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DENSeDUCATION: re-imagining the typology of a learning environment in the dense inner city of Johannesburg

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abstract

"The biggest issue I could think about before I even started visiting the schools was that I could not comprehend how a school could be effective in offering quality education if it was lacking several crucial academic and recreational facilities."

- (Investigator, 2019)

Over the past two and a half decades, following the fall of the Apartheid regime, inner city Johannesburg has experienced significant population changes that saw the major businesses moving out and the working class moving into new residential developments to be closer to work and the urban lifestyle.

A growing amount of buildings originally built as office buildings have been repurposed over the years to serve as residential developments in response to the high numbers of young Johannesburg residents moving into the city from outlying suburbs/townships, some South African citizens from other parts of the country, and African citizens from other countries of the continent.

This has resulted in many children being raised in the inner city with very inadequate schools that have been being born into existing buildings built for different purposes in Johannesburg's past.

This research report suggests that a new typology is required to deal with rising numbers of students to be catered for due to rising numbers of young families moving into the inner city, and as a response to inadequate schools with no facilities required to provide quality education. As a result of limited space within the inner city, the nature of this learning centre would make sense if it were to be vertical in order to accommodate the program of a traditional horizontal school and a wider, more inclusive program.

The conducted research aims to give light on the influence of educational environments on the quality of education, the benefits of school-community relationships and the importance of having recreational spaces within the setting of a learning environment for both the learning centre and the community.

Keywords: Inner City, Inadequate Schools, Education, Learning Spaces, Learning Centre, Recreational Spaces, Community