

Abstract

This dissertation aims to examine how pottery factories in the North West province were conceived and how relevant their functions are, within the confines of craft product development training initiatives, as potential contributors to social empowerment, job creation and economic sustainability today. The dissertation will trace and analyse the impact of specific training initiatives undertaken to empower potters from one of these factories. The focus will be on the methods used to transfer product design and craft manufacturing skills (craftsmanship) as well as evaluating the challenges and success of these methods in promoting self-reliance and sustaining livelihood economically. The impact of these methods will be assessed by the beneficiaries' ability to integrate concepts, ideas and action as well as their understanding of the markets and ability to follow through orders.

The research draws inspiration from the South African National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP, 2011: 10). The plan envisages that by 2030; "the economy should be close to full employment; equip people with the skills they need; ensure that ownership of production is less concentrated and more diverse (where black people and women own a significant share of productive assets); and be able to grow rapidly, providing the resources to pay for investment in human and physical capital".

One of the key sectors anticipated to contribute in achieving the vision of the NDP is the craft sector as suggested by the Department of Trade and Industries (DTI's) Customised Sector Programme (DTI, 2005). This vision is possible in the craft community if community development efforts are not rushed towards achieving immediate results, but rather focus on the long term of investing in and empowering people with the relevant skills. Writing about applying design to alleviate poverty, Thomas (2006) suggests that sustainable results can only be achieved in the long term because short term initiatives are dependent on single individuals from 'outside' organisations for designs and markets. And therefore this research focuses on pottery factories established in the year 2010 by Mintek's Small Scale Mining Beneficiation Programme, particularly the Timbita Ceramic Incubator.

According to the Minister of Arts and Culture the honourable Mr Paul Mashatile, the cultural and creative industries have the potential to be an important driver of

economic growth and job creation (Business report, 5 April 2011, 17). Perceiving the creative sector beyond aesthetic and human development dimensions, and more as a sector with the potential to contribute to economic growth and job creation stimulated the assumption of more responsibility for stakeholders and government to invest in both financial and skills development. It is important then, to analyse whether the training methods implemented are efficient and effective in empowering these communities and whether or not they yield sustainable results.

It is, therefore, anticipated that this study will contribute toward, at least within the South African context, the limited literature in craft development as an economic industry from the context of crafts product development and craftsmanship skills transfer. Applied research looking at practical cases will be combined with various literature engagements, and supported by semi-structured in-depth interviews used as tools to obtain information for this research.

Key words: Craftsmanship, Designer-ship, Economic Empowerment, Empowerment, Job creation, Pottery, Poverty, Product Development, Social Empowerment, Sustainable Development, Training and Workmanship.