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# Beads, Sculptures, and Baskets: South African Traditional Craft as a Means of Economic Empowerment

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# **Beads, Sculptures, and Baskets: South African Traditional Craft as a Means of Economic Empowerment**

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South Africa: Social and Political Transformation  
Spring 2012

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## **Abstract**

The significance of the South African traditional craft industry is often associated with the preservation of historical culture. However, besides being a crucial element in the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, craftwork also can be a significant source of income generation for disadvantaged communities across South Africa. The African Art Centre, a non-profit organization located in Durban, reaches out to various communities of disadvantage in and around the KwaZulu Natal province, holding training and design workshops, providing access to craft skills and materials, and providing a market for the sale of craft as a source of sustainable economic empowerment.

The focus of this study is to examine the development workshops run by the Centre and to evaluate their success. Success, in this study, is measured by whether or not the programs yield long-term results and if the model used is applicable to other communities outside of KwaZulu Natal. This information was collected through a combination of observation, participation, and interviews.

My research will show that while the African Art Centre's development projects successfully provide significant income-generating opportunities for disadvantaged, rural communities, the full potential of these programs are limited by lack of governmental support and the gendered division of labor within the craft industry.

## **Introduction**

The South African traditional craft industry is rich not only in historical and culturally significance, but also in its potential for economic development. The craft sector is playing an increasingly important role in the international context of culture and development. In South Africa alone, the craft sector contributes to approximately R2 billion to GDP in retail sales (CCDI, 2007). The African Art Centre, a non-profit organization located in Durban recognizes the potential of the craft industry as a means of income generation and employment for South Africans and promotes craftwork as a means of economic empowerment for various disadvantaged communities in the KwaZulu Natal province. Through various training and design workshops and promotional events, the African Art Centre works to provide crafters with opportunities for sustained self-employment.

The focus of this study is to examine the programs that the Art Centre runs and to evaluate their success. Success, in this study, is measured by whether or not the programs yield sustainable results and if the model used is applicable to other communities outside of KwaZulu Natal.

The African Art Centre is the longest surviving South African organizations involved in the development and promotion of black artists and craft-workers.<sup>1</sup> While KwaZulu Natal is full of many organization, NGO's, and gallery spaces similarly devoted to the promotion of craftwork, these organizations and institutions focus either on linking crafters with markets through which to sell or the preservation of historical artifacts of Zulu culture. It is in this way that the African Art Centre is unique. It not only promotes preexisting craft culture, but also seeks to develop it further, reaching out to various

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<sup>1</sup> African Art Centre. "Mission Statement and Historical Background."

communities of disadvantage who can utilize these traditional skills as a means of economic empowerment. These communities include but are not limited to, rural women, the disabled, the unemployed, HIV/AIDS affected persons, and impoverished communities.<sup>2</sup>

The art and craft industry is an often ignored and under-funded sector of the South African and international economy. Very little work has utilized the traditional and available skills of Zulu craft to economically empower disadvantaged people, despite the increasing market of foreign buyers and tourists who continue to contribute to the commercialization of traditional and handmade craft (M. Terry, 1993). If programs like the ones facilitated by the Art Centre prove to be successful and widely applicable, however, similar organizations may find private and governmental support easier to gain.

As I was only able to work with the African Art Centre for four weeks, I will focus my research on the development projects that I was able to observe and in which I participated. The first section will consist of a brief overview of the African Art Centre's development projects. I will explain how the development workshops are organized and facilitated, as well as the ways in which different groups of crafters are identified as participants. The second section will provide a brief overview of the observation I made on the demographic buyers at the Art Centre.

The third and fourth section will be based on data collected from interviews with jewelry beaders and soft-wire weavers, respectively. Both of these groups consist of all-female participants who make their living with what they identified as being traditionally feminine skills. Section five will be based on an interview conducted with a male crafter who specializes in wooden sculptures using a burnt-wood design technique. This

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<sup>2</sup> African Art Centre. "Mission Statement and Historical Background."

participant serves as an example of a male crafter making a living through a self-identified masculine skill. The sixth section will be based on an interview conducted with a male crafter who, although no longer participates in the development projects regularly, has done so in the past and makes his living as a beader, a traditionally feminine craft. Finally, in section seven, I will discuss the findings I collected in the prior interview sections with regards to interviews conducted with the director and development officer of the African Art Centre.

This research cumulates with a final analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the development projects and whether or not this model is successful and/or widely applicable.



## Literature Review

The scholarly study of indigenous or traditional South African craftwork is a relatively recent phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> Although most art historians would start a discussion on “craft” by attempting to relate it to and distinguish it from “art”, this distinction is widely acknowledged as an imposed Western ethnocentric point of view.<sup>4</sup> Within historical African cultures, this difference does not exist. There is no word for “craft” or even “art”. There are only words to describe aesthetic appeal.<sup>5</sup>

Fortunately, craftwork has evolved significantly within the past few generations. Unfortunately, despite these changes, thinking in both the western art historical context and the traditional African context does not help one understand what exactly constitutes craft. One definition describes craft as being “useful and aesthetically pleasing objects created mainly by hand using specific materials and developed skills”(Sellschop, 2002).

Another, more specific definition could be: “Craft covers media, materials and functions ranging from glass, textiles, ceramics and jewelry to curios, industrial appliances and everyday utility objects. It lives in galleries and museums, on sidewalks, at trade fairs and outside airports. Craft art embraces the so called higher realms of arts and culture through its production of traditional and contemporary artifacts, yet it also penetrates the arena of mass production, intersecting at the point where art and business usually meet.”<sup>6</sup> Regardless of how one defines what craft is understood as, craft has recently taken on an additional role as a means of earning a living, a potential that has

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<sup>3</sup> Nettleton, Anitra C. E., and W. D. Hammond-Tooke. *African Art in Southern Africa: From Tradition to Township*. Johannesburg: Ad. Donker, 1989. 7.

<sup>4</sup> ^ 9.

<sup>5</sup> ^ 14-21.

<sup>6</sup> South Africa. Department of the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. *The South African Craft Industry Report: Report to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology : Final Report*. Pretoria: DACST, 1998. 8.

gained particular momentum in the KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa (Sellschop, 2002).

The importance of exploring craft as a means of economic development for South Africans is especially relevant given the nation's current economic climate. In 2002, it was estimated that approximately 40% of South Africans lived in poverty, with rates in rural areas being even higher. These rates are at the high end of developing countries, overall<sup>7</sup>.

The highest rate of unemployment was reported to be amongst African women at 47%, followed by African men at 29%.<sup>8</sup> Even in KwaZulu Natal, the third richest province in the nation, the poverty rate was reported at 54.3% with an unemployment rate of 27.9% in 2001.<sup>9</sup> On both the national and provincial level, the vast majority of government-sponsored work to eradicate poverty has focused around the growth of the economy and the job market. One major issue with focusing on increasing the labor market, however, is that the urban markets are driven by skill-based labor that is often unavailable to those living in rural areas.

Considering the fact that both poverty and unemployment are phenomena highly concentrated in the rural communities, and that just under half the people in KwaZulu

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<sup>7</sup> Klasen, S., and I. Woolard. "Surviving Unemployment Without State Support: Unemployment and Household Formation in South Africa." *Journal of African Economies* 18.1 (2008): p 2.

<sup>8</sup> Landman, J P. "Breaking the Grip of Poverty and Inequality in South Africa 2004-2014: Current Trends, Issues and Future Policy Options." *South African Regional Poverty Network* (2003). Nel, Etienne, Tony Binns, and Nicole Motteux. "Community-based Development, Non-governmental Organizations and Social Capital in Post-apartheid South Africa." *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography* 83B.1 (2001): 3-13.

<sup>9</sup> South Africa. Department of the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. *The South African Craft Industry Report: Report to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology : Final Report*. Pretoria: DACST, 1998.

Punt, Cecilia. "A Profile of KwaZulu-Natal: Demographics, Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment." *The Provincial Decision-Making Enabling (PROVIDE) Project*(2005).

Natal lives in rural areas, most jobs that are created become temporary, intermittent, and based on migrant labor (Punt, 2005). In a more recent study released by the South African National Treasury in 2011, it was found that about 42% of young people under the age of 20 are unemployed. That article cited lack of skills, education, and experience as primary causes of the high youth unemployment rates.<sup>10</sup>

Another problem with this tactic is that it ignores the increasing importance atypical forms of work play in both KwaZulu Natal and the international economy. The growth in atypical forms of employment has been an important development in the global economy since 1970 in both developed and developing worlds.<sup>11</sup>

Imraan Valodia describes two primary types of atypical work in his article, "Economic Policy and Women's Informal and Flexible Work in South Africa". The informal economy encompasses the first type of atypical work and is defined as "employment not recorded in formal labor market data". Informal work includes street trading and home-based work. Flexible work is the second atypical work Valodia defines. Flexible work is numerical or defined by occupational flexibility and often includes multi-skilled subcontracting, or part-time labor.<sup>12</sup> The growing influence of the atypical work is clear, with the majority of South Africans having some participatory connection to at least one type of either informal or flexible work. For instance, in the first survey conducted on South African home-based work, it was found that seven out of every ten households had at least one home-based worker, with 60% of those workers being

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<sup>10</sup> National Treasury (South Africa). "Confronting Youth Unemployment: Policy Options for South Africa : Discussion Paper." *National Treasury*, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Valodia, Imraan. "Economic Policy and Women's Informal and Flexible Work in South Africa." *School of Development Studies, University of Natal* (2000).

<sup>12</sup> ^ p 3

women.<sup>13</sup>

Keeping these points in mind, if the reduction of poverty is to be achieved, special attention must be paid to organizations, programs, and institutions that create jobs and teach skills to rural people, to be performed in rural areas and that utilize the structure and skills of the atypical workforce. This is where the role of craft comes in as a viable form of economic empowerment for disadvantaged communities.

In recent years, the craft sector has been playing an increasingly important economic role in South Africa. Nationally, the craft sector contributes approximately R2 billion in retail sales, which represents approximately 0.14% of GDP.<sup>14</sup> In one study, it was found that “the small business arena accounts for approximately 84% of South Africa’s workforce (and one-third of the GDP), of which the crafts sector employs about 15 %...this estimate is conservative, given that there are approximately 340 000 crafts people currently active in the informal sector – most of whom operate in a rural context, and many of whose activities remain unrecorded.”<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, craft industries not only provide income-generation opportunities for those groups which have access to resources, but it also offers employment opportunities for the most economically-disadvantaged groups in South African society (Nel et al, 2001).

In Katherine Spielmann’s article, “Feasting Craft Specialization and Ritual Mode of Production in Small-Scale Societies”, she discusses the importance of craft in a more traditional, small-scale society context. In these small-scale societies - ranging from

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<sup>13</sup> Valodia, Imraan. "Economic Policy and Women’s Informal and Flexible Work in South Africa." *School of Development Studies, University of Natal* (2000). 6

<sup>14</sup> CCD. "Impact Assessment." *The Cape Craft and Design Institute* (2007).

<sup>15</sup> South Africa. Department or the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. *The South African Craft Industry Report: Report to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology : Final Report*. Pretoria: DACST, 1998. 24.

several hundred to several thousand, much like many rural communities in KwaZulu Natal – the ability of the individual to transform mundane, raw materials into aesthetically pleasing items of use is highly valued by the community and a crucial element in the intensification of the economy.

While the craft market may not function in this traditional way as frequently now, some of the reasons why socially-valued goods like woven baskets or beaded ornamentation are essential for a sustained economy in a small-scale society still applies. For instance, Spielmann writes: “craft production in small-scale societies are supported not by elites but by the numerous individuals as they fulfill ritual obligation and create sustained social relations”.<sup>16</sup> By engaging a system of social and cultural networks, it is possible to reintroduce and promote the use of traditional craft works as a modern, but equally effective mode of economic intensification within the rural communities.

One of the biggest issues in the rural context is access. Because there is an absence of formalized workshops or factories in most rural areas, more common means of economic intensification are unavailable. Spielmann touches upon this issue in her article, but explains that craftwork is not dependent on these urban modes of industry development. Instead, in community specialization, single households within a village become the core of production (home-based work), specializing in the production of a specific craft. Through small-scale, modest surplus production, large-scale surplus at the village level is possible.<sup>17</sup>

In other words, by teaching several individuals in the community craft skills that they can execute without depending on a larger institution of employment, individual

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<sup>16</sup> Spielmann, Katherine. “Feasting Craft Specialization and Ritual Mode of Production in Small-Scale Societies”, *American Anthropologist*.104(1): 195-207. p 197

<sup>17</sup> ^ p 198

households within the community can participate in a modest form of income-generating activity that have the potential to translate into community-wide economic development. Programs aimed at income-generating activities need to be community-oriented, allow for the potential of home-based work, and pay attention to more ritualistic economic activity.

By using and promoting these methods as a model of economic development, it is possible to reinstate this traditional system of production, community networks, and economic intensification in a modern, atypical economic structure. As Speilmann explains, “the prevalence of community specialization in small-scale societies worldwide suggests that this form of craft specialization is a stable and highly successful response to the scale of demand for socially valued goods”<sup>18</sup>

In the same vein as Speilmann, “Community-Based Development, Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Capital In Post-Apartheid South Africa” contextualizes this question of grassroots, community-based economic intensification in non-governmental and not-for-profit organizational tactics of economic development. In it, Etienne Nel et al discusses the ways in which developing countries, like South Africa, are “frequently confronted with serious internal and externally imposed constraints on the ability of governments to provide meaningful support for their populations at the grassroots level”.<sup>19</sup>

The idea of “bottom-up development”, the possibility and need for communities to seize development initiatives and embark on strategies that will improve their social and

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<sup>18</sup> Spielmann, Katherine. “Feasting Craft Specialization and Ritual Mode of Production in Small-Scale Societies”, *American Anthropologist*.104(1): 195-207. p 201

<sup>19</sup> Nel, Etienne, Tony Binns, and Nicole Motteux. "Community-based Development, Non-governmental Organizations and Social Capital in Post-apartheid South Africa." *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography* 83B.1 (2001): p 1

economic wellbeing, insists that any and all economic strategies be aimed at an ultimate goal of community self-sufficiency.<sup>20</sup> In order for meaningful development to be achieved, dependence on NGOs must not persist for too long. The community must be able to drive the initiative eventually. The skills, talents or leadership capacity possessed by members of the community (here referred to as human capital) is the community's primary strength and the key to making this kind of self-sustained change occur.

This strategy is not without its faults. Within the South African context in particular, capacity constraints caused by access to usable physical resources and generally weak or limited capacity of NGOs are very real threats to the ideal of long-term local development initiatives that are independently sustained.<sup>21</sup> However, if organizations and programs focus on providing individuals in need with skills that are relatively easy to utilize independently and require very few physical resources or resources that are easily obtained, communities will have a better chance of gaining independence sooner.

In one study it was found that in the rural community of KwamZimela, 45% of women were practicing the traditional crafts of grass and beadwork, leatherwork, or pottery and 19% were doing sewing, knitting, or crochet work.<sup>22</sup> If all that is necessary for such skills to become practical means of income generation is an "outside...demand for locally-produced goods", then those preexisting skills should be nurtured and endorsed and links between buyers and producers made to be the new focus.

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<sup>20</sup> Nel, Etienne, Tony Binns, and Nicole Motteux. "Community-based Development, Non-governmental Organizations and Social Capital in Post-apartheid South Africa." *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography* 83B.1 (2001): p 4

<sup>21</sup> ^ p 12

<sup>22</sup> Preston-Whyte, Eleanor, and Sibongile Nene. "Black Women and the Rural Informal Sector." *South Africa's Informal Economy*. Cape Town: Oxford UP, 1991. 233.

When thinking of craft as a means of economic empowerment, it is impossible not to consider the issue of gender, the gendered divisions of labor, and general gender inequality as playing a crucial role in the success or failure of a craft-oriented project. Female identity has largely been structured around categories of “breeders” or “housewives”, constructs that also, as Rogerson points out, lead women to “concentrate in areas of economic activity that are compatible with their reproductive role”<sup>23</sup>. This marginalization also contributes to the idea of “women’s work”, especially when associated with domestic labor or household production, as unworthy of attention or inherently of lesser value (Friedman, 1991). Craft, having its origins as objects of use, falls into this category of gendered labor and is therefore de-valued in much the same way as child-care or domestic work might be. This is especially significant, considering women dominate the craft industry.<sup>24</sup>

Production of craft often falls under the category of atypical work, discussed above. Most studies confirm the predominance of women in informal and flexible work and most women within the informal economy are to be found in survivalist segments of small businesses.<sup>25</sup> Within the informal economy, women occupy the low-income, low-skilled occupations. Valodia explains “Women remain in subsistence level activities while men are often able to move beyond...to accumulate capital for more ambitious projects.” He continues to say that part of the reason this is the case is because “when

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<sup>23</sup> Rogerson, C.M., 1985: *The First Decade of Informal Sector Studies: Review and Synthesis*, Occasional Paper No. 25, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

<sup>24</sup> South Africa. Department or the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. *The South African Craft Industry Report: Report to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology : Final Report*. Pretoria: DACST, 1998. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Valodia, Imraan. "Economic Policy and Women’s Informal and Flexible Work in South Africa." *School of Development Studies, University of Natal* (2000).



activities undertaken by women...start to become more profitable they are gradually taken over by men".<sup>26</sup> In other words, women who work within the informal economy are continually marginalized from significant income-generating activities and even if the value of "women's work" increases, it is the male workers who benefit.

While the devaluation of particular types of labor has contributed to a gender bias, making women more likely to occupy marginalized sectors of the economy, it is possible to utilize the situation in a more positive way. As Friedman and Habridge explain, home-based work has been adopted by many international aid agencies and government agencies of developing countries as a potentially successful strategy of economic empowerment. Home-based work is particularly associated with women because it is a means of income generation that can be successfully integrated into their household duties.

Women entrepreneurs have limited access to capital, technology and resources. Because craft business is often being built around traditional women's work, women often have the baseline skills needed for production and those skills can be more easily adapted to generate income.<sup>27</sup> In one study, it was found that 82% of women interviewed in the rural area of KwamZimela were able to enhance their chances of economic survival by relying on their existing household and domestic skills<sup>28</sup>.

The South African craft industry is a growing sector of the country's economy.

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<sup>26</sup> Valodia, Imraan. "Economic Policy and Women's Informal and Flexible Work in South Africa." *School of Development Studies, University of Natal* (2000). P 5

<sup>27</sup> South Africa. Department or the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. *The South African Craft Industry Report: Report to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology : Final Report*. Pretoria: DACST, 1998. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Preston-Whyte, E.M. and Nene, S., 1984: *Where the Informal Sector is Not the Answer: Women and Poverty in Rural KwaZulu*, Carnegie Conference Paper No. 235, Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Souther African, University of Cape Town.

Increased tourism and South Africa's enhanced global profile has led to an increased demand for traditional and regional craft work both domestically and abroad.<sup>29</sup> According to a report by the South African Craft Industry, "The development of the craft sector will significantly contribute to the overall prosperity of South Africa by providing more citizens with a legitimate means of earning an income which in turn will enable them to participate more fully in the affairs of their communities."<sup>30</sup>

Though craft may be difficult to define, as Peter Dormer observes in *The Culture of Craft*, "a set of values is associated with the freedom that comes through the possession of skills, the freedom that is attainable when one is in a position to direct the content, pace and quality of the way one earns a living"<sup>31</sup>. Whether evaluating craft from an aesthetic or economic perspective, this overlooked sector in the South African community holds high potential for individual and community-based empowerment.

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<sup>29</sup> South Africa. Department or the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. *The South African Craft Industry Report: Report to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology : Final Report*. Pretoria: DACST, 1998. 7.

<sup>30</sup> ^ 109.

<sup>31</sup> Dormer, Peter. *Culture of Craft*. "Craft South Africa: Traditional, Transitional, Contemporary". Hyde Park, South Africa: Pan Macmillan, 2002. 22.

## **Background**

The KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa is home to many museums, NGOs, and gallery spaces that focus on traditional Zulu craft. These institutions are crucial to the promotion and support of Zulu craftwork and each take on this issue with unique perspectives and goals.

Programs such as the Siyazama Project Collection and Amazwi Abesifazane (Voices of Women) memory cloth project utilize traditional beading, embroidering, and doll making as platforms for previously ignored or silenced women to express themselves and tell their stories as a means of empowerment. The Vukuni Museum and the Phanzi Museum preserve the historical and cultural significance of traditional craft by housing extensive collections of native Zulu beadwork, basketry, pottery, clothing, and a plethora of other artifacts. The Markets of Warwick and The ELC Art and Craft Centre, Rorke's Drift are both accessible means through which traditional crafters can sell their work to tourists, buyers, and collectors.

While these organizations and institutions play their own, crucial role in the promotion, preservation, and development of local craftwork, none do so in quite the same way as the African Art Centre. Originally a project of the Natal Region of South African Institute of Race Relations, the African Art Centre has, since 1984, operated as an autonomous, non-profit organization (Thorpe, 1994). Jo Thrope, an artist and lover of Zulu craft, remained the driving force of the African Art Centre for 30 years.

During her time at the organization, Thorpe staged dozens of exhibitions, ran workshops and classes, and promoted African art and its creators to hundreds of art dealers, galleries, and buyers. Over the past fifty years, her work has continued, and the

number of artists and crafters the Centre has employed, trained, and promoted has grown exponentially<sup>32</sup>.

Today, the African Art Centre is one of the longest surviving South African organizations involved in the development and promotion of black artists and craft-workers. Operating from their gallery, shop, and office location on Florida Road in Durban, South Africa, the African Art Centre has continued to expand its operations, working closely with the Durban Institute of Technology, the BAT Centre, the Durban Art Gallery, and other like-minded organizations and institutions.

While the Centre started as an outlet for artists and crafters to find public exposure, more recently the focus has shifted to the nurturing and expansion of craft and fine art skills as a means of income generation for various disadvantaged communities. The introduction of development workshops that provide free training in a number of creative skills has been the primary means through which the African Art Centre has reached out to the poorest communities, rural women, the disabled, unemployed, youth, HIV/AIDS affected persons, frustrated artists craving recognition and development.

The African Art Centre can be seen as having two primary and often overlapping areas of interest: traditional Zulu craft and local fine art. Zulu craft would include mediums such as beaded jewelry, soft wire baskets, and embroidery. Fine art consists of painting, sculpture, works on paper and ceramics. Of course, the distinctions between art and craft are far from absolute. For every crafter that produces fashionable and innovative works that push the limits of their medium, there is a fine artist who is utilizing traditional materials and themes to reference his/her cultural heritage.

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<sup>32</sup> African Art Centre. "Mission Statement and Historical Background."

Depending on the funding available, development workshops are held throughout the year in and around KwaZulu Natal. These workshops are free to participants and are intended to promote local talent by providing workshops aimed at developing and teaching new skills. While this study focuses on the craft workshops that take place primarily in rural areas, the Velobala Art Classes are similarly structured workshops that are held at the Durban Institute of Technology. These Saturday classes have been held consistently since 1994 and teach fine art skills such as painting, contemporary jewelry design, and printmaking to young students who are by nature of their circumstances unable to afford tertiary art education.

Key components to all the development workshops are the exhibitions held at the end of each project. Since 2009, the Centre has mounted approximately ten temporary exhibitions annually, giving exposure to both emerging and established artists and crafters. These exhibitions are a crucial introduction to the art and craft market and an important time in which participants can sell work and network with buyers and promoters. One exhibition of particular significance is the “Artists and Crafter of the Year Award”. This award and public event has been held annually since 2003 as a way to honor and promote two individuals who have shown exceptional talent, drive, and growth in their particular medium. (A summary of the development workshops and exhibitions can be found in Appendix A)

Along with exhibitions, the African Art Centre’s office also doubles as a shop. This retail space serves as the foundation of support for the organization’s network of artists and crafters. The work sold in the shop is often ordered and bought directly from past development participants, helping to ensure those individuals have a consistent

market and means of generating income. The Centre also buys from local crafters and artists not directly affiliated with the organization or its workshops, on condition that the work meets the high standards of quality control and innovative design set by the Centre.

As taken from the African Art Centre's mission statement, the organization's primary commitment is the development, promotion and appreciation of the works of indigenous artists and craftspeople. The Centre does this by:

- Providing creative and craft skills development training for groups of talented youth, and targeted male and female crafts people, primarily in KwaZulu Natal
- Actively discovering, encouraging and nurturing works of creativity, originality and of the highest quality
- Providing an outlet for the exhibition, sale and dispatch of artists' and crafts persons' work, based on the principles of fair trade
- Assisting young and established artists/craftspeople to become self-supporting by accessing funding for training, development and for exhibitions/ displays and publicity
- Communicating and documenting traditional and contemporary trends in art and craft
- Preserving cultural heritage

The vision of The African Art Centre is a society where the work of indigenous artists and craftspeople is acknowledged, respected, appreciated, promoted and preserved to ensure that they are able to earn a sustainable living from their artistic creativity and craftsmanship.

The African Art Centre currently employees five permanent staff members and bought from 219 different crafters and artists last year.

## **Methodology**

The bulk of my data was collected during the informal internship position I held at the African Art Centre. Because the internship was developed in order to help me with my research, my duties were not specific and varied from week to week. Both Nozipho Zulu, the Development Officer, and Sharon Crampton, the Director, acted as my informal advisors during this time. In order to maintain a good relationship with the Art Centre, I made sure that my work was not exclusively research-oriented, but also benefited the organization in some way.

I participated in as many events or work-related tasks as I could. For instance, I developed and maintained a Facebook page for the African Art Centre. Their previous page was not a dedicated page, but part of a group. In the development of their new Facebook presence, I was able to observe and participate in the marketing of the African Art Centre and gain insight into the organization's current networking and marketing aspirations. I also helped organize incoming information on past development projects, creating a spreadsheet that listed past participants, average earnings, and the impact the programs had. These tasks were mutually beneficial.

As an intern, participatory observation became a key component of my research. I maintained a notebook on obvious trends and demographics of people I observed coming in and purchasing products from the store. I attended the Artist and Crafter of the Year Award Exhibition, an annual event held to acknowledge, award, and promote one crafter and one fine artist who show exceptional talent and drive. Here, I observed who the supporters of the African Art Centre were and spoke to many of the guests in order to better understand what their connection with and interest in the Centre was. I was also



able to observe one primary context in which the crafter's work was promoted and get a sense of how well the work sells under these circumstances.

While working at the Art Centre, I had access to current and past project overviews, sales reports from the gallery openings and the Art Centre's store, grant proposals, and other documentation that will provided me with necessary information to gauge the progress and success of the Centre's work and learn about the history and inner workings of the organization. Documentation included, but was not limited to, the Art Centre's official mission statement, most recent Narrative Report, and a summery of the crafter's earnings from April 2010 to March 2011. Sharon Crampton was especially helpful when it came to material, sending me any documents that I requested and often suggesting articles and other related sources that may have been useful.

The bulk of the data I collected during my internship with the African Art Centre was through formal interviews. Coincidentally, funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation had just finished and Nozipho Zulu was also conducting interviews with crafters to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of the development projects the Kellogg's grant funded. Because many of the questions that Nozipho had written for her questionnaire were similar to mine, I used hers as a foundation for my interview questions (see appendix B for sample interview questions). The interviews were mostly consistent: some questions were omitted, presented, or slightly altered based on the participant's gender, craft, and/or personal/economic circumstance. Consent forms were produced and signed before each interview with Nozipho translating the content of the forms. I interviewed ten different crafters.

The crafters were chosen based on accessibility. Every Friday, a different group of crafters would come in to receive new orders, submit their products, sell to the Centre, and get paid. The beaders and wood carver I spoke to were in the Centre for these reasons. Unfortunately, because many of the crafters live in rural areas and were only in Durban for the day, it was difficult to get as much time to conduct the interviews as I would have preferred. While some crafters were patient, many were clearly eager to finish the interview and either start their long journey home or get to the market in order to buy materials or run errands. Because of this, not all the interviews were completed, and some were rushed.

Only one of the crafters I spoke to was interviewed in English. Although this crafter sells his work to the Art Centre, he also facilitates development workshops teaching beading skills. As a beader, he was the only man I spoke to who was making a living through a traditionally female craftwork. Because of these differences, a similar but different set of questions was used (see Appendix B for sample interview questions).

Finally, I conducted interviews with the director, Sharon Crampton, and the development officer, Nozipho Zulu. Because Sharon and Nozipho do the vast majority of the work organizing, facilitating, and implementing the various craft and fine art projects and programs, I had to keep the interviews brief and limited only to questions that had not already been address during informal conversations (see Appendix C for sample interview questions).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The language barrier, time restraints, and lack of diversity amongst the interview participants I spoke with were the primary limitations of this study. Although Nozipho was a willing and consistent interviewer, whenever a translator is used, there is a tendency for information to get lost. For instance, I would occasionally ask a question which, after being translated required further explanation that Nozipho would provide in Zulu. However, only a summary of the participant's response was relayed back to me in English, not the questions asked or explanations given. It is also important to note that because I recorded and took notes on Nozipho's translations and not the interviewee's responses, any quotations from those interviews are Nozipho's words and interpretations.

The language used in many of the recorded responses is similar, which also speaks to the potential limitations of using a translator. The phrase "woman's work" was used again and again and while that may be because the interviewees all used that phrase to describe certain types of craftwork, it could also be because that is the phrase that the translator chose to use as a translation for any number of descriptions of feminized labor. The subtleties of language (in both the questions and answers) are compromised when translation occurs.

Nozipho's status as the Development Officer and my status as a foreign researcher potentially influenced the responses we received. When asking development workshop participants if they had any suggestions for the African Art Centre, for instance, a large number of crafters said "no" or "everything is perfect". Whether or not these were accurate representations of how the crafters felt is more difficult to determine

when the person answering relies on the programs they are being asked to critique for their income and the interviewers are both affiliated with the organization.

The length of the interviews I wished to conduct also posed a problem during this research. As mentioned in the methodology, most of the crafters I spoke to lived outside of Durban, interviews were often cut short or rushed. Even when I interviewed crafters in their homes I wasn't always able to speak with as many people I would have liked to because of timing the drive back to the city. Also, some of the participants clearly wanted to finish the interviews as soon as possible, potentially affecting the quality and detail of the answers they gave.

Time limitations also affected diversity of my sample. I was limited to those individuals who either came into the Centre or whom Sharon and Nozipho had already planned to visit. I would have preferred to speak to an equal number of crafters participating in each of the skills the Centre teaches (hard wire basket weaving, soft-wire basket weaving, glass beading, seed beading, embroidery, etc.). I was also only able to speak to one man who produced a traditional craft and relied on the Art Centre as his primary means of income. More information from wood carvers, hard-wire basket weavers, or other crafters in male-dominated mediums would have benefited this study.

## Research Findings

### *The Development Workshops*

The vision of the African Art Centre is a “society where the work of indigenous artists and craftspeople is respected, promoted, and preserved”<sup>33</sup>. As part of their work to realize this vision, the Centre holds development workshops throughout the year that are able to “generate significant economic opportunities for the crafter communities and artists in both rural and urban KwaZulu Natal and...[ensure] a steady stream of new, competent entrants into the art and craft communities”<sup>34</sup>.

Many of the development workshops that focus on craft skills are held in rural areas throughout the province and are intended to not only provide income generation opportunities for groups with very little access to resources, but also employment opportunities for the most economically disadvantaged people in South African Society. During the fiscal period of April 1 2010 – March 31 2011, The African Art Centre facilitated fifteen development projects and mounted twelve temporary exhibitions, presenting the new work to the public.

The workshops generally range anywhere from five days to eight weeks. In planning the development workshops, facilitators pays close attention to the demand generated in the store and current trends in the international marketplace to insure the products remain up-to-date and original. The products are further marketed at the end of each workshop through temporary public exhibition held to introduce the new products and crafters and facilitate access to local and international markets.

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<sup>33</sup> African Art Centre. "Mission Statement and Historical Background."

<sup>34</sup> African Art Centre. "Durban African Art Centre: Narrative Report". 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011

The goal of the development projects is not simply to sustain the production of craftwork, but to also challenge crafters to utilize their skills in new and creative ways, pushing the boundaries of their traditional medium. The creation of interesting, trend-conscious and unique products is a key element to the success of the African Art Centre and their development workshops. In 2009 alone, 39 new beaded jewelry products were developed and jeweler workshops were facilitated with 50 new products created and presented by March 2010.<sup>35</sup>

As the 2009-2010 Narrative Report indicates, “every attempt is made to introduce a variety and diversity of design [so that]...a new generation of skilled craftspeople are capable of working consistently and recognize the potential for the craft industry and the effect it has on social and economic upliftment.” The Art Centre consults and collaborates with various interior decorators, enterprises, and trend forecasters to create contemporary, marketable products and collections that can be sold internationally.

The scouting process for development projects is reflective of the Centre’s commitment to sustained economic empowerment for communities with limited access to resources or income-generating opportunities. Because the craft workshops are facilitated in primarily rural areas, the majority of the participants are Zulu. The craft skills that are taught in the workshops are, as Nozipho Zulu explains, “very related to traditional cultural practices”<sup>36</sup>.

Often, the traditional craftwork skills already found in a village or rural community influences the kind of workshop that will be facilitated in that area. For instance, in the town of Bergville it was found that many of the women in the

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<sup>35</sup> African Art Centre. “Durban African Art Centre: Narrative Report”. 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Nozipho. Interview, April 25 2012

communities already knew how to bead, though mostly utilized to make traditional garments and adornments for ceremonial purposes. It was therefore much easier to facilitate a beaded jewelry development workshop there than it would have been a group of crafters who had no previous experience.

Accessibility to materials is also a primary concern when deciding where to facilitate development workshops. The village of Loskop in Injisuthi is one of the areas in KwaZulu Natal where the imfibinga seeds (traditionally worn by children for good luck and protection) grow. Knowing this, the Art Centre has facilitated development workshops there where the seeds are used as beads and used to make decorative bowls, placemats, and vases. Instead of having to travel far distances to source the crafting materials, the participants in the workshops are able to pay local community members to grow and harvest the seed-beads for them. This cuts down on transportation costs for the crafters and generates income for community members not directly associated with the Centre's development projects.

Although the primary goal of the African Art Centre is widespread economic empowerment, this does not come at the expense of the quality of the products produced. For example, in the 2010 Beaded Waistcoats Project, not all the products could be taken back to the African Art Centre: "The slow process of the workshop and the inability of participants to produce finished products within the allotted time resulted in us not being able to issue certificates of completion." The Centre will not promote or sell work that is not of "consistently superior quality and design"<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> African Art Centre. "Durban African Art Centre: Narrative Report". 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011

The African Art Centre's development projects utilize traditional skills and locally-sourced materials, insist on high-quality work, and place emphasis on post-training marketing of the crafters and their products. These elements are crucial to the success of the development projects. The skills and income the development projects provide crafters leads to long-term relationships, with many crafters working exclusively with the Art Centre for their entire adult life. The average annual earnings of participants in the development projects was roughly R10, 000 during the April 2010 – March 2011 fiscal period, with the top crafters making upwards of R100, 000 year<sup>38</sup>.

### *Market*

While working at the Centre, it was clear the majority of buyers were interested in luxury items of aesthetic value for decoration, not the traditional or utilitarian uses that some of the goods held their roots in. The craftwork was no longer associated with items of use, but with decoration. Small-scale buyers were primarily tourists looking for a unique souvenir to take home. Bulk buyers were generally shop owners or buyers who supplied multiple stores that specialized in craft.

For instance, after a group of woodcarvers came in to sell their work one afternoon, another intern and I were asked to photograph and document the description and price of each piece. This information, I was told, was to be sent to a woman located in Johannesburg who owns several shops that are frequently stocked with goods bought at the African Art Centre. Before we finished, however, two local buyers who supplied several shops throughout the country came in and bought up more than half of the

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<sup>38</sup> African Art Centre. "Durban African Art Centre: Narrative Report". 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011



product. Both small scale and bulk buyers tended to have a consistent relationship with the Art Centre, many knowing the staff members by name. The network of buyers affiliated with the Centre is wide reaching and consistent.

### *Beaders*

Beaded jewelry is one of the most popular crafts sold at the African Art Centre. Development workshops are frequently held to teach new crafters beading skills and established crafters new designs and color combinations. Tradition Zulu beadwork uses color and pattern to shape messages or identify the social status of the wearer and is often worn as a major part of traditional and ceremonial dress (Hemp, 2003). Traditionally, Zulu women are responsible for producing beadwork. If, for instance, a young man wants to give a beaded message to his fiancée, he would have to get a sister or other female relative to make it for him (Sciama, 1998).

While traditional beadwork can be found throughout Durban, the African Art Centre's focus is on the production of more modern "fashion jewelry". Traditional Zulu beading techniques are updated through pattern, design, and color choice. Trendy, seasonal color combinations and interesting designs are chosen based on current fashion trends and encouraged in the development workshops. The Centre places orders with the crafters who then produce and sell these pieces. As the Centre's narrative report for 2010-2011 states, "Bead workshops have been the highlight of the African Art Centre achievements; empowering rural women with valuable skills and a sustainable source of income".

On Friday's the finished orders from the development projects are brought in by crafters, checked for quality, and bought by the centre. It was on one of these days that I interviewed six beaders: Happiness, Jabu, Angnes, Ntombi A, Ntombi M, and Maningi. All the beaders who came into the Centre that day were women.

When asking directly whether or not they felt the African Art Centre has helped sustain them as a crafter, all participants said yes. All the crafters started working with the Centre around 1980, which suggests a strong and sustained relationship between the organization and the crafters.

All but one of these women said they were the sole or primary providers for their families and many had specific examples of accomplishments they made because of the income generated through the Art Centre. Maningi was able to send her children to school: "I was a single mother [when I started working with the Art Centre] and my children were dependent on me. I could send them to school, support them, even send them to university. If not for the African Art Centre, I would not have managed."<sup>39</sup> The incomes generated from the beading workshops even help pay for bigger life expenses. Happiness was able to pay for her first husband's funeral and later her second marriage without having to take out a loan.

Five beaders cited new designs and color combinations as a valuable lesson they learned from the development workshop. Angnes was one crafter who talked about the value of producing products with unique colors and designs: "[knowing which colors sell best] works well for me when I sell my beads at the plaza"<sup>40</sup>. The skills these crafters

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<sup>39</sup> Maningi. Interview, April 13 2012

<sup>40</sup> Agnes. Interview, April 13 2012

learn not only result in more orders from the Centre but increased sales in other markets as well.

Along with craft skills, the development workshops also encourage participants to look for income generating opportunities beyond the Art Centre. It was clear from the participant's responses that these lessons were not as influential, but Happiness did touch upon this element of the workshops when she said the "most important thing I've learned was how to be dedicated to my work. Make a living."<sup>41</sup> Happiness was one of the highest earning beaders during the 2010 - 2011 fiscal period. While not all the crafters "spend all night beading to fulfill orders" as Happiness says she does, it's clear that if the level of motivation is present, there is enough work to keep crafters very busy.

The effects of the development workshops do not only influence the lives of participants. Community-wide involvement is highly valued by the Art Centre, and all the women said their beading skills have not remained with them. All reported having taught at least their family members their skills. In the case of Happiness, her success as a beader has led to teaching jobs. She says she has taught so many workshops that she "can't even count how many [people I've taught to bead]"<sup>42</sup>.

Some crafters, like Ntombi M., teach these skills to friends in order to help keep up with demand: "Neighborhood people or family help with big orders, depending on who is available."<sup>43</sup> All the children of the crafters knew how to bead as well. This illustrates Spielmann's assertion that: "craft production [is supported by] numerous

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<sup>41</sup> Happiness. Interview, April 13 2012

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<sup>43</sup> Ntombi M. Interview, April 13 2012

individuals...and create sustained social relations”.<sup>44</sup> Ntombi A is a perfect example of the potential for community-wide development one workshop holds. “I’ve taught many people. My six children and all my grandchildren. I taught my niece to bead, she taught her family and now the whole family beads and makes a living.”

The Art Centre’s development programs promote community specialization and thus, reap community-wide benefits. By using the traditional model of home-based work, a single household acts as the core of production and through small-scale production and exchange of skills, large-scale surplus at the village level is possible. Ntombi A isn’t the only one who benefited from the Centre’s workshop. Her extended family and community are also able to use these skills as a means of generating income.

Although the development projects work successfully within rural economic structures, one weakness that beaders cited was the Centre’s inability to adequately compensate for issues of access. All the women live outside of Durban and because none own a car or other means of transportation, rely on public transportation to make the journey into the city to receive orders, sell their products, and buy materials.

Jabu has the most time and money-consuming journey. In order to get to the Centre to fulfill an order she must leave her home before 3am and spend total of R110 on transportation. Ntombi A has a similarly difficult time getting to the Centre consistently: “I live in Cato Ridge, it’s very far from here and that effects how often I can come in. It takes three taxis to get here, an hour-and-a-half or two. Public transportation is unpredictable. I come in mostly every Friday but if there is a dry season [no orders] I

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<sup>44</sup> Spielmann, Katherine. “Feasting Craft Specialization and Ritual Mode of Production in Small-Scale Societies”, *American Anthropologist*.104(1): 195-207. p 197

won't come in as much." It costs Ntombi R65 to make the journey and if she isn't going to make a significant profit off of her work, it's not worth the effort.

The issue of transport is further problematized in this context because the only place that the crafters can buy the materials they need to produce the jewelry is in town. Angeles explained that one of the improvements she would make to the development workshops would be accessibility of materials: "I'm not called in all the time [to fill orders] and don't have materials to produce where I live". Trips to the Centre often double as trips to Victoria Street Market, where the glass beads can be bought in bulk (Kempter, 2009).

Four out of the six participants said they supplied other markets or private buyers besides the African Art Centre; two at the Early Morning Bead Market at Warwick Junction and two to private buyers who contact them directly for orders. The other two bead makers said they used to supply other markets, but found that the income they generated from the Art Centre was enough to support themselves. As Hlengi, the shop manager explains, once the workshops are over, the Art Centre does not "own" the crafters and they are free to sell wherever they may (Kempter, 2009).

Although some bead makers have been able to supplement the incomes earned through the Art Centre by selling in other locations and to other buyers, crafters still remain largely dependent on the demand generated through the Centre. When asked why or how often the crafters sold elsewhere, both Jabu and Happiness cited "low orders" and the need for "additional income" as reasons.

When the Centre is buying, bead makers feel sustained. However, because demand for the beaded jewelry fluctuates, income is not consistent. Jabu explains: "The best time is

right after the Centre holds a workshop. After that happens, I have new skills, there is a demand, and I can put those skills to work and produce lots of jewelry and sell.”

The crafters did not express a desire to work with other markets or buyers. Their solution to the inconsistency of demand is to supplement their beadwork with new skills. Although four out of the six participants were satisfied with the development projects and didn't have any suggestions for improvement, when asked directly, the same number of participants said they would want to learn new skills.

Ntombi A., a crafter who recently started supplying to Art Centre again after a brief hiatus, said that one of the main differences between selling in town and at the Art Centre was that while she could sell whatever she wanted at the markets, at the Centre she is limited to beads. She explains that there are more opportunities to sell at the plaza or beachfront because “I can make a lot of different kinds of things and sell all of them”. She continued to say she wanted to learn embroidery as an additional source of income, explaining: “If the beadwork doesn't sell than maybe sewing would...It would be supplemental income.”

It should be noted that not all crafters wanted to learn new skills. Happiness, for example, felt sufficiently sustained by her beadwork saying “Even when I'm not busy with orders I have work to do.” Happiness, however, is also one of the more skilled and successful beaders and therefore often commissioned to produce special-orders for the Centre along with standard stock requirements. While the crafters widely expressed satisfaction with the development workshops, crafters also feel that only producing beadwork does not allow them to compensate for those times when the demand for their product is low.

Another potential limitation of the beading workshops came up when participants were asked about whether or not they saw men participating in the beading workshops. As mentioned above, beading is traditionally considered “woman’s work” and it’s clear from speaking to this sample of crafters that this categorization remains relevant.

None of the respondents said they had ever seen a man participate in one of the beading workshops before. Two said their sons knew how to bead. However, the possible utilization of this skill as a means of income generation was not acknowledged for the boys. Maningi said that although her son loves to bead and has often helped her fulfill orders in the past, “when he graduates and gets a job, he won’t have time [to bead]”.<sup>45</sup> Despite this young man’s skill and affinity for beadwork, the possibility that his post-graduate work may include these skills is not considered.

Ntombi A. said that if men are seen beading, they generally do beaded sculptures from hardwire and never the beaded jewelry that these women produce. When asked why men don’t do beadwork, the three women who responded all said that men were too “lazy” or “impatient” for it. Ntombi A. was also one of these women, saying that when her son beads, he gets “impatient and wants to do something that will make him more money, faster”. She continued to say that most men are like that and “get up in the middle” because they are “fed up”.

Ntombi A is a particularly interesting case because her husband is also a crafter. Although she has helped him with his work as a wood carver, she says that he will not help her with her work as a beader. According to Ntombi, the beads are too small, he doesn’t enjoy beading and loses patients very quickly. When I asked whether or not she thought wood sculpture takes patience she said: “I think woodcarving requires patience as

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<sup>45</sup> Maningi. Interview, April 13 2012

well. It's just that they don't want to do the beading because it's not work for men. No patience because it undermines them to do that work".<sup>46</sup> While Ntombi is able to participate in and help with her husband's work as a woodcarver, he is not able to do the same for her without feeling "undermined" in some way. The gendered division of labor is hierarchical, with women's work less valued than men's.

Nozipho, who was translating this interview, said that it is not uncommon to hear female crafters complain about their husband's lack of support. She said that husbands don't see their wife's craftwork as a legitimate means of employment and therefore don't support the women when they need to stay up for longer hours to bead, for example. This lack of support and devaluing of craftwork not only speaks to the limitations the women face as crafters but also to the limited nature of widespread employment. Ntombi A said it worried her that men don't see beading as a possible means of employment. These traditional limitations based on gender may prevent the Art Centre's programs from being as effective as they could be, especially for the large numbers of unemployed youth who are especially in need of income-generating skills and experience<sup>47</sup>.

### *Soft-wire Weavers*

Much like beading, soft-wire basket weaving finds its roots in traditional Zulu culture. Although basket making is widespread throughout South Africa, KwaZulu Natal is the leader in this field, partially because craft skills were still taught in primary school

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<sup>46</sup> Ntombi A. Interview, April 13 2012

<sup>47</sup> National Treasury (South Africa). "Confronting Youth Unemployment: Policy Options for South Africa : Discussion Paper." *National Treasury*, 2011.



throughout the region until fairly recently.<sup>48</sup> Traditionally woven with natural material like grass or palm, the use of telephone wire to weave colorful bowls, plates, vases, and baskets allows for a level of creativity that would otherwise be limited by more traditional methods and materials. It was “the abundance of wire basketry practice [that] compelled the African Art Centre’s Development team to find innovative ways to weave and design new wire baskets, bowls, and jewelry that would be appealing to the new market”.<sup>49</sup>

The African Art Centre trains and sells both soft and hard-wire baskets. The hard wire technique is the more advanced and more expensive of the two. As Nozipho explained, “you need to be a master weaver”. Soft-wire weaving uses a mold, limiting the possible shapes that can be created, but the techniques are relatively easier to learn, making this skill more accessible.

According to the African Art Centre’s narrative report for 2009 - 2010, weavers originally sourced telephone wire from actual wire cables and therefore had a limited number of colors from which to choose. According to Sharon, because the telephone wires originally used were actually intended for industrial production, they were made of copper and therefore extremely expensive: “[The crafters] used to steal the wire. But then we worked with Telkom to make it without the copper inside. The actual telephone wire is made with copper and so it’s very expensive. They can buy spirals of wire now in a variety of different colors.” These spools of wire are now less expensive, equally effective for weaving, and come in a much wider variety of colors.

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<sup>48</sup> Hemp, Doreen. *Craft South Africa: Traditional, Transitional, Contemporary*. Hyde Park, South Africa: Pan Macmillan, 2003. 11. onker, 1989. 47.

<sup>49</sup> African Art Centre. “Durban African Art Centre: Narrative Report”. 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010.

The advancements in sourcing telephone wire greatly increased the possibilities for innovative design. The most recent soft-wire development programs takes advantage of these advancements, experimenting with new color combinations and designs. The inclusion of seed and bugle beads, for example, is one way in which the Centre encourages modern designs that keep consumers interested. I accompanied Sharon and Nozipho on a trip to Greyville, to check up on one of these soft-wire basket workshops.

While there, I spoke to two women who help facilitate the soft-wire workshops: Benzani, a master weaver and the workshop's facilitator, and Thandazile, her mother. Thandazile had been working with the African Art Centre for at least 30 years and Benzani since she was old enough to work for herself. They were both well acquainted with the Centre's development projects and had been making their living primarily through the organization for many years.

Much of the data collected from the interviews was consistent with what I had found in the interviews with the beaders. Both cited the mixing of colors and use of new designs as important skills they learned from the development projects. Benzani had worked with Zen Zulu in the past (another Durban-based organization that fuses traditional craft skills with cutting-edge design)<sup>50</sup> but said: "The African Art Centre people do [workshops] the best. They know how to combine colors. If it weren't for the African Art Centre or Zen Zulu then there would be no orders. No demand."<sup>51</sup> While both Benzani and Thandazile have worked with Zen Zulu and the BAT Centre in the past, now

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<sup>50</sup> Hemp, Doreen. *Craft South Africa: Traditional, Transitional, Contemporary*. Hyde Park, South Africa: Pan Macmillan, 2003. 11. onker, 1989. 121.

<sup>51</sup> Benzani. Interview, April 17 2012

they only supply the Art Centre because, as Thandazile explains, “I felt I was benefiting more from [the Centre’s development workshops].”<sup>52</sup>

Benzani serves as a good example of the kind of sustained economic empowerment that can be achieved through the Art Centre’s programs. As a master weaver and facilitator of the programs, she has learned how to control a large group of learners, has taught all over KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape, and has had her work exhibited overseas. She has been able to generate enough income to build a home, support her son as a single mother, and gain independence from her parents. Although she expressed a desire to learn the hardwire techniques, she said: “the African Art Centre has been able to sustain me...I learned a lot from the projects. I feel empowered because I can pass skill on to others.”<sup>53</sup>

Another similarity between the beading and the wire weaving workshops is the predominance of female participants. Although, traditionally, not identified as “women’s work”, soft-wire is still predominantly practiced by women.<sup>54</sup> Benzani said that most men who join the workshops don’t see weaving as a legitimate means of employment: “most of the men, even if they join in on the project, half way through they think ‘I’d rather earn a salary’”. They don’t want to sit and work with their hands.”

Thandazile agreed, adding: “The men don’t want to learn. They are unemployed but they don’t want to learn a skill they just want to watch the women. It worries me. They feel its women’s work. It’s always been like that. Other men are employed. The unemployed ones just sit at home. It worries me.” Again, these results speak to the

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<sup>52</sup> Thandazile. Interview, April 17 2012

<sup>53</sup> Benzani. Interview, April 17 2012

<sup>54</sup> Arment, David, Marisa Fick-Jordan, and Andrew Cerino. *Wired: Contemporary Zulu Telephone-wire Baskets*. Santa Fe, NM: S/C Editions, 2005.

cultural limitations that exist when dealing with craftwork. The potential community-wide success of the Art Centre's workshops is limited when men self-select out of the workshops.

### *Woodcarving*

While beading and soft-wire weaving are considered work more appropriate for women, woodwork is a skill that has historically been practiced by men and remains a masculine-identified craft. Woodcarving, one of the oldest and most developed crafts in Africa, holds its roots in male-dominated activities like hunting. Traditionally, woodcarving was used to make a variety of objects for use in the homestead such as wheels, bowls, spoons, or meat platters. The symbolism and style of carving can denote the social group of the owner, but many woodworkers have pushed the boundaries of their creativity in recent years with altered products.<sup>55</sup> Wooden objects found at the Art Centre are primarily sculptures carved out of wood sourced from areas close to where the crafters live with details burnt into the surface using a hot poker or designs painted onto them.

One of the Centre's most consistent producers of wooden sculptures, Sibusiso, uses the burnt-wood technique on his sculptures to create expressive and creative representations of animals both real and imaginary (see appendix D for examples). Sibusiso's story is not significantly different from that of the other female crafters I interviewed.

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<sup>55</sup> Dormer, Peter. *Culture of Craft*. "Craft South Africa: Traditional, Transitional, Contemporary". Hyde Park, South Africa: Pan Macmillan, 2002. 59.

Before he worked with the African Art Centre, he was doing what he called “piece jobs” and what Imraan Valodia defines as “flexible work”. These part time occupations proved to be too inconsistent, however, and Sibusiso started carving wood around 2002. Sibusiso learned his craft from others who were supplying the Art Centre and, thus, “tried to use their skills and standards”. Since working with the Centre, he has taught two other wood carvers, both male, who have also started selling.

Like the crafters interviewed before, transportation is a major issue for Sibusiso, with the added risk of fragility of the product to be concerned with: “I want AAC to visit me more. Because when they do they look at work and purchase it there. Otherwise I have to pack all the work and travel. Sometimes pieces get broken along the way. It’s an overnight trip for me and it costs R400.” If an overnight journey is necessary, the Centre pays for the hotel stay and makes the money back in sales.

Sibusiso uses the income he generates from selling to the African Art Centre to support his family. Being able to buy a car was one major accomplishment he attributes to the Centre’s development workshops, suggesting that his success has been very lucrative. He was also entered in a competition in Johannesburg in 2009, for which he won 1<sup>st</sup> prize. Sibusiso says he would not have been able to enter the competition without the African Art Centre didn’t help. Sibusiso’s accomplishments illustrate the positive effects the development projects marketing and relationship-building tactics can have on a crafter’s career.

One thing that stuck out in Sibusiso’s interview came when asked if there were any other skills he wished the Centre would teach him. He said: “[I would] appreciate it if

they would give training in any other medium”. However, when asked if he would consider beading or basket weaving, he said “No. I wouldn’t take the offer”.<sup>56</sup>

Much like Ntombi A’s husband who was also a woodcarver, Sibusiso had no interest in participating in what he considered to be feminine craftwork. When asked what he would think if he never saw female woodcarvers he responded: “I feel women usually say it is a difficult craft and they don’t want to experiment. They believe it is men’s work.”<sup>57</sup> Sibusiso used similar language and ideas of masculinity and femininity to describe the division of labor as the female crafters did but, unlike the female crafters, didn't see these distinctions as fluid.

The female weavers and beaders, although often identifying men as “lazy”, believed they were capable of crafting in that medium but were simple unwilling. Sibusiso continued to say that chopping wood is too masculine for women and that, although he has taught many people in his community already, he wouldn’t train his daughters and if he saw a woman carving he would “not believe it”.

The willingness and ability of women to teach their sons “feminine crafts” and the unwillingness of men to teach their daughters “masculine crafts” illustrates the ways in which the gendered division of labor is not a separate but equal distinction but, in fact, a hierarchical distinction with women’s work being valued less than men’s.

#### *Beader (male)*

Of all the crafters I interviewed, Nkosinathi was the only interview conducted without the assistance of Nozipho as translator. Furthermore, he was the only crafter I

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<sup>56</sup> Sibusiso. Interview, April 20 2012

<sup>57</sup> Sibusiso. Interview, April 20 2012

spoke to who was making his living in a gender-non-traditional medium. Nkosinathi is a beader and produces mostly rings and bracelets for the African Art Centre.

Nkosinathi's connection to the African Art Centre started with his mother. A scouter for traditional art and craft, he took over for her at 18 when she fell ill and had to stop working. Eventually, Nkosiathi became involved with the development workshops, scouting for new communities to target, facilitating workshops, and producing beadwork for the organization. Beading, he said, was a skill he learned from the Sangoma in the village he was from. Unlike the sons and nephews of the female beaders, however Nkosinathi continued making jewelry after becoming an adult and has continued to make a sustained living through his craft.

An issue of concern that Nkosinathi brought up with the development workshops was lack of government funding. Because his involvement with the Centre is more extensive than the other crafters I spoke with, he had more insight and understanding on how the workshops were funded: "I wish to use [my] experience to get to the rural area so government needs to help. [They should help] source the necessary materials for people to start up their business. If the African Art Centre is buying, that is not enough. We want to do things that would be easy for the people to carry through."<sup>58</sup>

While Nkosinathi got his start with the African Art Centre, he now sells primarily through flea markets around Durban. He attributes his access to the Centre however, saying: "Usually they [flea market buyers] ask where I supply and I say the African Art Centre. I support them because they support me." Of all the crafters I spoke to, Nkosinathi was the most independent from the Art Centre and appeared to be the most economically sustained by his craft.

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<sup>58</sup> Nkosinathi. Interview, April 13 2012

Nkosinathi is an example of a man who has found significant success working in a medium traditionally assigned for women. Nkosinathi acknowledges the traditional Zulu division of labor saying: “People see me [beading] and they think ‘oh, this guy is a beader, how come? Is he a real man?’” However, he is also extremely comfortable with his deviance, claiming that being a male beader has helped, not hurt his career: “I am very happy about that. It’s going to take time for me to get competition. I’m happy to be doing something different. People get excited... People support me a lot because they see me as different. I sit with women and am the only man. They can’t believe it.”<sup>59</sup>

### *Sharon and Nozipho*

Both Sharon, the Director of the Art Centre and Nozipho, the Development officer, were extremely frank about the successes and limitations of the development workshops. The primary issue that prevents the development workshops from reaching their full potential is lack of government support. As a non-profit organization, most of the money made in sales goes back to the crafters and the Centre relies on donations primarily from private sources like the WK Kellogg Foundation.

Sharon explained that lack of funding puts the Centre in a position where simultaneous long-term development and widespread reach are not always possible: “because so many people need skills training we can’t go back [to locations where precious workshops were held] as much. We can’t make sure they are getting what they need because we are trying to reach out to other communities who need these skills”.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Nkosinathi. Interview, April 13 2012

<sup>60</sup> Sharon. Interview, April 25 2012



When working with new crafters, Sharon explains, the relationship must be nurtured: “Anyone can do a project...come in and teach a skill. But its continuing working, getting the crafters to think on their own about where opportunities are and continue to work and be creative that’s not as easy and requires a lot more. What happens to the project? Who’s the market for the product? You’ve got to be able to take it from one step to another.”<sup>61</sup> When asked why the government doesn’t support organization like the Art Centre more, Sharon wasn’t sure how to respond: “I don’t know. Too many people asking, too many people applying. There’s so much to be done, you can’t really blame them”.

Nozipho agrees lack of funding severely limits the success of development workshops. As facilitator to most of the workshops, she says one of the things she wished the center could afford to do more was follow ups with the groups of crafters they train. When she can’t check up on crafters consistently, she says issues with quality control or finding materials come up and crafters don’t necessarily know how to deal with: “When we have [the crafters] work on their own, the group downsizes. Some people drop out. Issues they mainly face is the responsibilities involved after training.”<sup>62</sup>

She continued to say that the quality of the work also suffers when the crafters are left alone to fulfill an order for the first time: “Sometimes we come back to the workshop and the quality of the products has dropped so we don’t buy. That can discourage the ones who don’t think they’re good enough. They think they just can’t or this isn’t the right thing for them.”<sup>63</sup> If facilitators could check up on crafters more often, making sure

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<sup>61</sup> Sharon. Interview, April 25 2012

<sup>62</sup> Nozipho. Interview, April 25 2012

<sup>63</sup> ^

they remain on-track, then fewer crafters would find themselves in this frustrating situation and give up prematurely.

Although the integration of new crafters into the Art Centre's development workshops may be compromised by lack of funding, it seems that the crafters who do succeed reap long-term benefits. While Sharon cited the "preservation of traditional skills...especially for youth" as a primary motivation of the development workshops, she also said "every year we do increase the number of new crafters we work with. What's very encouraging is that many of the crafters have been with us for years and years...we will still accept work from crafters we've worked with before. We stay in contact with them through SMS, phone, and sometimes even email."<sup>64</sup> These findings are supported through the interviews conducted with crafters. The ones who have made it through the development workshops and sell consistently have stayed affiliated with the organization, sometimes for their entire working life.

Although the number of workshops the Centre can afford to hold has limited the reach of the development workshops, the secondary benefits of the workshops were not compromised. Sharon used the example of the embroidery projects they facilitated a few years ago saying: "What they're doing now versus before, it's growing. Instead of buying aprons from Mr. Price and embroidering on it, they employ people who live near by to make the aprons that they use. Big spin-offs."<sup>65</sup> When a successful workshop is facilitated, the crafters and the communities they live in both experience long-term benefits.

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<sup>64</sup> Sharon. Interview, April 25 2012

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Sharon and Nozipho both acknowledge the role gender plays in the development workshops, and gave examples of the ways in which the workshops attempt to work with these traditional divisions of labor: “We try to get men to do more technical work like welding and women more intricate work. It has a lot to do with Zulu culture. We want to work with it.”<sup>66</sup> Nozipho confirmed this statement: “We, the Zulu people, have an understanding that if its woman’s work it remains gender-oriented. Women see it as too much and they don’t want to try men’s work.”<sup>67</sup>

Just as the female crafters had said before, both Nozipho and Sharon said they experienced trouble keeping male crafters invested in the development projects, particularly when they were learning skills they perceived to be for women: “I don’t want to generalize...[but] women are more reliable. Often the men get bored [when crafting] and quit. But we have it with women too. But we also have a lot more women in general so its more obvious when the men drop out.”<sup>68</sup>

Nozipho tried to explain this phenomenon, saying: “Part of the reason why men drop out is because they don’t take it seriously. They have fun with everyone in the workshops but if you have to sit down get to work and produce on your own, they wont do it.” She also said that, while never expressed overtly, she assumes that the men feel uncomfortable when a woman is teaching them because it represents a shift in power.

Despite these observations, the African Art Centre has not considered running single-sexed workshops. The goal, Nozipho says, is to provide all economically disadvantaged person with the opportunity for income generation: “We don’t want to discriminate against anyone by not letting them participate. It usually ends up being all

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<sup>66</sup> Sharon. Interview, April 25 2012

<sup>67</sup> Nozipho. Interview, April 25 2012

<sup>68</sup> Sharon. Interview, April 25 2012

women, but if the workshop started out with all women then this would be the ‘African Art Centre for Women’ not the African Art Centre.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Nozipho. Interview, April 25 2012

## Conclusions

Overall, my findings suggest that the African Art Centre's development workshops successfully provide income-generating opportunities and means for economic empowerment for communities of disadvantage in KwaZulu Natal. By working promoting various craft skills and providing a market through which to sell their products, the workshops and African Art Centre provides participants and their fellow community members with increased opportunities to generate income.

The responses from the crafters in the development workshops were overwhelmingly positive. Many had been working consistently with the organization for several years, implying a strong and sustained relationship between producer and buyer. Furthermore, all participants were able to cite a specific and significant way in which their lives have been positively affected by the development workshops.

The effects of the workshops are not limited to the participants, either. All interviewees said they have taught other people their particular craft skill. A kind of "ripple effect" occurs when an individual participates in a development workshop. They teach a few people close to them and those people, in turn, teach others. Craft, having its roots in community-based activity, is a skill that is often shared through family and community members. Those skills often translate to income-generation opportunities for those "secondary beneficiaries" of the development workshops.

Although the model of the development workshops is extremely useful, there are several limitations that prevent the workshops from being as effective as possible. Firstly, lack of government funding. The devaluing of craftwork, especially as a means of

economic empowerment, limits the amount of attention paid to organization like the African Art Centre and, thus, the amount of funding the organization can receive.

Relying on private funding has yielded successes in the past, but it is not a sustainable way for the organization to continue the work it does. Sharon, the director of development, spoke about the limitations of private funding saying that while the grant from the WK Kellogg Foundation allowed the organization to facilitate many successful workshops, now that the funding has run out they may have to “scale down” and “not hold as many workshops as before”.<sup>70</sup> The success of the workshops is also largely dependent on long-term and sustained interactions between the Centre and the crafters, but without adequate funding, the resources to build these relationships might not be available.

Access is another issue that was consistently brought up during the interviews. Although some crafters (like the woodcarvers) are able to source their materials locally, the bead makers and the weavers rely on non-organic material that must be bought. The Centre provides telephone wire for participant, but the bead makers must buy their materials from town. The guaranteed income gained fulfilling orders from the Art Centre is not always enough incentive to make the expensive trip into Durban and it is unlikely that the uncertainty of selling at other markets would be equally or more worthwhile. Because the cost of getting these materials is so high, crafters aren't always able to get what they need in order to fulfill orders, losing income.

If true independence and economic empowerment is to be achieved, a stronger network of buyers and markets centered around the Centre needs to be established so the

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<sup>70</sup> Sharon. Interview, April 25 2012

crafters can make better use of their expensive trips into town and don't struggle for income any time the Centre goes through a "dry spell".

While both male and female crafters are able to find success through the development workshops, the heavily gendered division of labor in the craft market limits success. The primary concern for the beaders, for instance, was finding ways to continue generating income when demand for their jewelry is low. Although they expressed an interest in learning new skills, if a woman were to participate in a masculine-identified craft, she would not be openly accepted. As Sibusiso, the woodcarver stated, it would be "unbelievable".

Similarly, it is apparent if a man participates in a workshop that teaches female-associated craft skills, he is less likely to succeed. One reason for this is because he doesn't see those skills as legitimate means of work and therefore lacks motivation. Another possible reason for dropping out or not working as hard as he could or should is because he feels embarrassed to participate in an activity that he finds emasculating and would not want to be put in a position where he has to learn from a woman. The constructions of masculinity and femininity severely impact gendered division of labor and have negative outcomes for both men and women.

One possible reason for this is the association with domestic labor or household production much female-associated craftwork holds. This association deems these skills and products as unworthy of attention and less valuable than more creative skills that are not associated with domestic work.<sup>71</sup> Woodcarving, while originally intended to create

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<sup>71</sup> Friedman, Michelle, and Maria Hambridge. "The Informal Sector, Gender, and Development." *South Africa's Informal Economy*. Cape Town: Oxford UP, 1991. 162.

objects of use, is now (especially in the context of the Art Centre's development workshops) used to produce decorative pieces.

The animals Sibusiso carves have been completely disassociated with any utilitarian purpose the skills he utilizes might have originally intended for, unlike the beads or wirework which still resemble the objects that the skills were originally used to make.

While it is tempting to see Nkosinathi as evidence that these gender divides are not as influential as the crafters make them out to be, he is the exception to the rule. Nkosinathi's particular circumstances allowed him to feel comfortable about and use his deviance to his advantage. Unlike the other crafters who have participated in the development workshops, Nkosinathi is not as connected to traditional Zulu cultural expectations and is therefore able to participate comfortably in and make his living through beading, despite it being labeled "women's work".

Nkosinathi's background with the Art Centre as not just a supplier but also an employee means he has a much more complete understanding of the craft market than the crafters living in rural areas do. Therefore, he understands that his status as a man can be utilized as a quality to draw positive, and not just negative, attention to himself and his work.

Furthermore, because Nkosinathi speaks English and lives in Durban, he has much more access to a variety of craft markets and materials he needs to produce, giving him a significant advantage over the crafters who must travel hours by public transportation in order to get into the city. Nkosinathi's success cannot be solely attributed to his status as a male beader. His background and the particular privileges that



he has benefited from allow him to take advantage of the skills he has gained in craftwork and find success in a non-traditional way.

While the African Art Centre has no interest in gender-based missions of economic empowerment, it is impossible to ignore the effects this highly gendered environment has on the participating crafters. Crafters who wish to learn more skills to supplement their income are limited by the socially acceptable crafts assigned to their gender and therefore limited in their opportunities to generate income.

The African Art Centre's development workshops have proven to be a successful and sustainable model for economic empowerment in KwaZulu Natal. Similarly structured models have already been used to assist other communities of disadvantage and, if the potential success of these programs can be realized and further funding and support granted, the opportunity for even more widespread and significant economic empowerment is possible.

### **Areas for Further Study**

Although I entered this research interested in the economic effects one organization's development projects had on the communities it reached out to, I left with many more questions about the role of gender construction, gender expectations, and the gendered division of labor plays in the craft industry in general and the African Art Centre's development projects in particular. The following is a list of questions or ideas to consider for further study:

- How do traditional Zulu constructions of masculinity/femininity affect the kinds of crafts that an individual can participate?
- How do these gendered divisions of labor within the craft market limit the potential for income-generating activity for men/women?
- How do NGO's or non-profits that work with crafters address issues of this gendered division of labor?
- How do men/women see their masculine/feminine identity in relation to their craftwork?
- Case study on one crafter that makes a living through a gender non-traditional medium.
- What is the relationship between the valuing of fine art over craft and valuing of particular kinds of craftwork over others? The distinctions between goods produced for aesthetic value and good that have their roots as objects of use.
- Does the social value of men's work over women's translate to increased monetary value of the products? Are products that are "men's work" more expensive than "women's work"

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- Thandazile. Interview by author. KwaZulu Natal. April 17 2012

## Appendix A: Summary of Projects from 2008-2011

### 2008

<b>Name of Project</b>	<b>Date/Length</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Christmas Decoration Range	October-November/8weeks	16: 2 male, 14 female
Beaded Rings	November-December/4weeks	5 women
Beaded Fashion Jewellery Range	February-April/8 weeks	14 women
Velobala Group Jewellery Classes for Young People	July-October/6 weeks	7 males

### Exhibitions 2008

Lallitha Jawahirilal Oil and Collage Paintings	October	Lallitha Jawahirilal
Launch of New Christmas Decorations	November	16
“Divination”	December	Velobala Group students

### 2009

<b>Name of Project</b>	<b>Date/Length</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Velobala Group Jewellery Classes for Young People	March-April 2009/6weeks	7 males (same as 2008)
Velobala Group Fine Art Classes for Young People	March-April 2009/6weeks	20 males, 5 females
<i>Velobala Group</i>	<i>1 year, every Saturday</i>	25
Drawing Module	10 weeks	25
Monoprint Module	6 weeks	25
Silkscreen Module	8 weeks	21
Painting Module	8 weeks	25
Figure Painting Module	20 weeks	25
Jewellery Module	20 weeks	25
Jewellery Module pt. 2	12 weeks	25
Telephone Wire Sculpture Workshop	10 weeks	8
Siyazikhandla Telephone Wire Weaving Workshop	18 weeks	46
Beaded Christmas Ornaments	8 weeks	10
Embroidered Felt Christmas Ornaments	8 weeks	4
New Range of Summer Telephone Wire Jewellery	8 weeks	5
New Range of Summer Beaded Jewellery	6 weeks	4
Beautiful Boots Workshop	6 weeks	6
Laduma Embroidery and Applique Project	5 days	7
Makarapa, Drinkazela and Soccer Goggles Project	4 weeks	8
Beaded Sling Bag Project	5 days	8
New Range of 2010 Beaded Jewellery	5 days	8

## Exhibitions 2009

Beaded Jewellery and Fantasy Sculptures	29 April – 10 May
<i>New World</i> : Solo Exhibition of Monoprints and Drawings by Mxolisi Sithole	27 May – 20 June
<i>My memories</i> : Solo Exhibition of Paintings by Welcome Danca	24 June – 22 July
The Amagugu Treasures Exhibition	15 July – 10 June
Celebrating Women by Dina Cormick	5 August – 12 September
Best Ceramicist in KwaZulu Natal: Clive Sithole and Jabu Nala	16 September – 8 October
Makarapa: A Newton Project	14 – 22 October
New Range of Christmas Ornaments and Telephone Wire Products	28 October – 10 November
<i>Ubuntu Bami</i> : Solo Exhibition by Themba Siwela	18 November – 4 December
Exhibition of artwork by the Velobala Group & New Range of Summer Jewellery	9 December – 10 January 2010)

## 2010

Name of Project	Date/Length	Participants
African Art Centre, Tree Decoration	5 days	2
African Art Centre Front Banner	5 days	Khehla Ngobese
I Care Centre Mural Painting	9 days	4
Beaded Waistcoats Project ( <i>no certificates of completion given</i> )	6 days	10
Beaded Bergville Doll Training Workshop	4 weeks	20
Embroidered Indigenous Plants Project	9 days	8
New Range of Ornamental Pottery Project	3 weeks	14
Embroidered Felt Christmas Ornaments 2010	4 weeks	5
Beaded Christmas Ornaments 2010	4 weeks	10
Telephone Wire and Beaded Christmas Ornaments	4 weeks	2
The New Range of Summer Jewellery 2010	4 weeks	10
Zibusele Wire Project	4 weeks	23
Hammarsdale Winter Jewellery Project	2 weeks	14
Velobala Saturday Group Classes Project	February – November	25 Fine Arts students, 4 Jewellery Design students

## Exhibitions 2010

Black on White Exhibition	27 January – 10 February
Lalelani Mbhele and Bhekinkosi Gumbe	17 February – 10 March
African Art Centre Artist of the Year: Sibusiso Gumede and Themba Khumalo	27 March – 17 April

Celebrating Craft	21 April – 6 May
Jannie van Heerden and Zolani Mpente	12 May – 6 June
Woza 2010!	12 June – 12 July
Bheki Khambule and New Range of Ornamental Pottery Project	20 July – 4 August
In Celebration of Women’s Month: Celebrating Women	11 August – 2 September
Celebrating Heritage Month: <i>Amaqhawe Ethu</i>	8 – 26 September
A Solo Exhibition of New Painting and Drawings by Mduduzi Xakaza	19 September – 16 October
Exhibition of New Christmas Ornaments and Telephone Wire Products	19 October – 20 November
Velobala Group Annual Exhibition and Awards and a New Range of Summer Jewellery	1 December – 15 January 2011

## **Exhibitions 2011**

“On Paper”	21 January – 20 February
Abantu Bakithi / Our People	25 February – 13 March
Artists and Crafter of the Year: Victor Shange and Widus Mtshali	16 March – 8 April



## **Appendix B: Sample Questionnaire for Crafters**

1. When did you start working with the African Art Centre?
2. How were you making a living before working with AAC?
3. What do you produce for the AAC?
4. What new skills have you learned since your involvement with AAC?
5. How have you benefited from AAC development workshops?
6. How has your involvement with AAC Development workshops impacted your life?
7. Have you passed your skills to other people in your community or your family? Can you estimate how many?
8. Do you supply other Markets or Art Centres other than AAC?
9. How often do you come into the AAC?
10. How do you get here?
11. Would you have suggestions of how the African Art Centre can improve its development workshops?
12. Are there any other skills you would like the African Art Centre to teach you?
13. Do you feel that the African Art Centre has succeeded into sustaining our development as a crafter?
14. Have you every seen any other men/women in the development workshops/doing your craft?
15. What would you think if you did?
16. How does it make you feel when people call your craft man's/woman's work?
17. Why do you think people call it that?
18. Do you think a man/woman could do your craft and be successful?

### **Appendix C: Sample Questionnaire for Sharon and Nozipho**

1. How are the locations of the development workshops determined? How do you determine which groups learn which crafts?
2. Is the cost or availability of materials a factor?
3. Are all participants Zulu?
3. What has been the biggest challenge with the development workshops?
4. Which crafts make the most profit for the crafters?
5. Does the African Art Centre Receive support from the government?
6. What is the gender makeup of the development projects and does it change depending on the craft skill being taught? Why do you think that is?
7. Have you noticed a significant difference between the male and female crafters?
8. Has the African Art Center considered holding single-sexed development workshops?

## Appendix D: Pictures of Crafts



**Collection of beaded jewelry**



**Vases using soft-wire weaving technique and addition of seed and bugle beads**



**Imfbinga seeds**



**Crafter weaving using the soft-wire technique**



**Sample of wooden sculptures**