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Profit for change: catalysing architecture through commerce and identity

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PROFIT FOR CHANGE

CATALYSING ARCHITECTURE THROUGH COMMERCE AND IDENTITY

ABSTRACT

Informal communities seem to thrive due to their ability to invent and adapt resilient organic systems. Although programmes are often conceptualized to intervene in social, economic or institutional settings, very few are able to address what I believe to be the problem underlying in many instances; money. The ability to attract, develop and maintain commerce in a closed system will determine the efficiency and dependency a community will have on external forces.

The quest for a self-sustaining economic system suggests a move towards creating complex commercial urban centres which can operate outside the parameters of a formal economy. History has provided such models, where out of necessity, informal industries have taken structure and found ways to attach to the mainstream economy.

My line of questioning stems from these principles and seeks to explore modes of community empowerment initiatives. The goal is to identify the necessary framework that will allow capitalist constructs to prevail within informal systems.

At the crux of economic emancipation for informal communities in South Africa must exist an environment that compels a shift in attitude for the mobilisation change. The state in its incumbency to deliver radical social transformation is in the best position to act, but history has shown that movements which were born from the society, despite financial, political & social hardships, have the propensity to dramatically advance and flourish along a greater trajectory.

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