time when the Universities and Technikons were inaccessible to them. Although the Art Foundation was located in a house in the affluent white suburb of Forest Town, it was on a major taxi route from Soweto, and thus was accessible to black students from the townships. The board of trustees also raised money each year to assist about ten or twelve black students with bursaries (Steven Sack¹³, personal comment). The Art Foundation was a place where black and white art students had opportunities to work together, mix and share ideas, even during the dark years of apartheid.

Ainslie had a very particular work and teaching ethos and this continued at the Art Foundation after his death (Ruth Sack,¹⁴ personal comment). Ainslie encouraged free creative self-expression and the form that this often took was large abstract painting,¹⁵ particularly among the senior students. In the first few years of study more traditional subject matter prevailed and students painted and drew still life, figure studies and landscapes done out in the garden (Steven Sack, personal comment).

The notion that art should be available to everyone was an important one for Ainslie, and a culture of anti-intellectualism and anti-theory (an opposition to theorising) dominated at the Art Foundation. Overseas and visiting artists were often invited to give presentations to the students; this tended to be as a substitute for formal theoretical training (Ruth Sack, personal comment). The Art Foundation, like the Polly Street and Rorke's Drift Centres was free to develop its own curriculum and meet the perceived

¹³ Steven Sack took over the directorship of the Art Foundation after Ainslie died. He held this position from 1988 to 1994.

¹⁴ Ruth Sack taught at the Art Foundation from 1989 to 1996. She was responsible for initiating a history of art and cultural studies programme as well as a teacher-training course there.

¹⁵ Ainslie was greatly influenced by the Abstract Expressionists particularly after visiting the Triangle workshop in New York in the mid 1980s.

need of its students, but unlike the latter two institutions it placed little emphasis on the selling of artworks and producing self sufficient professional artists.

Thupelo Workshops

The Thupelo Workshops began in South Africa during the 1980s and were strongly linked to the Art Foundation as Bill Ainslie, (along with David Koloane) was instrumental in organising them¹⁶. Taking its form from the Triangle Workshop model pioneered in New York in 1982 by Robert Loder and Anthony Caro, the Thupelo workshops provided an opportunity for artists from southern Africa, the U.S.A and U.K to work together for an intensive two-week period. During this time the artists involved were encouraged to experiment, break new ground, work in new materials and try out new concepts. They were not necessarily expected to paint work for a show (Loder 1995).

These workshops were always artist-led and based on a principle of genuine cooperativeness. A prime focus of the workshop experience was the development of artists' creative abilities (Loder 1995). This spirit of sharing and exchange was fostered at a time when Apartheid disenfranchised a number of artists, particularly black artists who were denied access to art institutions and art historical and critical discourse (Richards 1997; Koloane 1997). These workshops took place in many countries in Africa during the 1980s and early 1990s. They were always artist driven and governed by a loose, flexible structure where the development of the artists' creativity was the prime focus.

The workshop format operationalised through the Thupelo Workshops is one that has, to varying degrees, remained central to many arts education programmes in South Africa. Like the previous art programmes mentioned, the Thupelo Workshops also functioned outside of mainstream institutions and thus had freedom to develop structures, values and working methods suited to the participating artists.

¹⁶ The way the workshops were run and the principles on which they were based were very close to Ainslie's philosophy of free self-expression.

There are a number of differences however between the workshop format of the Thupelo Workshops and that of Imbali's. The Thupelo Workshops focussed on artists working together for mutual benefit and support. The participating artists worked towards producing a body of work in a relatively short period of time which they would then share with each other, giving and receiving feedback. In contrast, the Imbali workshops are always facilitator led, the main aim being to expose participants to creative processes and develop new skills. However, the experiential component is an aspect that the Imbali workshops share with those of Thupelo's; they are also both open ended and involve a process of participation, sharing and discovery.

The Funda Centre and the African Institute of Art

The Funda Community College founded in Soweto in 1983 provided a venue for another art institution that focussed on the education and training of black artists, students and teachers: the African Institute of Art (AIA). Situated in Soweto the Funda centre was very accessible to black artists, students and teachers.

The AIA fostered an environment where freedom of expression was valued and encouraged and attempts were made to develop an Afro-centric curriculum and approach. The appreciation of African art and drawing from it as a source of inspiration were initiated by Skotnes during the Polly Street era. The focus on developing a more Afro-centric approach and using cheaper and more accessible materials and techniques for art-making is something that the AIA shared with both the Polly Street and Rorke's Drift centres, the Art Foundation and the Thupelo Workshops. There was also a cross fertilisation between these various centres, a number of graduates from both Rorke's Drift (Sokhaya (Charles) Nkosi and Dumisani Mabaso) and Polly Street (Durant Sihlali) taught at Funda under the AIA. Dumisani Mabaso also taught at the Art Foundation.

The AIA was the first visual arts organisation existing outside of mainstream university and technikon structures to pioneer relationships with these structures. Partnerships were formed with the University of South Africa (Unisa), the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Witwatersrand Technikon and Johannesburg College of Education. Steven Sack was instrumental in setting up a degree programme linked with Unisa, whereby students could work towards acquiring qualifications from this

institution. This was the first time that a university degree was offered through an organisation such as the AIA (Steven Sack, personal comment). In addition to its University Support Programmes, the AIA ran an art teachers training programme and part-time art courses. The art teachers training programme became known as Khula Udweba and resulted in the publication of a teacher's resource book with the same name. This book, which was based on the innovative teaching methodology used by the course, broke new ground in terms of art teaching in South Africa (Seidman 1994). Aimed specifically at art teachers with little background in art, the book develops an approach to art teaching and a series of projects in art-making for children that are particularly suited to the South African context.

Summary

There are many differences between all the arts education initiatives discussed above: they were started at different times, in different places, by different people with different philosophies. They also however, have many similarities: they all to some extent resisted apartheid; in going against its ideology of separate development they fostered a democratic ideology. They all focussed on teaching the visual arts, often at grass roots level. In addition, they functioned outside of mainstream institutions and thus had the freedom to develop their own curricula, tailoring it to the perceived needs of their students or participating artists; hence it could be said that an ethos of learner-centeredness prevailed. Developing a curriculum more located in African content and culture and more directly related to learners experience was a common concern of all these projects. Moreover, they all developed working methods and encouraged use of material that was accessible and often less expensive than traditional fine art material. They also in many instances used a “workshop model” instead of more traditional “classroom practices”.

In chapter two I will trace Imbali's development and show how many of the art education projects preceding it are responsible for aspects of its orientation. The general ethos of resisting apartheid, making art and visual literacy accessible to a wider audience, working in a learner-centred way, and using a “workshop model”, all point towards liberal democratic principles that are firmly carried forward in Imbali's

approach and practices. The progressive and liberal democratic ethos of Imbali has its roots in these previous arts education projects.