

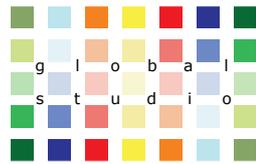
Global Studio Johannesburg 2008

ACADEMIC ACUPUNCTURE Executive Summary

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In collaboration with Global Studio 2008

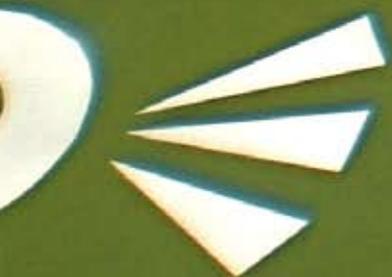
GLOBAL STUDIO 2008



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GLOBAL STUDIO

JOHANNESBURG 2008



DIEPSLOOT COM



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GLOBAL STUDIO 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Global Studio is an innovative design and planning studio and forum spearheaded by the United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers in 2004. Developed by the University of Sydney, Columbia University and the University of Rome - La Sapienza, Global Studio aims to impact design and planning education and professional practice through the establishment of international, interdisciplinary, and multi-institutional partnerships. Global Studio Johannesburg (June /July 2007) built upon the program models established in Istanbul (2005) and Vancouver (2006) . GS 2007 was organised by the University of Sydney and the founding partners in association with local academic host (the University of Witwatersrand) and the City of Johannesburg. Global Studio returned to Johannesburg in July 2008 to further develop work begun in 2007.

Since its inception in 2005, Global Studio has involved over 450 students, academics and professionals from more than 30 countries, 50 universities and 10 disciplines in projects with disadvantaged communities, bringing together approximately equal numbers from the Global North and South. It has included participants from North America (USA, Canada), South America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Guatemala), Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Botswana), Europe (United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Italy), Middle East (Iran, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi



Arabia, Israel), Asia and the Pacific (India, China, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand).

GLOBAL STUDIO CONCEPT

Central to the Global Studio concept is a community-based action and research agenda which focuses on issues defined as important to the community, and through a process of 'academic acupuncture' assists in improving people's lives in disadvantaged communities. This includes building capacity and enabling change. In addition, GS facilitates and feeds a developing national and international network of city building students, academics, and professionals who will be able to contribute more effectively to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and especially goal 7 to "ensure environmental sustainability".



ABOUT DIEPSLOOT

Diepsloot is a dense low-income settlement located 24km northeast of Johannesburg adjacent to the Diepsloot Nature Reserve and the walled suburb of Dainfern. The name Diepsloot is an Afrikaans term meaning “valley in the village”. It was created in 1994 as a temporary transit camp to accommodate people forcibly relocated from Zavenfontein in Johannesburg. Subsequently, there has been significant relocation from other surrounding local areas, the greatest numbers having arrived from Alexandra, followed by Skotipol and Randburg. Half of these relocations were due to forced removal, and half moved to be closer to their work. With such a high influx of migrants, Diepsloot became a permanent township with land allocated for development by the poor.

Diepsloot’s population continues to rise, and currently has around 160,000 residents. Of these residents, roughly 50% are unemployed. Looking for work becomes expensive. Rising petrol prices mean that a return taxi fare to Johannesburg has gone from 14R to 22R since mid 2007. But despite the lack of income generating activity and pervasive poverty, there is a high level of

resourcefulness, creativity, mutual help and innovation. The newly founded Diepsloot Community News, the many theatre, performance and visual arts practitioners, the agricultural cooperative, or the way women join in to work on the insulation of others’ shacks are just a few examples. Innovation extends to the capability to design: witness the sculptures made of mufflers and exhausts or the wire toy cars made by the children. There are significant Government provided community facilities which include a youth centre, library and community hall, and a community development centre with adjacent skills training centre and a soon to open child care centre. While adding value to life in Diepsloot, the design of the hall has severe acoustic problems, and the skills training centre is in use only when Service Providers are offering training. Start-up businesses, such as the soap making enterprise, received training at the centre, and a further three-month residency to establish the business. With a small turnover, limited capital to fund materials or marketing, this business is struggling and will soon re-locate to operate out of a shack. Our observation is that skills centre building is not fully used, or used all the time, and that it could be much more intensely used. Theatre and



music groups, for example, have no place to rehearse or develop new work. The design of these buildings could do more for people than they do.

Within the township, there are formal subsidized housing developments and informal settlements. The majority of people (about 76%) live in the informal settlements and backyard shacks. The Transvaal Provincial Administration developed 1,124 plots into formal housing stands and construction began in 1999 under the former Northern Municipality Local Government. In 2001, as a component of the Alexandra Renewal Project, the Gauteng Government relocated approximately 5,000 families from the banks of the Jukskei River in Alexandra to Diepsloot. Government officials estimate that almost 5,000 RDP houses have been built in the area, and that more than 700 housing stands with water and sanitation have been supplied.

Diepsloot has become home to a marginalized and often transient population, with refugees from Somalia, the Congo and more recently Zimbabwe. There were few instances of xenophobia during the recent upheavals,

but there is an active township justice system in place, which can take swift and violent action against those that commit crime. Local theatre groups use performance to conscientize people with respect to xenophobia but also to domestic violence, crime and HIV Aids, which is also prevalent in Diepsloot.

The rapid expansion of the township's population has placed a considerable strain on the area's scarce infrastructure and resources. There is inadequate access to basic services such as running water, electricity, garbage removal and sewerage systems. Many streets are affected by the presence of raw sewage and grey water. The informal settlements mainly comprise of 3m x 2m shacks, assembled from scrap metal, wood, cardboard and plastic. Diepsloot's topography consists of a series of networks of dirt paths and tracks, which outline residents' dwellings, the rubbish-strewn flood plain of the Jukskei River, illegal dumping sites and open raw sewage. However, local community members, in collaboration, with Pickupup, as well as Alex's Recycling Centre have made substantial gains in addressing refuse collection.



GLOBAL STUDIO DIEPSLOOT 2008: APPROACH

Listening, looking and sharing have been central to the work completed in Diepsloot from July 6-21, 2008. Ward Councillor Jan Mahlangu and Community Development Worker Sam Sikhosana have provided guidance and assistance, and have referred to the exchange with Global Studio participants as an example of ubuntu. 'Ubuntu' refers to a person who is open and available to others, and in such a schema unity and consensus decision-making are key principles. Thus, Global Studio is concerned with the democratising of action research, and effective dissemination of the outcomes to stakeholders – that is to the community, policy makers and the academy.

This report documents the projects undertaken in this Global Studio and includes proposals for the medium (by 2010) and longer term (by 2015), how they might be realised and resources that will assist in that realisation. A key contribution has been assistance with making

connections with government and other agencies, and providing information about opportunities and ways to approach those opportunities. The City is rolling out Internet access in township libraries, and the Diepsloot Library is scheduled to have four on-line computers by the end of the year. Until such time access to Internet information is very limited for local people, and impedes their ability to participate in the knowledge the internet offers. In the case of the one of the theatre groups, GS drew their attention to the call for applications for a festival in Brazil.

Global Studio's return to Johannesburg has been a productive one. Over the year project manager Jennifer van den Bussche has been visiting Diepsloot frequently, and is known to many people in Diepsloot. After Global Studio 2007, she and Trish Bowker continued working on housing insulation projects. Global Studio Phase Two builds on GS07 in terms of knowledge of Diepsloot, its political and social structure, and the trust established



between community members and studio participants.

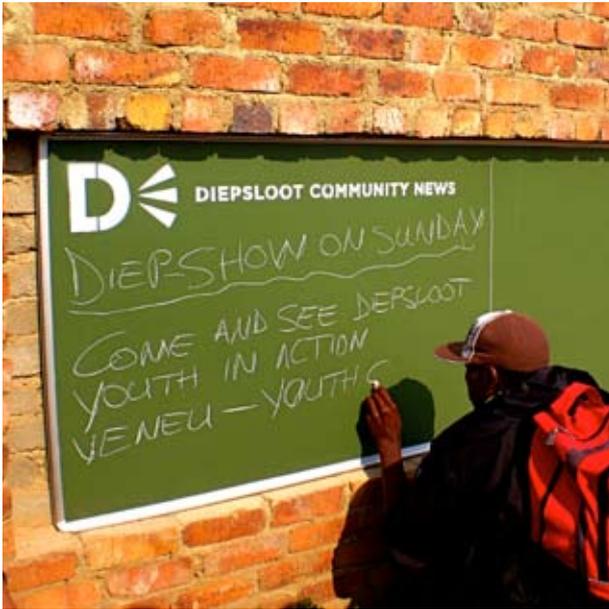
To establish the terms of reference for Phase 2, Jennifer van den Bussche and I had meetings before the start of Global Studio with the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering; the Head of the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand; the Executive Director, Urban Planning and Management, City of Johannesburg; the Head of Region 4, City of Johannesburg, the Diepsloot Community Worker and community representatives.

Global Studio commenced with an Orientation Symposium (July 6-7), held at the School of Architecture and Planning and the City of Johannesburg, and was followed by a meeting in Diepsloot ((July 8) at which people broke into small groups to discuss proposed projects. Global Studio teams formed to further the projects independently, and to work together with local community representatives. Several large reporting meetings were

held to enable cross-fertilization between groups, and at one feedback was provided by Architecture, Construction and Journalism staff.

Throughout the process, the project teams had meetings with various organizations and stakeholders that enabled both the development of the projects, but also capacity building of community representatives.

The work concluded in a festival ' Diepsloot Arts in Action' on July 20 attended by an estimated 1500 people. The results of the work were presented at the School of Architecture and Planning on Monday July 21 (10.30-12), also attended by twenty Diepsloot project champions, the Ward Councillor and the Community Worker. To complete the program, Global Studio hosted a panel discussion on the topic "Addressing the Vulnerabilities of the Urban Poor: Interdisciplinary Research and Education for Action" in conjunction with the screening of the Rockefeller Foundation/ Centre for Sustainable Development film "Innovations for an Urban World: A Global Urban



Summit:" (2-4pm). Four invited panellists from different fields -from Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg - addressed the panel theme.

PROJECTS

The Global Studio aim was that all projects should:

- Improve people's lives
- Be driven by local people's interests
- Build capacity, and as possible generate employment and income
- Help build confidence, capability and community spirit
- Help introduce useful technologies
- Suggest career of training paths

Through such mechanisms as:

- Realised projects and training
- Business plans and identifying potential funding sources

Communicating results to local authorities, professionals, educational institutions and NGOs.

PROJECT 1: INFORMATION

Access to information is a vital component for any community. It is through daily communication and a constant exchange of information that a community becomes informed of local events, educational and job opportunities, health and government services, and other community issues. The sharing of local knowledge allows residents

to empower each other, take advantage of government services, and become more effective agents in their communities. Building on the community information accessibility survey in 2007, Global Studio worked closely during the past year with the nascent not for profit Diepsloot Community News which has just published its fourth paper. Examining their current newsletter, goals, and needs, the team has helped develop skills, capacity, and networking contacts through meetings with local radio organizations and journalists, as well as collaborative development of their business plan. The group has also explored and established additional means of disseminating information. This includes the installation of community chalkboards and the production of a resource guide of research into developing a local radio station and communal cell phone text-messaging technology.

Next Steps Should Include

- Further development of the community chalkboards
- Exploration of the feasibility of community radio- a project that could be taken jointly with the Arts and Culture Network.
- Research by Global Studio into the potential of SMS and new technologies in other countries that may be applicable in Diepsloot, and conveying the results to residents.
- Opportunities exist for radio and print journalism and



business students to assist with research and action (or mentoring roles) for the financial viability, job creation opportunities and continued development of information projects.

PROJECT 2: HOUSING

The Housing Team built on work from 2007, introducing technical improvements in the shack insulation project and a stronger training component. With the extremes of temperature found in Johannesburg, a single and often damaged sheet of iron for walls and ceiling provide little protection, and in many cases allow water to penetrate. Insulation can make an instant difference in a family's life. Beneficiaries were identified by the Community development Worker, a youth group was trained to do the work, and other residents analyzed their needs for materials to waterproof, insulate or address structural problems. The youth group is keen to continue, as are numerous women

Next Steps require scaling up of the program

- Corporate social responsibility support for project materials, tools and stipends could dramatically impact the health and well being of residents, provide jobs and build capacity, community and self pride.
- Opportunities exist for construction, civil engineering or architecture students to liaise with the Diepsloot Environment champions to progress the work in a process of



mutual learning.

PROJECT 3: ENVIRONMENT

The Waterways and Waste Team engaged in a series of projects addressing wetland rehabilitation, drainage systems, and refuse collection.

3a) Local residents helped refine the drain improvement model from 2007, and a number of men and boys are able and willing to undertake this repair work, and continue the work of training others.

Next steps require scaling up of the program

- Corporate social responsibility support for project materials, tools and stipends could dramatically impact the health and well being of residents, provide jobs and build capacity, community and self pride.
- Opportunities exist for construction, civil engineering or architecture students to liaise with the Diepsloot Environment champions to progress the work in a process of mutual learning.

3b) After investigating Diepsloot's floodplain in 2007, the team continued its work in this central area to transform it from a polluted barrier into a healthy ecological and community spine. Making strategic physical connections across the floodplain, between the informal and formal settlements within the township, could be a catalyst for this transformation. Various levels of government were



consulted, with all expressing interest in the proposal.

Next Steps could include:

- A costing commissioned by the City that would compare an ecological with an engineering solution.
- A feasibility study to better understand the implications for social, economic and environmental upliftment.
- Opportunities exist for students in architecture, landscape architecture, planning, engineering and community development to undertake or assist the above study, and further design explorations.

PROJECT 4: ARTS AND CULTURE

More than 30 arts and culture groups exist in the areas of music, performance, dance and visual arts in Diepsloot, and some have performed in Europe. They came together at the invitation of Global Studio to discuss local arts. In all 170 people registered. After hearing the groups talk Global Studio suggested that an art and cultural network would be an important first step to sustainable cultural

industries development. There was enthusiasm for this proposal, and a meeting with the Arts and Culture's Steven Sach and Evelyn Sena at Newtown was a useful beginning. Working with Global Studio, the interim Diepsloot Arts and Cultural Network mounted "Diepsloot Art in Action" on July 20, from 11-4 pm. Approximately 1500 people attended this event held at three locations, and which included one hour long play, story telling, and 30 groups of musicians, dancers and visual artists. The Network was launched by Councilor Jan Malhangu.

Next Steps

- The Arts and Culture Network should take steps to achieve not for profit status as set out by the Arts and Culture Directorate by December 2008, develop a mission statement, constitution and a democratic organizational structure, with equal representation to performance, music, dance and visual arts- and investigate the possibility of a community radio station.

- The Network should liaise with the Information group, and discuss with them their inclusion in the Network.
- The Network should set out an events program for 2008/9, with the aim of six events in 2009, apply for funding for equipment and event support in a timely fashion when NFP status is achieved.

• Global Studio will forward contact details to Faculties at Wits (e.g. Architecture and Planning, Education, Anthropology, Performance Arts etc) and University of Pretoria (Architecture and Landscape Architecture) and possibly selected schools suggesting they take groups in buses to daytime performances of the plays 'If' and 'Why', and selected musical performances. Global Studio suggests a student ticket price of 20R, or 40R, and that 30% be used to support the on-going development of the Network.

- Opportunities exist for students in the visual and performance arts, business, journalism and new media to connect with the Network, and to help develop a youth audience for the above daytime performances.

Global Studio offered to provide on-going mentorship if required.

CONCLUSION

This report has a section on each of the above projects, and a resource manual. The resource manual includes all relevant information found during this Global Studio, as well as contact details of people, organizations etc. Global Studio wishes to monitor the effectiveness of the manual and proposes to contact the Community Development Worker, and champions in the four groups in September.

A film of Global Studio Diepsloot will be available soon, and will be premiered at the Youth Centre in early September. A website has been created for Global Studio 2008, and will go live shortly on www.theglobalstudio.com. A PowerPoint presentation will be made available to the Diepsloot community for use as they wish.

We believe many of the concerns outlined under the heading "Projects" have been addressed, but we are cognizant of the fact that for the good outcomes to become better outcomes and for the Next Steps to become

reality, financial support and investment in human capital is needed. We are also cognizant of the fact that working in this intense manner, across disciplines and on real problems, is challenging, difficult, rewarding and transformative for Global Studio and the people in Diepsloot who have joined in on this work.

We believe this work has contributed to community spirit and confidence. We hope it will be lasting, and will lead to new initiatives by Diepsloot residents. As this work finished, Councilor Malhangu issued an invitation to Global Studio to return next year, not to a Phase 3 Global Studio, but a Phase 4. "Diepsloot", he said, "will do Phase 3 before you come back!"

This report represents the collective efforts of the Global Studio from July 6-22, 2008. On behalf of all participants, we hope it will be useful, and we thank all those who have assisted. Our special thanks and best wishes go to the people we have had the privilege of working with in Diepsloot.

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- Website and graphic design: Candy Chang

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Belinda Kanpetch, Jennifer Graef, Candy Chang

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Mowela, Ricky Robinson, Karabo Samuel Pitsoe,

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GLOBAL STUDIO JOHANNESBURG 2008 ORGANISATION

Symposium and Panel Discussion

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