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Center of hope: providing a platform for community development in Thembelihle, Johannesburg : the Mosque as a Nerve Center

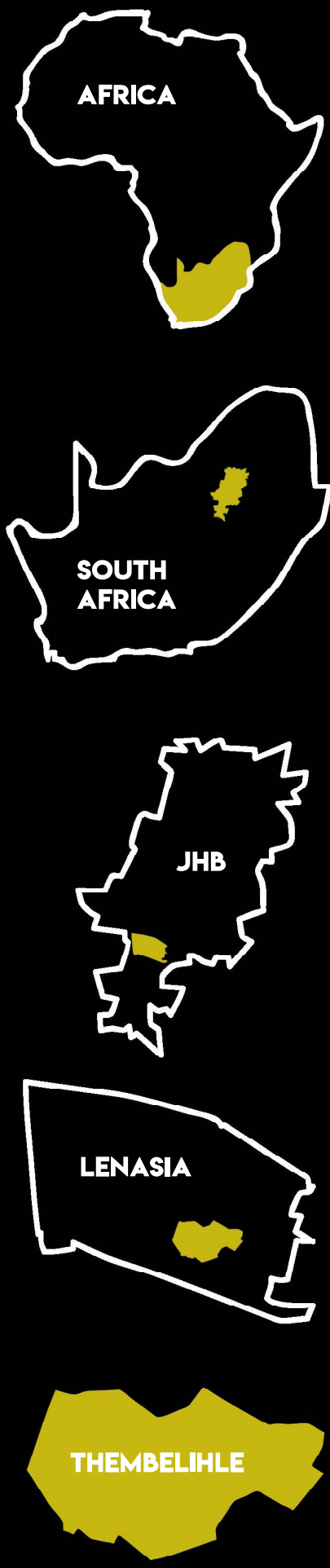
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(Author, 2019)

ABSTRACT

The location of this research is based in Thembelihle, Lenasia, an informal settlement in the southern region of Johannesburg. The core of this research seeks to unpack the developmental requirements of this marginalized community. Parallel to this, the architectural proposal aims to address a part of the developmental requirements by stimulating community development through the design and implementation of a Mosque precinct. The Muslim community in Thembelihle is seemingly growing in size. Even though the Muslim population remains as a minority, the practice of Islam, coupled with the various functions of the Mosque, has the potential to contribute towards providing an integrated and community orientated space that fosters positive development platforms. The Mosque is a center of gravity in the wide-ranging affairs of Muslim communities. Where ever there are Muslims there is a need for a Mosque, regardless of the amount of Muslims and their influence in relevant communities.

Previous development initiatives in Thembelihle have failed to holistically encapsulate the needs of both the Muslim and non-Muslim community in Thembelihle. Consequently, this research will investigate how the community of Thembelihle could be harnessed towards becoming an integrated, sustainable human settlement by applying the Mosque precinct as a key catalyst and impetus for future community development initiatives.

The underlying rationale and philosophical stance of the Mosque precinct is rooted in the desire to foster spirituality, inclusivity, economic development and serve as a means of achieving liveability, sustainability, connectivity and resilience.