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THE SPACE BETWEEN US



A self-managing approach to the creation of flexible spaces in Tsako Thabo Secondary School, South Africa



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The Space Between Us

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Thank you

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*“Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world”
-Nelson Mandela, 2003*

ABSTRACT

South Africa has made significant investments in education, with a portion of its GDP spent on education among the highest in Africa at 18.42% in 2021. However, the legacy of Apartheid is still felt, with a divided education system between Black and White students resulting in significant gaps in learning outcomes. For instance, only 5.3% of Black African students are enrolled in higher education compared to 24.6% for White students.

This thesis explores the potential of collaborative spaces managed by learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to foster ownership and responsibility for their education. This self-management approach is a way to allow flexibility in the spaces and encourage the act of commoning in a context where cultural differences are deeply ingrained. The methodology was developed in partnership with the Tsako Thabo Secondary School in Mamelodi, Pretoria, through a co-design approach primarily involving students between the age of 14 to 18 years old as the managers of the space. Through this approach, students can develop a sense of ownership and responsibility over time.

Based in Pretoria, South Africa, this research directly addresses real issues and engages with learners to provide a safe and inclusive environment where they can thrive. Since I believe architecture is beyond the physical space, the result of this study consists of three different components: a design proposal of the space, a new learner's body structure with an executive committee to enable a self-managing approach, and a plan for financing the space. The room reflect the values of the learners and provide them new opportunities to develop as young adults.

The study aims to create a safe space for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, where they feel a sense of belonging and agency. The space between each one of us can be tremendous, or it can be as a simple centimetre depending on how we decide to look at the world. We are all unique, but I believe that by finding that space that unites us, we become stronger and achieve greater moments.

Collaboration | Decentralization | Lifelong learnings | Flexible space | Self-management

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1. POSITIONING

Glossary

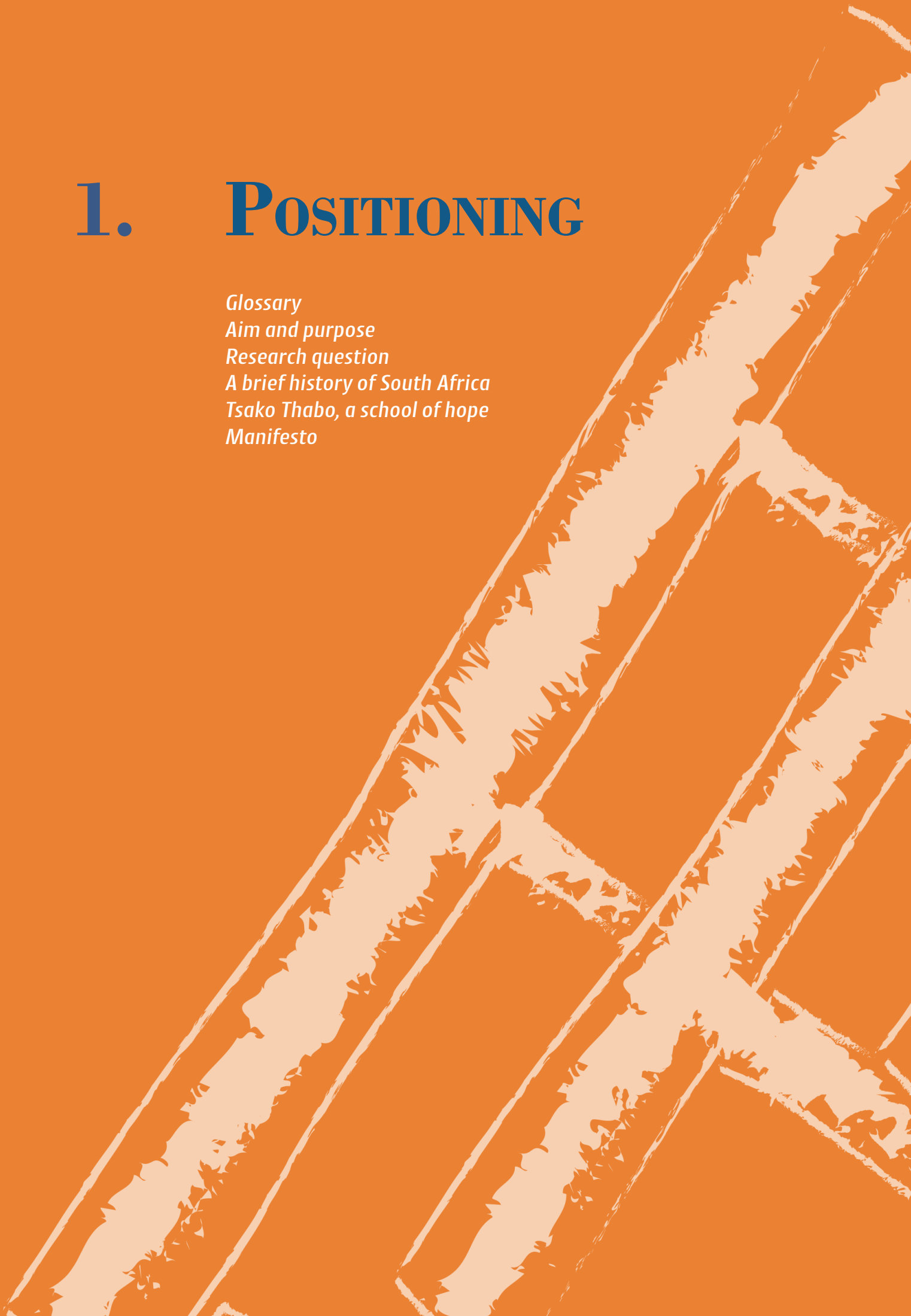
Aim and purpose

Research question

A brief history of South Africa

Tsako Thabo, a school of hope

Manifesto





TSAKO THABO

GLOSSARY

Collaboration

Act of working with different parties toward a common goal. Collaborating is one of the way to provide diversity and when done properly, it imply inclusivity.

Commoning

Act of being together and interacting as a group upon a specific space. This common space is not bound by physical limits and acts more as a mental and social space with an identity.

Decentralization

Redistribution of a central power to the many in the aim of a bottom-up approach where the people in need are the ones with the means to change things.

Deracialization

Eliminating racial boundaries within an institute to have a neutral power. It has to be achieved through legislation but also in the mindset of people. This last step is often the one taking the most time to be inculcated.

Flexible space

The capacity of a building to consistently adjust its spatial arrangement and even its structure to changing requirements. See page 17 for more information.

Lifelong learnings

Form of education that is self-initiated outside of formal schooling in the pursuit of personal knowledge. It focuses on an on-going learning experience from different spheres as to make oneself an active citizen.

Learner's body structure

Political structure composed of students and teachers that address some present issues in the school environment. Together they promote well-being by promoting policies around religion, language, school fees, and a code of conduct for the learners.

Self-managed space

The self-managed space is the intersection between a self-managing system and a flexible architecture which allow new chances of opportunities. See diagram 1 on page 4.

DIAGRAM OF A SELF-MANAGED SPACE

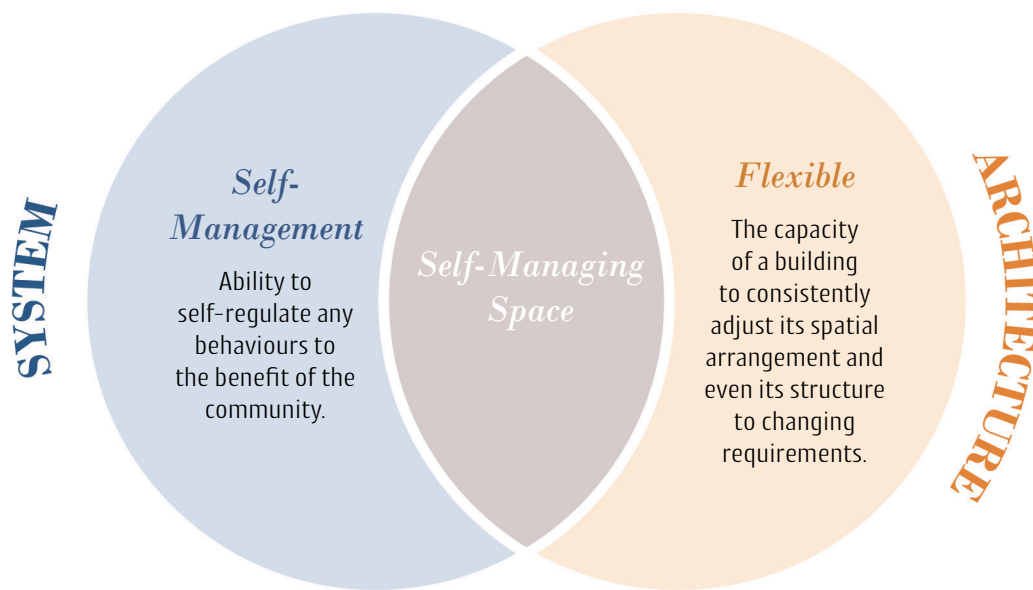


Figure 1. Diagram explaining the concept of a self-managed space.

This diagram has been created by me by incorporating the different concepts and knowledges around the self-management system and flexible architecture.

AIM AND PURPOSE

This thesis takes place in a township of Pretoria, South Africa, and delves into the exploration of a self-management approach aimed at creating a safe space within the youth education system, particularly in weaker socio-economic groups. The specific focus on this demographic arises from the acute disparities in educational opportunities between black and white secondary school learners. Thus, the study seeks to comprehend the possible outcomes derived from an approach that empowers learners as central decision-makers, fostering a sense of responsibility and ownership in relation to their education. By integrating learners' values, this approach facilitates the development of lifelong learning experiences that serve as a strong foundation for shaping their individual identities. This thesis serves as an opportunity to construct a space embodying the learners' characteristics, whether by establishing study groups to foster mutual support, providing art supplies to furnish the space, or implementing new clubs. The self-managing structure of this space is characterized by its democratic framework, where every member, exclusively comprising students, possesses a voice in the decision-making processes. Ultimately, this thesis will have a collaborative design proposal for this new space and a framework outlining the structure necessary for it to operate.

While architecture is commonly associated with physical buildings, this study aims to challenge this conventional conception and provide a personal definition of what architecture entails and the responsibilities of an architect.

Architecture is the design of social spaces that aims to provide a place where the many can collaborate and create togetherness reflecting their core value

What I mean by this statement is that we, as architects, should provide more than just a physical element as a design proposal. The scope of our work extends beyond the tangible materiality of buildings, and we need systems driven by the people to make them sustainable. I believe our work goes beyond the physical materiality of buildings. We have to create for the many, spaces that evolve and become part of the occupants' identity. It is about working collaboratively with the people rather than assuming a position of authority over them.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can a self-management approach to collaborative spaces create new opportunities for ownership and responsibility among young learners in a secondary school?

- + How can collaborative design produce social spaces that allow for new ways of management among young learners?

- + How can the creation of a new social space inside the school have an impact on the outside in terms of values and beliefs?

- + What brings value to the youth to their full development as future adults?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Political Context

South Africa has a rich history that goes back hundreds of thousands of years ago, but for the purpose of this thesis, I will only elaborate on its history, starting from the first contact with the Europeans. At the time, no united nation was in place, but many different tribes were already well established with their own cultures and traditions on the land where they harvested crops and owned livestock (Lambert, 2021). However, things started to change when the Dutch settled in the Cape in 1652 (Lambert, 2021) as a strategic point to provide fresh supplies for the ships travelling from the far East of the continent. At this point, Europeans started to import enslaved people from East Africa, Madagascar and the East Indies. Gradually, the Dutch colony expanded and in 1688, French Huguenots arrived in the country while escaping persecution. A century later, in 1795, the British captured Cape Colony (South Africa) as a controlling point on the sea route to the East, leading to a back-and-forth of the land ownership between the Dutch and the British. It finally reached the point where the British were the official owner of the land, according to European laws, in 1812.

After many wars between the Dutch, also known as the Boers, the Zulus, taking more and more territory, and the British, a mineral revolution in 1867 (South African Government, 2022) changed the country's trajectory drastically. First, diamonds were found in Northern Cape and Kimberley in 1871, and then gold was discovered in Gauteng and along the Atlantic coast in 1886. In the mid-twentieth century, these discoveries put South Africa on the map as the world's leading producer of gem-quality diamonds which led to many bloody wars where Britain lost more than 22,000 men, Boers around 34,000 people, and more than 15,000 South Africans were killed.

It was only in 1910 that a constitution was created to unify territories such as the Cape, Natal, Transvaal and Free State (South African Government, 2022). This union was exclusively white and was soon met with fierce opposition created by black natives in the form of the African National Congress (ANC) – a political movement created in 1912 protesting the exclusion of black people in the power structure. The

white-dominated National Party came into power in 1948 (Lambert, 2021), and their main focus was to reinforce laws to make Apartheid a legal political structure that would segregate white cultures from black and coloured. The new legislation went from prohibiting interracial relationships to excluding non-whites in certain areas. Because of this, thousands of Coloureds, Blacks and Indians were removed from their home and forcefully relocated into specific areas called "locations". The opposition to these reforms was constant and violent. However, the most violent one occurred in 1960, where 69 Black African students were killed, which is commemorated and remembered as the Sharpsville massacre. A few years later, in 1963, Nelson Mandela, the leader of this movement, was sentenced to life imprisonment. It was only in 1990 when F.W. de Klerk was positioned as the country's prime minister, that international pressures and sanctions forced the end of Apartheid and the release of Nelson Mandela in 1992. Two years later, in 1994, South Africa held their first democratic elections, and Nelson Mandela took the position as the president, from which he retired in 1999.

In this early 21st century, South Africa's history hangs as a dark cloud over its head as it deals with the symptoms of this history. It remains highly unemployed with widespread poverty with the world's highest GINI index (Statista, 2021) – a measurement to assess the income disparity between a population. Furthermore, it shows that only 10% of the population owns 80% of the financial assets (Chatterjee et al., 2020). The country relies heavily on tourism and mining while being subject to heavy corruption leading to more significant issues like load-shedding, the scheduled interruption of electricity for multiple periods during the day, and increased poverty. Unfortunately, racism still exists between Black and White people, but a new form of racism has also arisen, intra-racial, which is between cultures. The country has wonderful landscapes, unique cultures, and enormous growth potential, it does hold true wonders of this world, but the government has not yet been able to establish a stable government since the Apartheid, which has led to a very uncertain future for the South Africans.



Image 1. Sign in Durban that states the beach is for whites only under section 37 of the Durban beach by-laws, 1989.



Image 2. Woman protesting against the pass laws, 1956.



Image 3. Demonstrations and protests against apartheid South Africa in Amsterdam, in September 1984.



Image 4. Segregation signs at a South African train station, before 1972.



Image 5. President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela with members of the Congressional Black Caucus including Representative Kweisi Mfume, at an event at the Library of Congress, October, 1994.



Image 6. Muizenberg beach, Cape Town.



Image 7. Cape Town.



Image 8. Bo-Kaap neighbourhood, Cape Town.



Image 9. Boulders Beach, Cape Town.



Image 10. Zebras in the Kruger National Park.

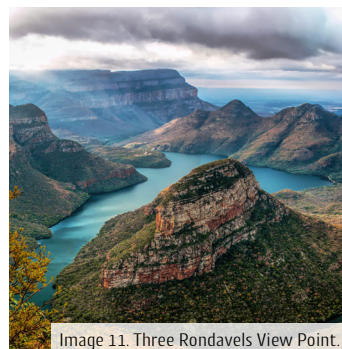


Image 11. Three Rondavels View Point.



Image 12. Elephants in Jackie's Lodge.



Image 13. Dancers in Phokwane.



Image 14. Rural South Africa.

Educational Context

South Africa's educational context has significantly changed since the transition to democracy in 1994. For example, the attendance rate during the compulsory years of General Education and Training (GET) from 7 to 15-year-olds reached a remarkable 99% by 2014, with gender parity achieved. However, the pass rate for the final year of GET, grade 9 at age 15, stood at a mere 40%, leaving 60% without qualifications. (UNICEF, 2018). Looking deeper into those statistics, we realize that most of those who end up without qualifications are from black communities where the quality of education is still inferior. In fact, learning outcomes in the educational context in South Africa are still tremendously unequal leaving a bimodal system.

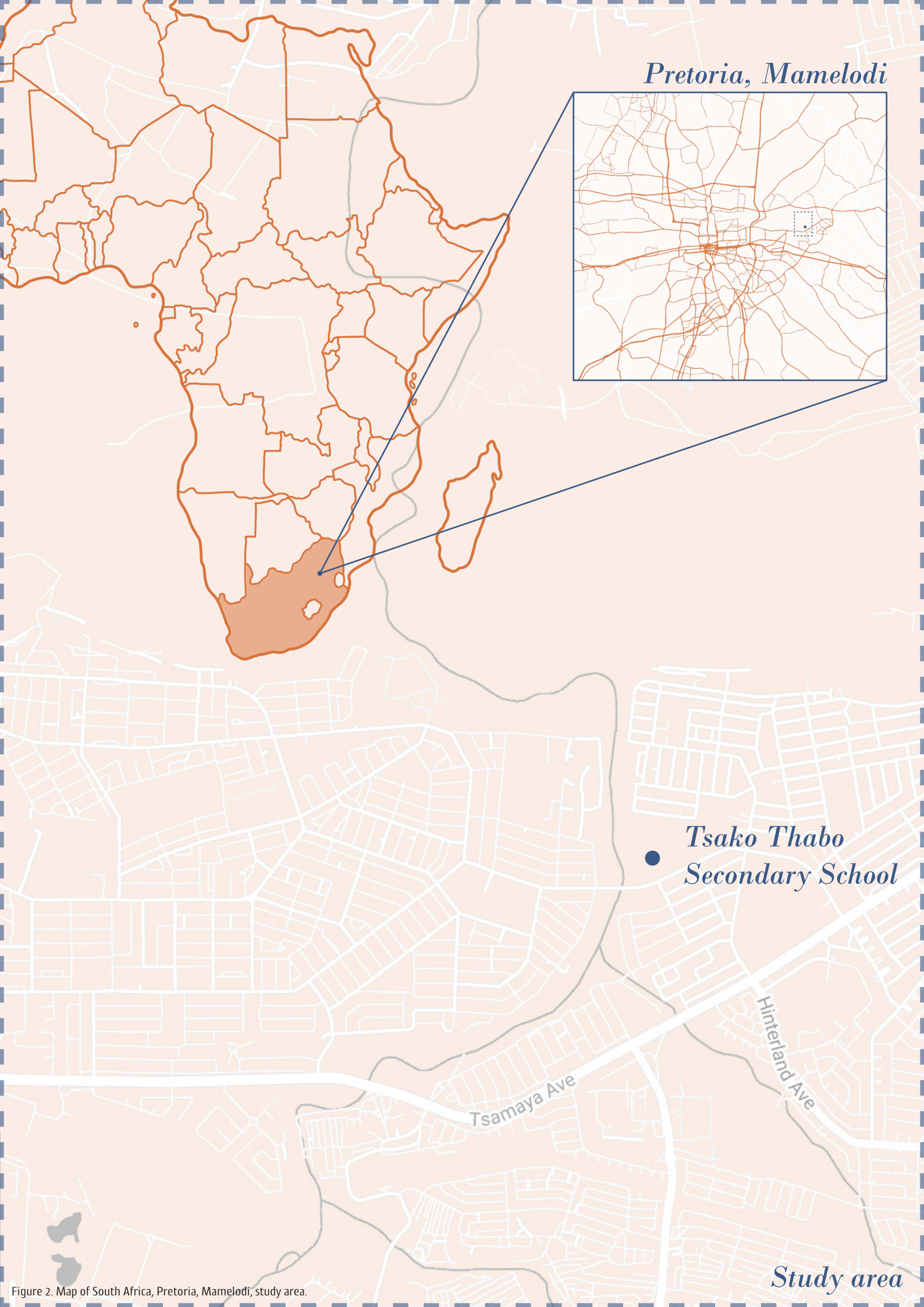
These disparities can be traced back to the Bantu Education Act of 1953, implemented during the apartheid era (Bauer, 2023). This legislation deliberately provided inferior education to black South Africans, perpetuating a system where they were relegated to unskilled labour positions compared to white South Africans. Although this racially segregated system was officially abolished in 1994 under the Mandela government, the effects of this segregation are still perceived in today's system. As an example, the White school pass rate after secondary school is up to 98% compared to 50% in the townships schools, and university degree from a White school is a good number of 80% of the students, whereas it is merely 11% for townships schools (Göttfried, 2014). Another major effect of this system can be seen in the illiteracy level of the children in grade 3, aged eight years old, which is as high as 41% for the year 2021, an increase of 9% compared to 2019 (Spaull, 2023). To this day, white schools are still seen as excellency, and black parents are fighting against each other for a place for their children where favouritism toward white children is still in place. The abolishment of the Bantu Act was supposed to deracialise the schools, but the system is still very much separated between the black and the white youth with different opportunities. Moreover, the government has not taken many initiatives to address this problem even though many recommendations have

been made during the previous years. For example, at the Reading Panel of 2023, four recommendations were made to improve the illiteracy problem, and almost no progress has been made on any of these points (Spaull, 2023). The problem is more profound than racial preferences; it is deep in the roots of its system where there is no incentive to address the issue politically. It is said that by the age of 9, we can know for a fact the future of a child; if they are illiterate by grade 4, there is poor chances that the child will get out of poverty.

Since there is still a very low incentive to improve the educational system from a top-down approach, a shift in mentality is necessary. Taking responsibility from a bottom-up perspective, where power is derived from solidarity, is crucial. Support needs to be addressed directly to the black schools, and it is through a collaborative effort that changes will be seen. First and foremost, there is a need for good infrastructure and proper material; then comes the teaching, which needs to be improved by the lack of teachers and training. Although, what can be done is to support one another and create new opportunities with the help of universities. For example, at Tsako Thabo Secondary School, situated in a township in Pretoria, which is also my case study, they have developed a program with the University of Pretoria called TULIP where university students visit the learners once a week on Saturday to help them read and write. Considering that 70% of students arriving from primary education are illiterate, this initiative has seen tremendous benefits and has changed the course of their life for the better.

Personal reflection

After being in contact with the youth of Tsako Thabo Secondary School, I have seen enormous willpower from these learners to overcome the obstacles of their context. They have a desire to learn and get out of poverty through education. It is truly amazing to see this generation of young mind being proactive toward their future.



Pretoria, Mamelodi

*Tsako Thabo
Secondary School*

Tsamaya Ave

Hinterland Ave

Study area

Figure 2. Map of South Africa, Pretoria, Mamelodi, study area.



Image 15. Mamelodi hill on the west side.



Image 16. Fres fruits and vegetables stand.



Image 17. Typical house in Mamelodi.



Image 18. Christian church in Mamelodi in front of the Islamic church.

TSAKO THABO, A SCHOOL OF HOPE

Mamelodi, Pretoria, South Africa

Mamelodi is a township part of the city of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality situated in the northeast of Pretoria in the Gauteng province of South Africa and home to approximately 335,000 inhabitants. The name “Mamelodi” derived from the Sepedi language word which means “Mother of Melodies” in honour of the president Paul Kruger who had the ability to whistle and imitate birds (World Travel Information, n.d.). The township was established on the farm Vlakfontein in June 1953 and was designated as a blacks-only area during the Apartheid, and though the laws have been abolished, it remains predominantly inhabited by black communities. Today, Mamelodi stands as one of Pretoria’s most developed townships, featuring numerous primary and secondary schools. Moreover, many organizations and groups are already in place working toward improving the standard of living within the township. Overall, Mamelodi still has a lot of crime, but the township is working actively to the better improvement of the life for its citizens with sports, facilities, school programs and organizations.

Choosing Tsako Thabo as my case study results in two different reasons. Firstly, it is due to some previous contacts from Chalmers who put me through this secondary school that has already worked with some architecture students from the University of

Pretoria. Because some initiatives were already taken, it was a great opportunity for this thesis to have a strong base and facilitate easier connections with both learners and teachers. The second reason is due to its political situation. Considering I want to evaluate the outcomes of a self-managing system from the perspective of students in weaker socio-economic classes, Mamelodi has indeed the right elements for this research. Moreover, Tsako Thabo is a particular school where the principal has put a lot of incentives to improve the school life. As a result, the curriculum is upgraded with many program choices: socio-political, mathematical, entrepreneurial, and extra-curricular activities such as sports clubs, chess, debate, and more. For this reason, Tsako Thabo is very open to developing more of these initiatives that can help the school, and my project can be an excellent opportunity to unfold a different aspect of the potential for the learners.

Personal experience

I have experience great openness from the learners at this school. Even though I am identified as an Asian, I can see a lot of curiosity from their side which they do not necessarily have for a white person. Since they already had a great experience with some exchange students that came some years ago from South Korea, they were welcoming and warm to my arrival. When in the courtyard, I would always attract a mass of students around me, questioning my origins, my hair, and calling me pretty. Some of them asked me “How does your hair grow?”, “Is that your real colour hair?”, “Can I touch your hair?”, “Do you speak Chinese?”, “What are you doing here?”, etc. It was sometimes overwhelming, but I always enjoyed their company and their curiosity.

MANIFESTO



Power to the youth. It is about giving the space for the youth to fully develop their inner self without top-down power to restrain them.



Flexibility against permanence. It is about providing a space that is adaptable to the changing needs of the learners. The social context in South Africa is changing rapidly as it is needed and for that the spaces occupy by the youth need to follow their needs.



From within to the outside. It is about setting the school values as base values in the outside context of school. Even through the different cultures and religions that may be encounter.



Beyond the physical space. It is about architectural as a space created to collaboration and commoning more than a physical place. The space of our existence exists between each one of us, and the purpose is to find this common space where we can grow together as a community.

MOTHER



OF MELODIES

Figure 3. Manifesto representing the four main points of this thesis.

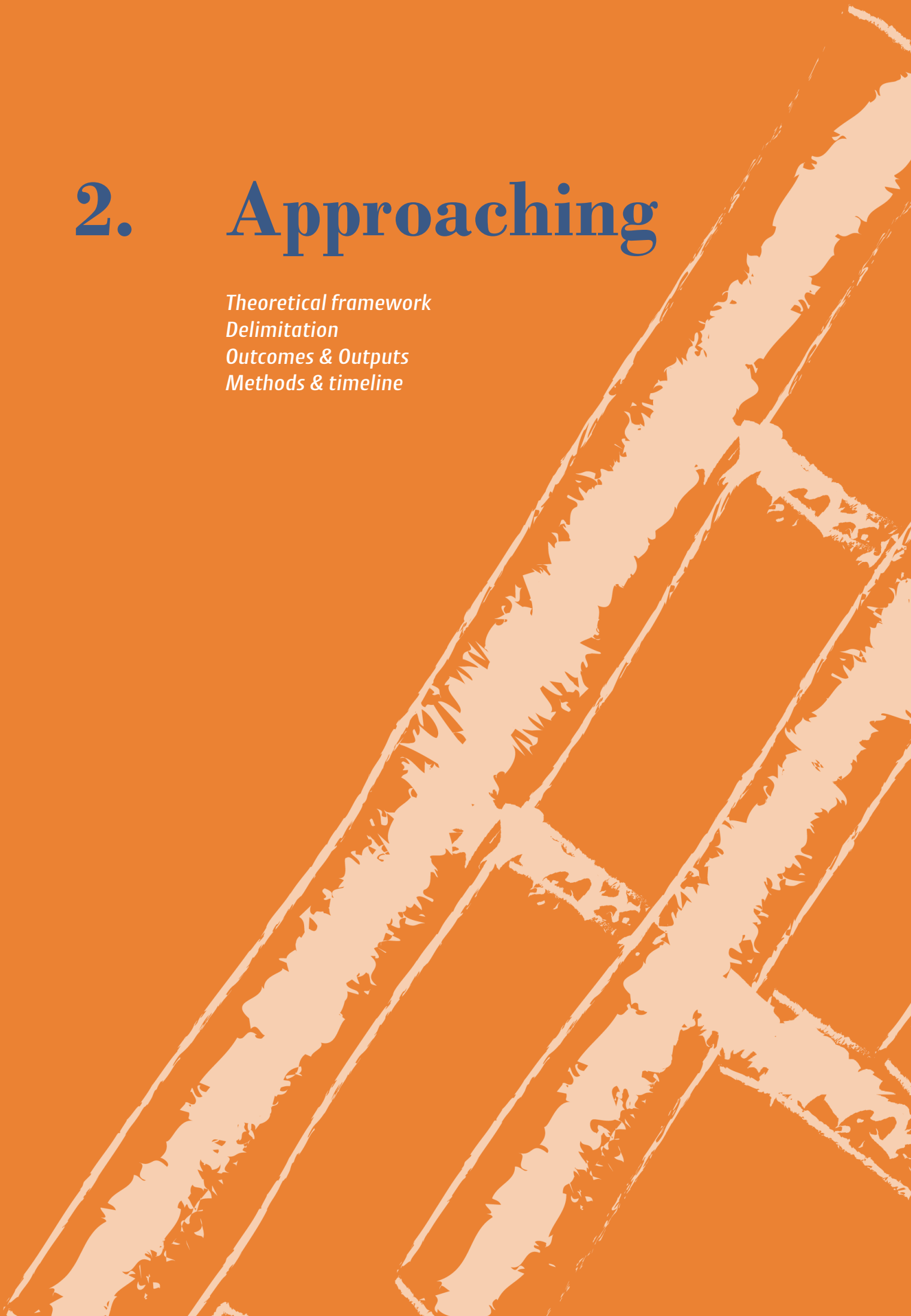
2. Approaching

Theoretical framework

Delimitation

Outcomes & Outputs

Methods & timeline





TSAKO THABO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Self-Management

The self-management approach in education refers to a system where the learners are the ones in control of their education. This approach can vary from one school to another depending on how much this system is integrated into education and what is allowed. For example, in the Lycée Autogéré de Paris, students form a general assembly where they can regulate the registration of other students, bring changes to the curriculum, promote new projects, call for parents-teachers meetings, and more (Lycée Autogéré de Paris, n.d.). In Jonathan School, in Quebec, Canada, the pupils in primary school have the choice to go to school or not, and they decide what they want to learn. Teachers act more as a support for the learning desires of the child, and the school is responsible for providing the necessary material. This technique showed great success in terms of individual potential. Taking the example of the reading skill, most children would learn by themselves at around six years old; by the age of 8, the whole class could read properly (UNESCO, 1981).

Self-management, in the context of this thesis, is the ability to self-regulate one's activity and to put in place new initiatives. To achieve this state of self-management, learners must implement a new structure containing an executive committee that will act as the driving force of the space. This committee will take responsibility for the main activities that will take place in the space, but always with the input of the other members. The committee will also be in charge of the funding and how the space can be furnished and with what, according to the plans made by the whole assembly. In conclusion, this implemented structure is a way to make all activities cohesive and align with the learners' values and needs.

Flexible Space

Flexible architecture is the ability of a space to adapt to the evolving occupants' needs. It is about providing a sustainable option that does not require demolishing or rebuilding a project which provides a greater lifespan. Transforming and converting is the key aspect of this kind of design that will be more and more prominent in the upcoming years (Hiran, n.d.). I focus on this kind of architecture due to the South African education system that has tremendously changed in the past years and will change even more in the upcoming. In fact, school programs are getting more and more diverse depending on their geopolitical status, which means more disparity, but also more opportunities for some. Therefore, focusing on the flexibility of the space means allowing the schools to explore and reflect their values on their environment.

In this thesis, the school's design is settled, so the flexibility will mainly be about the interior design of the spaces and proposing new open spaces. Education is evolving quickly, as do the values of each new generation that will occupy the school's perimeter. Therefore, the space representing the learners' values must follow their identities. It is about creating a space where brainstorming, dialoguing, and presenting can be open to anyone who wants to participate. This "safe space" is implemented so the learners can learn from each other and communicate their ideas. A flexible space is a space that can be opened or closed depending on the needs of the learner. It could be a corner for a library separated from the computers with movable walls; it could be furniture that converts into other functions when there is an assembly. In this context, the flexibility of the interior space plays a significant role in the appropriation of the space from a learners' point of view, and it is vital to create a sense of belonging to the school so they feel heard and seen.

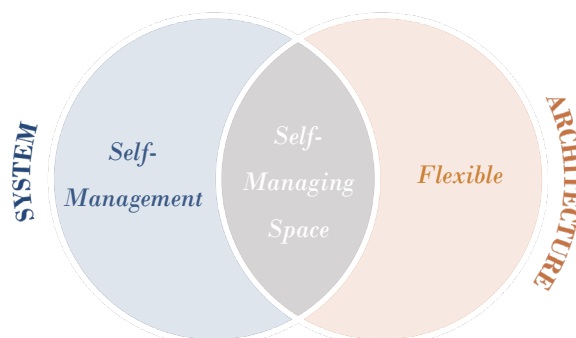


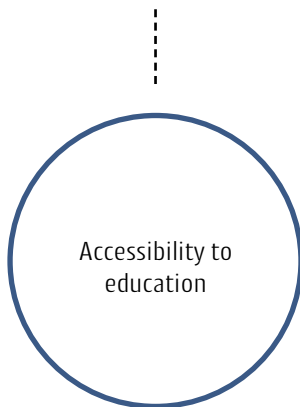
Figure 1. Diagram of the self-managed space

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Presented by the United Nation Development Programme



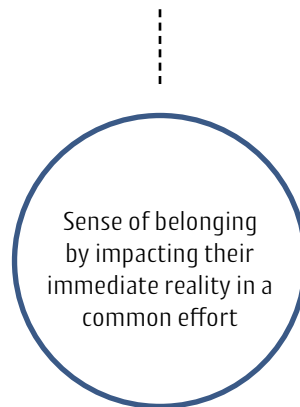
4. QUALITY EDUCATION



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Education is a right for all to ensure a well developed future. Children of today are the future of tomorrow and they will need to critically think of new challenges and provide new solutions.



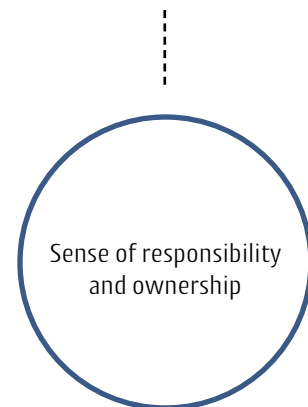
10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Reduce inequality within and among countries. Working toward a common goal can bring people together and developed a sense of understanding to one another. Education can be used as a key element to reduce the gap of those inequalities when supporting each other through adversity.



16. PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The importance for the teenagers to feel they have power over their future. How can education be shaped around the needs of this new generation. An alternative education system could allow this sense of responsibility where they decide what they need and how they want to obtain these knowledges through a direct democracy.

DELIMITATIONS

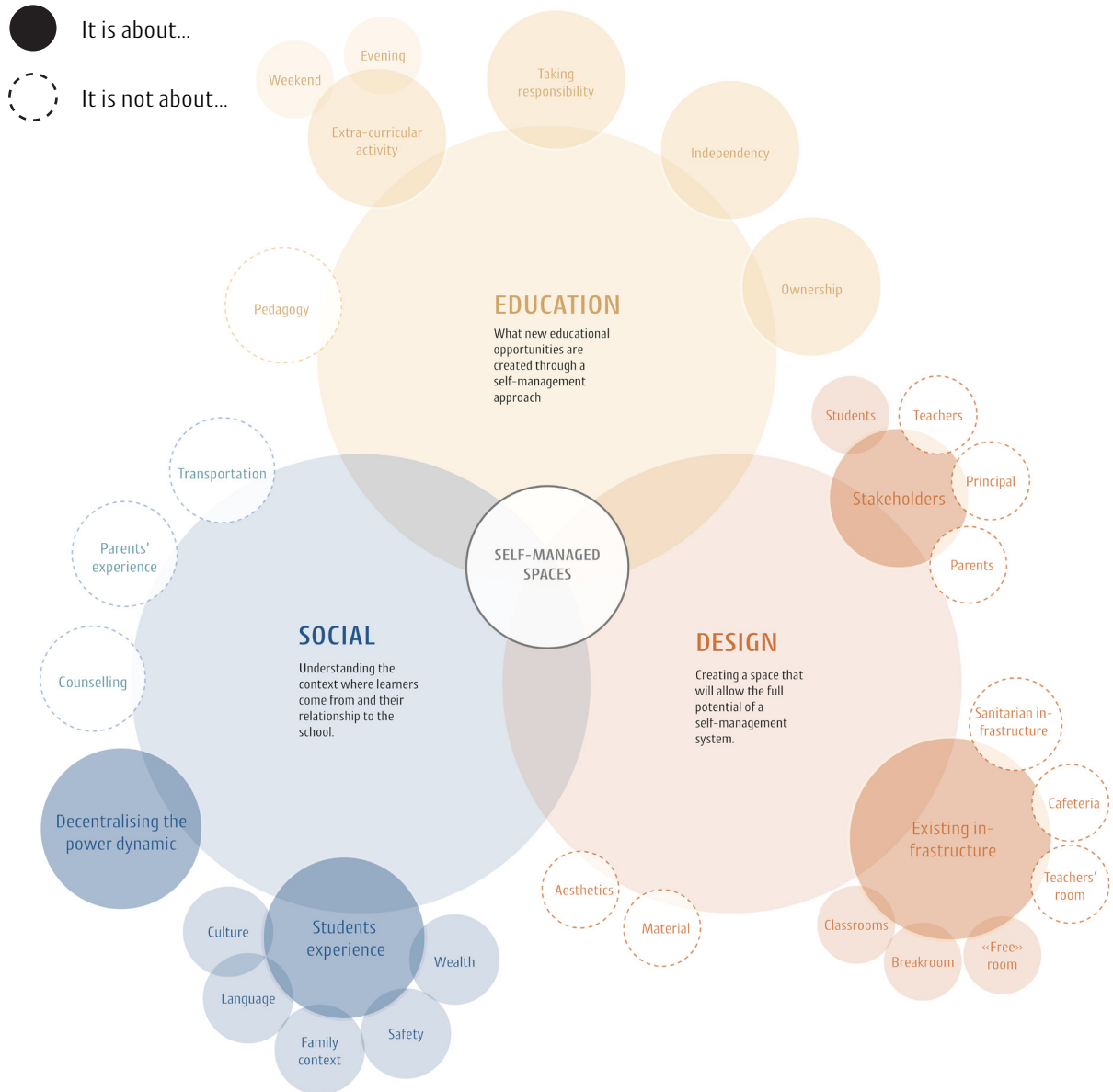


Figure 4. Delimitation diagram

This research is concentrated on three different spheres: design, social, and education. The design aspect is about creating a safe space within the existing infrastructure. The social aspect focuses on the learners' experience at school and in his daily life, and how decentralising the power can give them new opportunities. The education aspect is about exploring the new skills that can be developed through this approach and how it helps the learner in his development as a young adult.

OUTCOMES & OUPUTS

xxx Outcomes

xxx Outputs

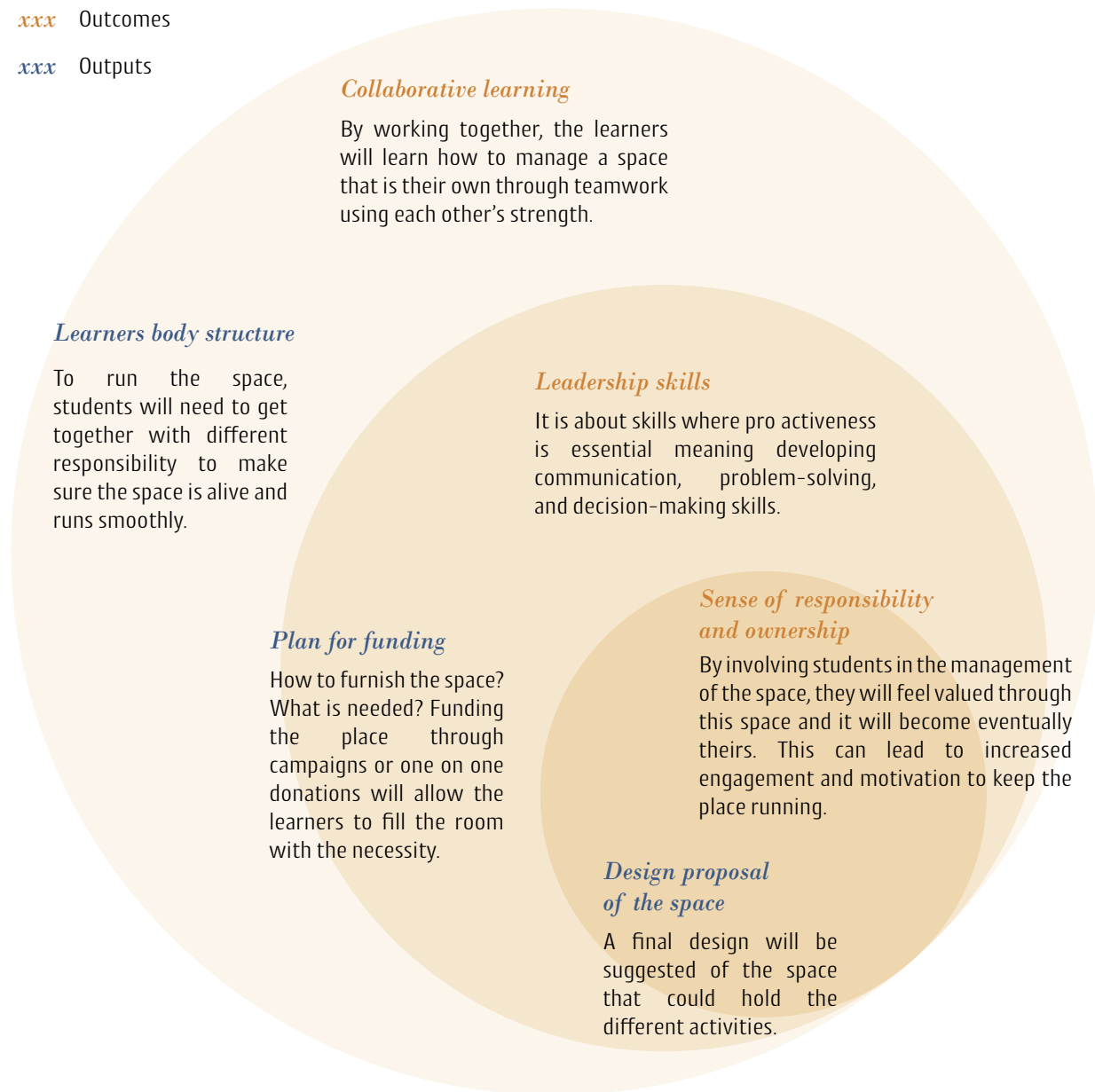


Figure 5. Outcomes and outputs diagram

Purpose

The outcomes and outputs of this thesis can be understood through three different levels from a macro to a micro level. The macro level encompass the idea of a learners body structure that will govern the space and allow good collaborative work. The meso level is about developing those leadership skills and organise ways of funding the space to get the right material. The micro level is about acquiring a new sense of ownership and responsibility through a space that is tailored to their needs and values.

Legend



Personal path

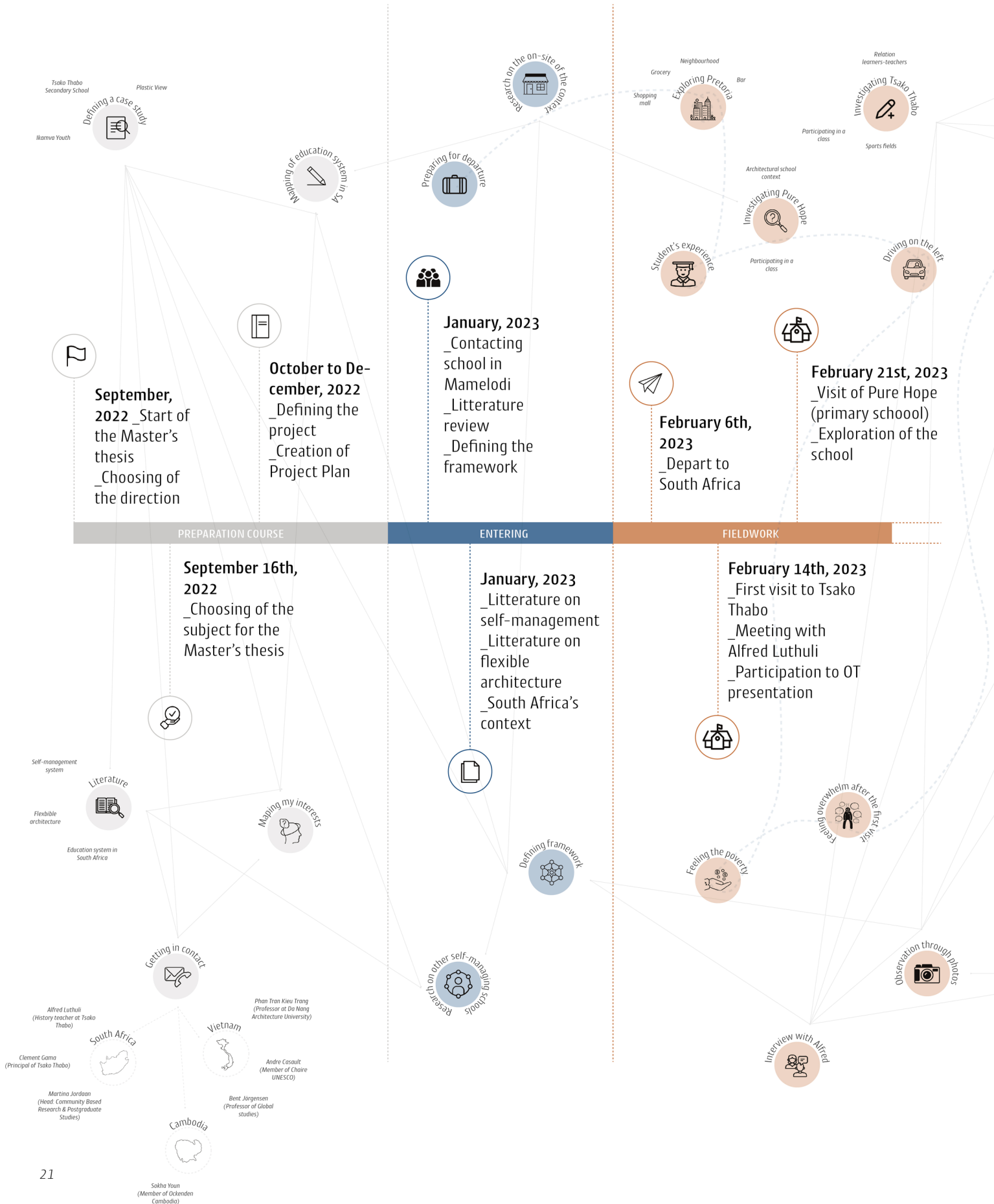


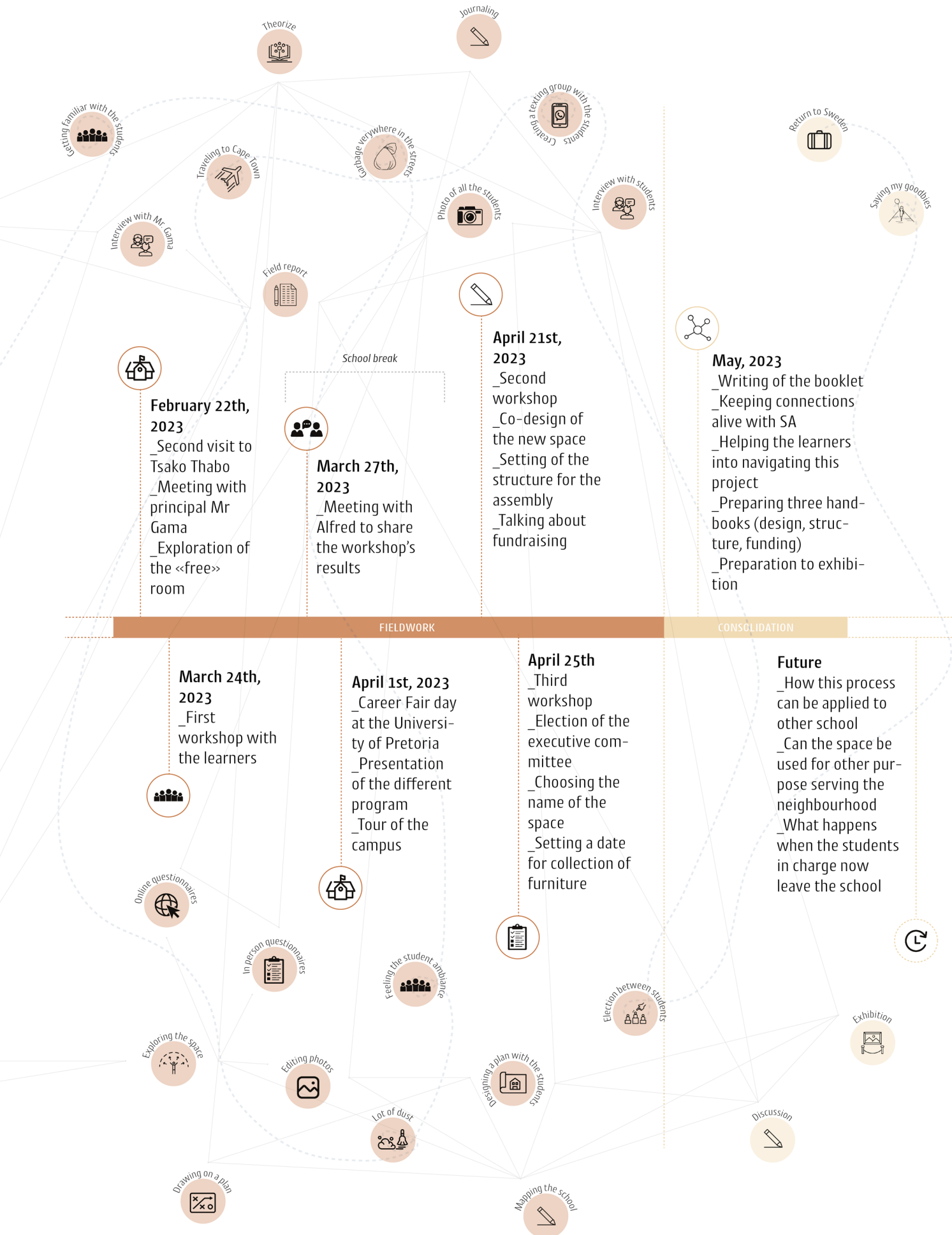
Connections



Methods & approaches

METHODS & TIMELINE





February 22th, 2023
 _ Second visit to Tsako Thabo
 _ Meeting with principal Mr Gama
 _ Exploration of the «free» room

March 27th, 2023
 _ Meeting with Alfred to share the workshop's results

April 21st, 2023
 _ Second workshop
 _ Co-design of the new space
 _ Setting of the structure for the assembly
 _ Talking about fundraising

May, 2023
 _ Writing of the booklet
 _ Keeping connections alive with SA
 _ Helping the learners into navigating this project
 _ Preparing three hand-books (design, structure, funding)
 _ Preparation to exhibition

March 24th, 2023
 _ First workshop with the learners

April 1st, 2023
 _ Career Fair day at the University of Pretoria
 _ Presentation of the different program
 _ Tour of the campus

April 25th
 _ Third workshop
 _ Election of the executive committee
 _ Choosing the name of the space
 _ Setting a date for collection of furniture

Future
 _ How this process can be applied to other school
 _ Can the space be used for other purpose serving the neighbourhood
 _ What happens when the students in charge now leave the school

FIELDWORK

CONSOLIDATION

Catching familiar with the students

Traveling to Cape Town

Carriage everywhere in the streets

Creating a texting group with the students

Interview with Mr Gama

Photo of all the students

Interview with students

Return to Sweden

Saying my goodbyes

Theorize

Journaling

Field report

School break

Home

People

People

Online questionnaires

In person questionnaires

Feeling the student ambience

Home

Exploring the space

Editing photos

Lot of dust

Developing a plan with the students

Election between students

Drawing on a plan

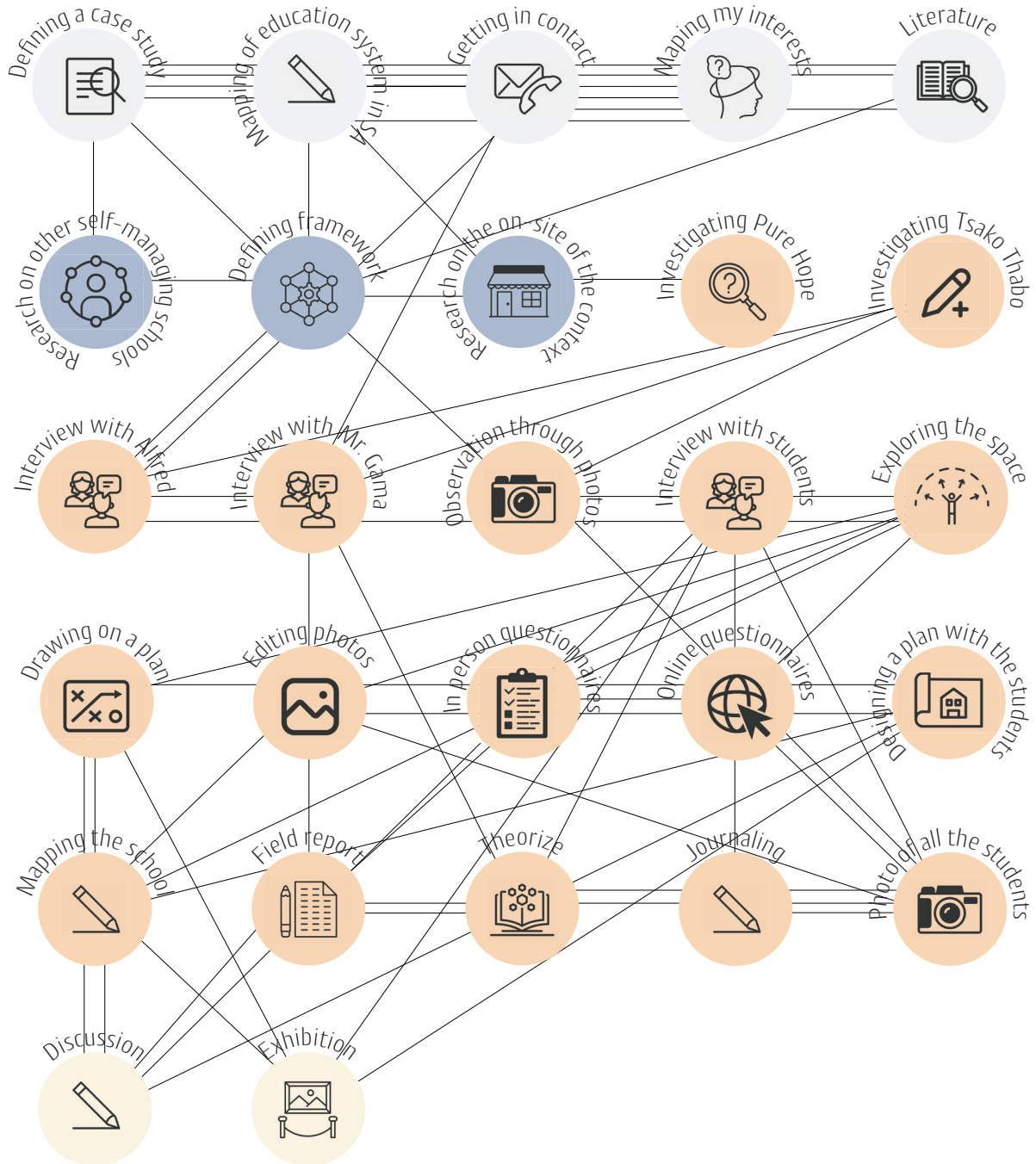
Mapping the school

Discussion

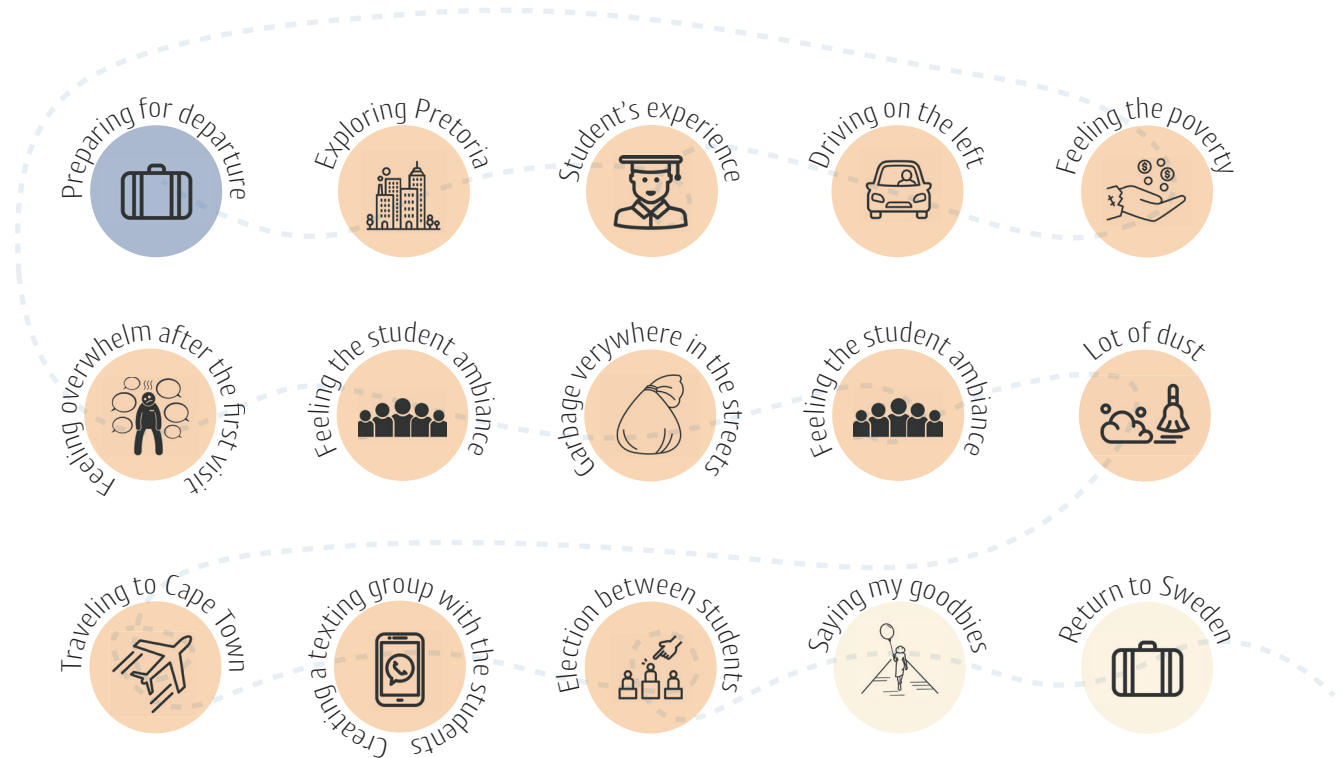
Exhibition

Refresh

METHODS



PERSONAL JOURNEY & IMPRESSIONS



Methods

Throughout this thesis, I have used a diverse range of interconnected methods, forming a comprehensive and dynamic approach from inception to conclusion. Recognizing that there is no linear path in the thesis process, I embrace the need for multiple perspectives as the project unfolds. My methodology has helped me base a strong framework, gaining a deep understanding of the context, and facilitating impactful workshops.

The various methods utilized in this research are presented in chronological order, reflecting their respective timings. However, it is important to note that these methods continuously inform and influence one another throughout the entire process, often overlapping as the project develops. The methods varies from interviews, to observation with photos, questionnaires, reports, mapping, etc. By employing this diverse array of methods, I have been able to collect rich and varied data that enhances the depth and validity of my findings.

Personal journey & impressions

My personal journey throughout this project has been a remarkable rollercoaster, encompassing both ups and downs, which I consider vital to acknowledge and reflect upon in a constructive manner. Navigating the unfamiliar territory of a new country, its systems, and diverse cultures while simultaneously pursuing a master's thesis is undoubtedly a challenging endeavour, demanding a multitude of skills. Nonetheless, this transformative journey stands out as one of the most enriching experiences of my life, affording me the opportunity to explore an entirely different part of the world, distinct from any previous encounters.

I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have had this experience with remarkable individuals and experiences that I will keep forever with me. I believe this personal journey is intrinsically linked to my thesis which allowed me to delve into the depths of diverse socio-economic groups, uncovering alternative realities that a leisurely travel experience alone would not have unveiled.

3. THE CASE OF TSAKO THABO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Context

Tsako Thabo learner's body structure

Flow and classes of the school



TSAKO THABO

CONTEXT

To complete this text, I have conducted different interviews with the principal Mr Gama and one of the teacher of the school Mr Luthuli at Tsako Thabo. These information were crucial to my understanding of the context as it is a unique school. Indeed, Tsako Thabo Secondary School, located in Mamelodi, offers General Education and Training (GET) for grades 8 and 9 and Further Education and Training (FET) for grades 10 to 12. The name “Tsako” comes from the language Tsonga, which means “Happy” and “Thabo” also has the same meaning but in Sepedi. In fact, this school specialized in those two primary cultures by offering language classes in these mother tongues, which makes the school a high-interest option for those who belong to Sepedi or Tsonga. School days are from Monday to Friday, from 7:30 until 14:30. They constitute of nine different periods of 40 minutes with a lunch break from 11:00 until 12:00. The school has around 1400 learners and 38 teachers, with classes of 30-40 students. Because it is a public school, there are no fees, and lunch is provided for free since many of the learners do not have the means to pay for food.

The particularity of Tsako Thabo is its multiple programs and extra-curricular activities available for the learners. For example, in the Further Education and Training (FET), grade 10, students can choose a direction such as natural sciences, economics, arts or social sciences. For extra-curricular activities, they have the opportunity to choose between soccer, netball, volleyball, rugby, tennis, choir, drum, chess, debate, drama, robotics, or environment club. These initiatives are only available due to the hard work of the principal implementing these activities and the teachers being involved after school hours. In counterpart, Mamelodi Secondary School, which is only a few kilometres from Tsako Thabo, offers no extra-curricular activities.

Some other initiatives involve the community, like giving the opportunity for mothers of the learners to cook during the lunch break for the students. It has been a way to integrate the families into the school and to give them some paid work. Unfortunately, many confrontations have occurred between the mothers due to their cultural differences, which were then linked to the explanation of certain behaviours of their child at school. All in all, it has worked well, and this initiative will stay for a while. There are also many street vendors in the courtyard during lunch break so learners who can pay for

more can buy other products if they are still hungry. It has been agreed that street vendors are responsible for cleaning up the courtyard once the break is over before leaving the school perimeter. Both the street vendors and the students gladly welcomed this initiative.

Finally, the school is also connected with students from the University of Pretoria who come regularly to help the illiterate young students to catch up with the curriculum. Indeed, more than 70% of the students who arrive in grade 8 do not know how to read and write. Therefore, some university students are part of the group TULIP, which helps young black South African students, volunteer to assist illiterate learners with reading and writing every Saturday. As a result, tremendous benefits have been seen, allowing the learners to complete secondary school. In addition, many other university programs have also conducted work in this school, such as architecture and occupational therapy. These partnerships have also helped the school become a better and safer place with the right tools for the learners.

However, despite all their efforts and proactiveness in implementing those different initiatives within the school, they still face many challenges. One of them is the noticeable cultural differences between learners from various backgrounds. Having primarily Tsonga and Sepedi cultures, they have different values and opinions, which can quickly become conflicts between them and the teachers. For example, many Sepedi teenagers go to Initiation schools where they learn to be a “man”, but those schools often teach values in discord with the school mentality. This causes a lot of confrontation when returning to school, where young boys defy the teachers and bully other learners who have not attended those schools. There are approximately 50 students who come back from these schools each year, and the teachers do not have the proper resources and time to deal with them one by one, so there is a lot of friction happening during those years. Another important problem is the excessive drug consumption among learners, even during school hours. These drugs can range from weed to crystal methamphetamine, which has increased in the last few years. This is the sad reality that many teenagers face, which causes an impediment to their development.

Personal reflection

Tsako Thabo remains a very loud and noisy school environment. During the classes, we can hear noises from everywhere and students outside of the classroom wandering the courtyard. It makes learning a difficult task. Moreover, during summer, I can imagine the classroom being very hot without enough ventilation. Moreover, the sounds inside the classrooms were resonating a lot which made it hard to understand some of the students when they were talking.



Image 19. The courtyard of the FET (grade 10,11 and 12).



Image 20. A classroom cleaned up at the end of



Image 21. The learners taking a break between two classes in the courtyard.



Image 22. End of the classes, all the learners are going home taking the bus or walking.

TSAKO THABO LEARNER'S BODY STRUCTURE

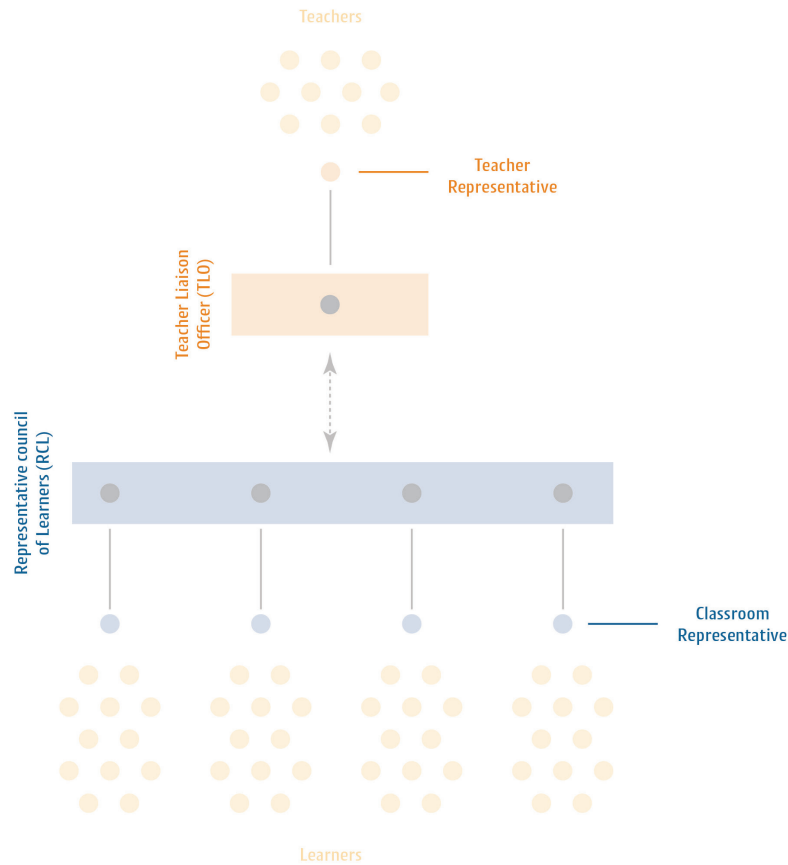


Figure 6. Structure in Tsako Thabo, designed from the discussions with the teachers.

This chart provides a simplified overview of the existing structure at Tsako Thabo Secondary School. Each class has a delegate elected among the learners, and together they form the RCL (Representative Council of Learners), where they debate on school matters. These topics can be in the form of demands, for example, if there is a necessity for more material or to relay information from the outside. In fact, many organizations that want to provide information to the youth can access this demographic through the RCL since they are the representative of Tsako Thabo. It can be a new initiative from the student at the university who wants to offer their help to the learners or some open spots for therapy groups, among other kinds of activity. The delegates also act as intermediaries, conveying student feedback to teachers through the elected Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO), who is elected among the teachers.

This structure is also used at the regional, provincial, and national levels. As a matter of fact, each school elects a student that will compete at the regional

level by presenting a project. If their project is recognized as the best, the student gets to be part of the RCL at the provincial level and so on until the national level. This structure helps for good communication between the different schools and is a way of self-management. Building upon this foundation, I aim to leverage the students' familiarity with this structure and implement it on a micro level within the self-managing space.

A self-management approach entails the delegation of authority exclusively to the learners within the school, who would democratically elect an executive committee to assume responsibility for governing the designated space. By adopting such an approach, learners would have the opportunity to cultivate and enhance their leadership abilities. This would foster a sense of agency and empowerment as they actively shape their educational environment according to their preferences and needs.

FLOW AND CLASSES OF THE SCHOOL

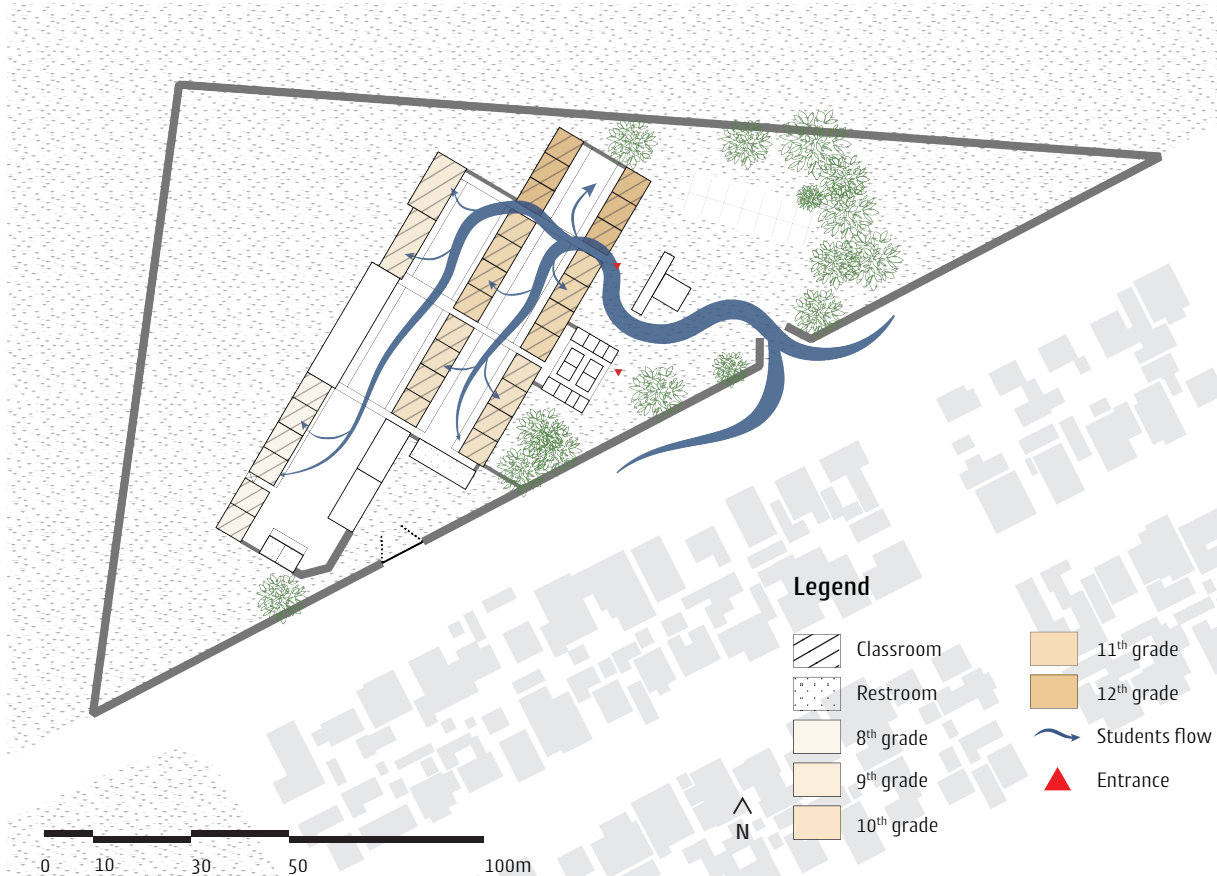


Figure 7. Flows of the student when arriving at school and separation of the school per grade.

Tsako Thabo Secondary School comprises two distinct courtyards that segregate the General Education and Training (GET) section (grades 8 and 9) from the Further Education and Training (FET) section (grades 10 to 12). This way, both educational trainings have their own courtyard and separate activities. However, the narrow entrance and passage leading to the school buildings create significant congestion during the start and end of the day. Another entrance is allocated on the west side, but it mostly leads to offices and the secretary, which the learners do not use. With the 1400 learners at Tsako Thabo, the two courtyards can become quickly crowded, especially during the period I was conducting my thesis with the renovation of the whole grade 8 and 9 courtyard. Additionally, the absence of tables or seating areas in the courtyards forces students to eat their lunches in classrooms without supervision or wander within the fenced perimeter of the school. Furthermore, the lack of adequate shading intensifies the discomfort, as the South African sun quickly raises temperatures.

Regrettably, the school's infrastructure is not well-maintained. Constructed with concrete and bricks, some sections of the walls exhibit deterioration around the openings. The windows themselves are dusty, with several remaining broken. The roofs consist of metal sheets supported by wooden or steel structures, often exposed in the classrooms due to the absence of ceilings. Naturally, it is a very dusty environment, and the model of the school is based on southern countries with classes that overlook directly to the courtyard. This makes the maintenance of the school an additional challenge for maintenance. The furniture is a mix of office chairs, wooden chairs, or cushioned chairs. All in all, the learning environment at Tsako Thabo is not the most conducive for learnings as we are used by our European standards. However, it is still better than many other schools, not to mention they were under massive renovations, making the air even more dustier.

POTENTIAL SELF-MANAGED SPACE



Figure 8. Identification of the potential space for the self-management approach and flows to the space with its area of influence.

Relation to the space

After a discussion with Mr. Alfred Luthuli, we identified a potential space suitable for the purpose of this project. It is currently utilized as a storage room with many books and materials that the school is not currently using. While acknowledging that the space requires considerable improvement before it can be effectively utilized, it is noteworthy that the room is well-maintained and organized, with materials already sorted into piles, facilitating eventual clearance. More importantly, the room is separated from the main school premises, featuring its own distinct entrance accessed through a secondary gate positioned towards the western side separated from the classrooms. This

separated entrance gives the opportunity for the space to be open during the weekend and after classes without worrying about any robbery in the school. It is a great way to allow inclusivity since one of the main focuses of this space is to give a place to study outside of the home for more conducive learnings.

On the next page is presented a comprehensive visual depiction of the spatial layout and key components of the designated area. These photographs were captured during my on-site visits, providing an authentic representation of the space and its various elements.

Learners' comments

After showing the potential space to the learners participating in the workshop, I received very different reactions. Some thought it was small, even though it is literally double in length than a normal class, and some thought it was big enough for the activities. Regardless, they were all very thrilled to envision what could happen in there, and they wanted to be part of it.

Light

In general, the room is bright with the big windows and a view on the GET courtyard



4 windows are placed on the wall facing a north-west orientation which provides a lot of sun in the morning

Small windows are also placed on the south-east wall for some additional light

Materiality

The space is definitely not ready to be used, the floor and the windows are very dusty and some dangerous elements are still out in the open

The construction area taking place nearby has left a lot of dust and dirt on the building



The roof made of metal sheets is visible from the inside as well as its structure

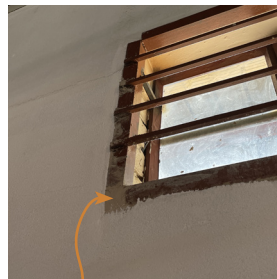
Many dangerous elements are still visible like the light switch and electricity chords from the roof

This building is one of the only one at school being with white bricks which gives it a lighter and more open feeling

Some beautiful wooden shelves are already in place that could be eventually used for the learners

Ambiance

The learners want a space that can be divided for the different activities and to make it welcoming and warm.



The ceiling is high which gives the space a nice feeling of openness

The light makes the space very enjoyable

The space is packed with books and many other things, but once it will be emptied, it can become a very spacious room with proper light

4. BUILDING THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Exploration of the space in Tsako Thabo

Structure of a self-managing space

Funding the space

Design proposal of the space between us

Collage of the project



TSAKO THABO

EXPLORATION OF THE SPACES IN TSAKO THABO

Participatory design

This architectural approach is a unique and innovative method that promotes the active involvement of various stakeholders to create a more inclusive solution that directly addresses the specific challenges within a given context (Singh, 2023). Tsako Thabo Secondary School is a highly diverse environment, encompassing learners from different cultures and backgrounds leading to various opinions and values. Consequently, it becomes imperative to address problems by considering the multiple perspectives to ensure that everyone feels included and leading to a solution tailored to the unique school's context. By adopting this approach, every individual with a stake in the matter can actively participate in the process, starting from the brainstorming phase and continuing until the final feedback is given.

This participatory process involves conducting workshops that focus on different aspects of the problem. These workshops are of great significance since they provide a platform for me to finally hear the voices of the people involved. In the course of this thesis, I conducted three distinct workshops. The first workshop focused on understanding the students' educational context encompassing their environment, interactions

with their surroundings, and overall sentiments towards teachers and fellow students. The objective was to gain a deep understanding of their experience as learners at Tsako Thabo. The second workshop centered around the design and implementation of the Safe Space. During this workshop, we addressed the three key dimensions required for establishing this self-managed space, which would accommodate various community-driven activities. These dimensions included the design proposal, a new learner's body structure enabling a self-managing approach, and the funding of the space. The third workshop was about setting the foundation to the realisation of this project. During this workshop, an executive committee was elected, concrete actions were taken to secure financing for the project, and a final design proposition for the self-managed space was developed.

Ultimately, through the series of workshops, I gained a comprehensive and holistic perspective on the essential requirements for establishing a space that offers abundant opportunities for learners to fully develop their potential, while also providing a safe and nurturing environment for them as young adults.

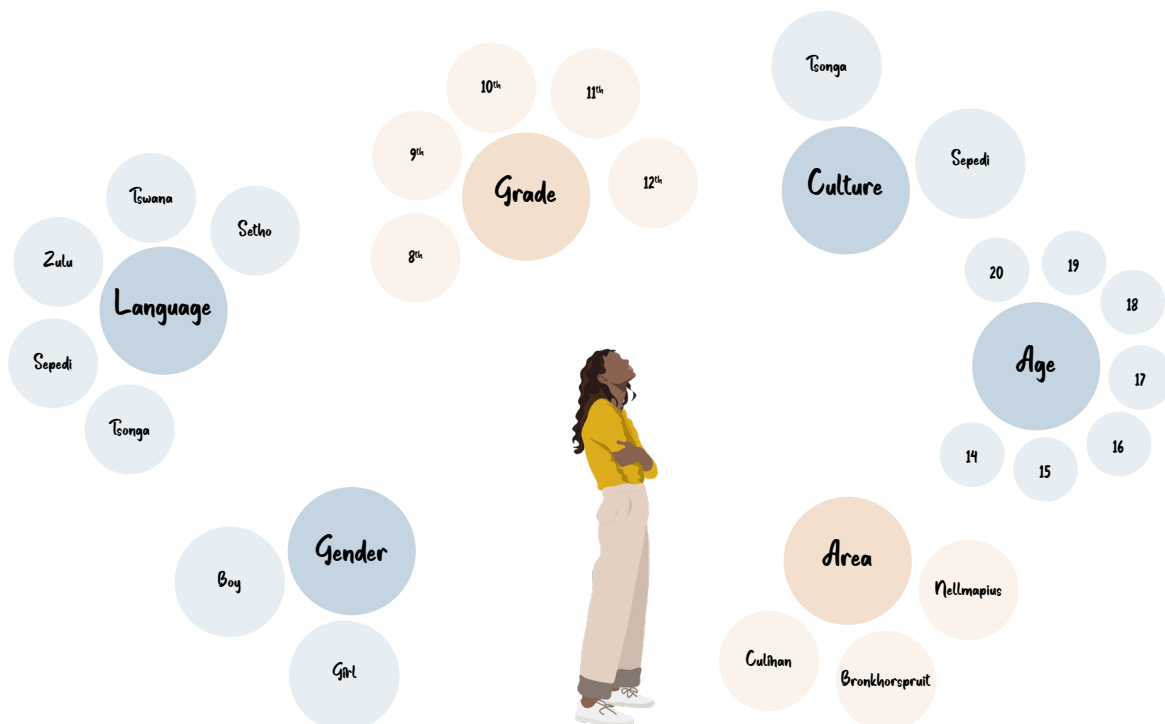


Figure 9. Grand diversity in Tsako Thabo

CONTEXTUAL WORKSHOP (1)

What is it about

This first workshop was held on the 24th of March after visiting the school twice during the previous month. These previous meetings helped me gather the general knowledge about the situation of the school on a macro level, regarding the neighbourhood, and on the micro level, based on the different situation of the students. With this information, I was able to build a workshop that would be composed of three different parts focusing on an in-depth experience of the students through an online questionnaire, a situation plan identifying specific areas around the school ground, and a discussion addressing the theme of self-management.

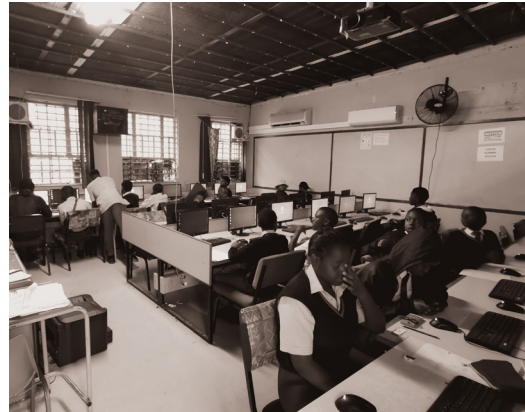


Image 23. Answering the questionnaire at the computer lab.



Image 24. Identifying the “good” and “bad” places at school.

Conducting the workshop

The questionnaire was constituted of 35 questions regarding the student’s situation in relation to their family, their interest, their relationship to the teachers and other students, and their well-being (see appendix A for the survey questions). This questionnaire was made through Questionpro, a website allowing to create our own questionnaires to gather the data in a comprehensive and graphical way. Some questions and answers are showcased on the next page.

The second part was about identifying the “bad” and the “good” places around the school on a plan. This served as a way to understand the relationship the students have with their environment and how can this be enhanced. The final result is showed on the page 37.

Finally, the last part was about regrouping the last three questions from the questionnaires but in a live discussion. These questions were targeting specifically how the learners would feel about having a safe space that would only be allowed for students and what kind of activity they would see fit for this place.

Results of the questionnaire

These data were collected directly from the website offering the online questionnaire (www.questionpro.com)

Question 16 - When you were late during the school year, how many time has it been because you...

Statement	Never	1 Times	2-3 Times	4 or more Times	Overall
Overall	0 0%	1 8.33%	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%
Had transportation problems (late bus, late drop-off etc.)	0 0%	1 20%	0 0%	2 100%	3 100%
Had to avoid gang members, bullies or others (GOING TO SCHOOL)	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Had morning family responsibilities (washing average kids, cleaning up, etc.)	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Just didn't want to go	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Stopped for food or drink	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Other	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

Two of them answered they are late at school to avoid gang members.

Many face transportation problems when going to school.

Question 20 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school experience?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Overall
I feel close to people at this school	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
I am happy to be at this school	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
I feel like I am part of this school	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
The teachers at this school treat me fairly	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Teachers are good at handling bad behavior between students	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
I feel safe in my school	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
My school is clean	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
My school promotes the same values as I do	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
I enjoy coming to school	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

The opinion about the cleanliness of the school vary tremendously which begs the question what is characteristic of a clean school.

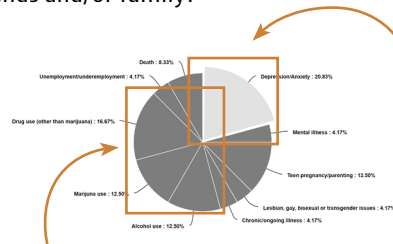
Most of the learners feel happy and appreciated at Tsako Thabo.

Question 23 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school's environment for academic learning?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Overall
Adults encourage me to work hard so I can be successful in college or at the job I choose	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Overall, teachers give students a chance to take part in classroom discussions and/or activities	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Teachers promote academic success for all students	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Overall, this school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

Overall, this school is very supportive of the students in their development.

Question 27 - With which issues has school helped you, your friends and/or family?



Five students have answered suffering from depression/anxiety, luckily it seems that the school is helping them.

It is known, learners suffered a lot from the drug and alcohol use that is prevalent in the school unfortunately. Maybe with the help of the teachers, the consumption can reduce.

Identification of the "good" and "bad" places around the school

This space is empty for the moment, but strangely students saw this place both as "bad" and ideal for the self-managed space.

The backyard is not very accessible and full of grass, but sports field are currently being built so it can be accessible for the students.

9 out of the 13 respondents were in grade 12 which is the reason why most of the "good" place are their respective classroom.

Sadly, the entrance is a dangerous place since it's the threshold between the safety of the school walls and the outside.

Unfortunately, the bathrooms are very dirty, some toilets don't have doors, the toilets are leaking, there is mud on the floor, the toilets are dirty...

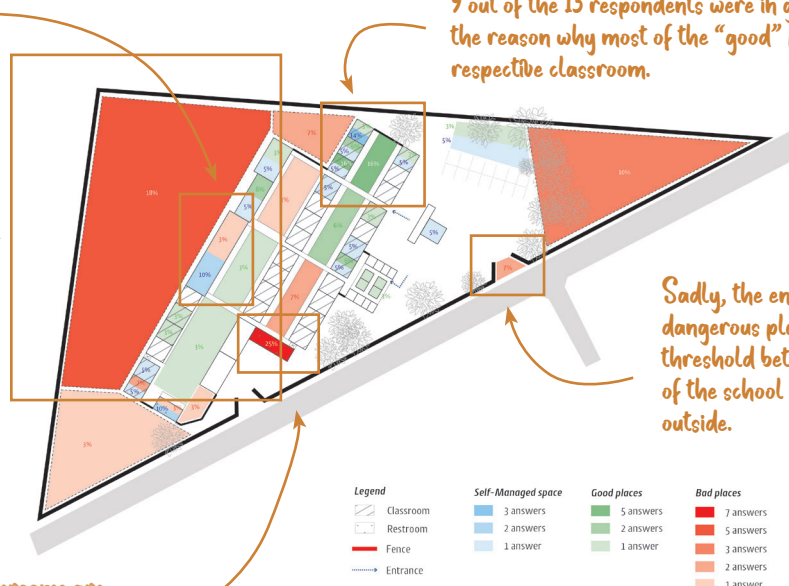


Image 10. Plan of the school identifying the "good" and "bad" places.

Overview

This first workshop was dense in information, but the results speak for themselves. The majority of the learners chose Tsako Thabo Secondary School by themselves and are highly willing to pursue their education in the tertiary sector, whether at a university or a vocational school. All the incentive to offer a variety of programs is a success since this is the main comment that comes up when asking the learners what they appreciate the most about their school (Arts, CAT program, Soccer, etc.). What is also highly appreciated is the willingness of the teachers to teach and help the students in need. They are available for them, and they care about their development. The cleanliness aspect is a divided opinion since half of them think it is a clean environment, whereas the other half does not think so. This topic would be worth diving in to better understand what they mean and how to provide a cleaner school. Unfortunately, bullying is still part of the school, which happens in most cases inside the classroom about their physic, their sexuality and even on cyber platforms. For drug usage, the teachers confirmed that around 90% of the learners use marijuana or other drugs, which is a challenging problem to control. In conclusion, there is a definite need for students to talk, either between themselves in a safe space or with professionals since they often have challenging personal situations including themselves or their families. The purpose of creating this self-managed space would be to answer one of these needs, which could be translated into a therapy area.



Image 25. William helping me with the workshop.

Reflection

After this first workshop, I have gained tremendous amount of information about the situation of the students at Tsako Thabo which has helped me develop a space with them that is appropriate for their needs. To understand where they come from, what they are hoping to see, is important in this process since it will guide the design. The general response I got from the students was brought up with a lot of excitement to this new project. In fact, these students are very proactive since they have been brought up in this school environment where new initiatives are welcomed and encouraged. This paved the way for students to take a stance toward what they want and what they need in their environment.

Challenges

- + All the students arrived at different times, so I had to start the workshop with part two while the others would arrive before going to the computer room with everybody.
- + The use of the computer was a tedious task since their server is quite slow. It took a tremendous amount of time to start the computer and even the navigator Chrome. This delayed the whole workshop for a lot of time, but thankfully everyone stayed patient.
- + Some grade 8 students had difficulties with some questions since English is not their first language. They were also struggling with the use of the computer since it is a new tool for some of them.
- + As a thank you to their time, I wanted to offer them a snack of chips and soft drink but I didn't have the time to buy it, so one of my helper went during the workshop to buy the food and come back on time.



Image 26. Supervising the questionnaire on the computers and helping the students who need some.

DESIGN WORKSHOP (2)

What is it about

This second workshop was held on the 21st of April, one month after the first one. It was targeting three different themes. The first one was about the design of the future space, the second one about the structure of this self-managed system and finally about the funding of the place. Even though the setting of the workshop was last minute, we were able to gather 9 of the students who participated in the last workshop that were the keenest to pursue this process.



Image 27. Thinking the space during the design workshop.



Image 28. Choosing the furniture.

Conducting the workshop

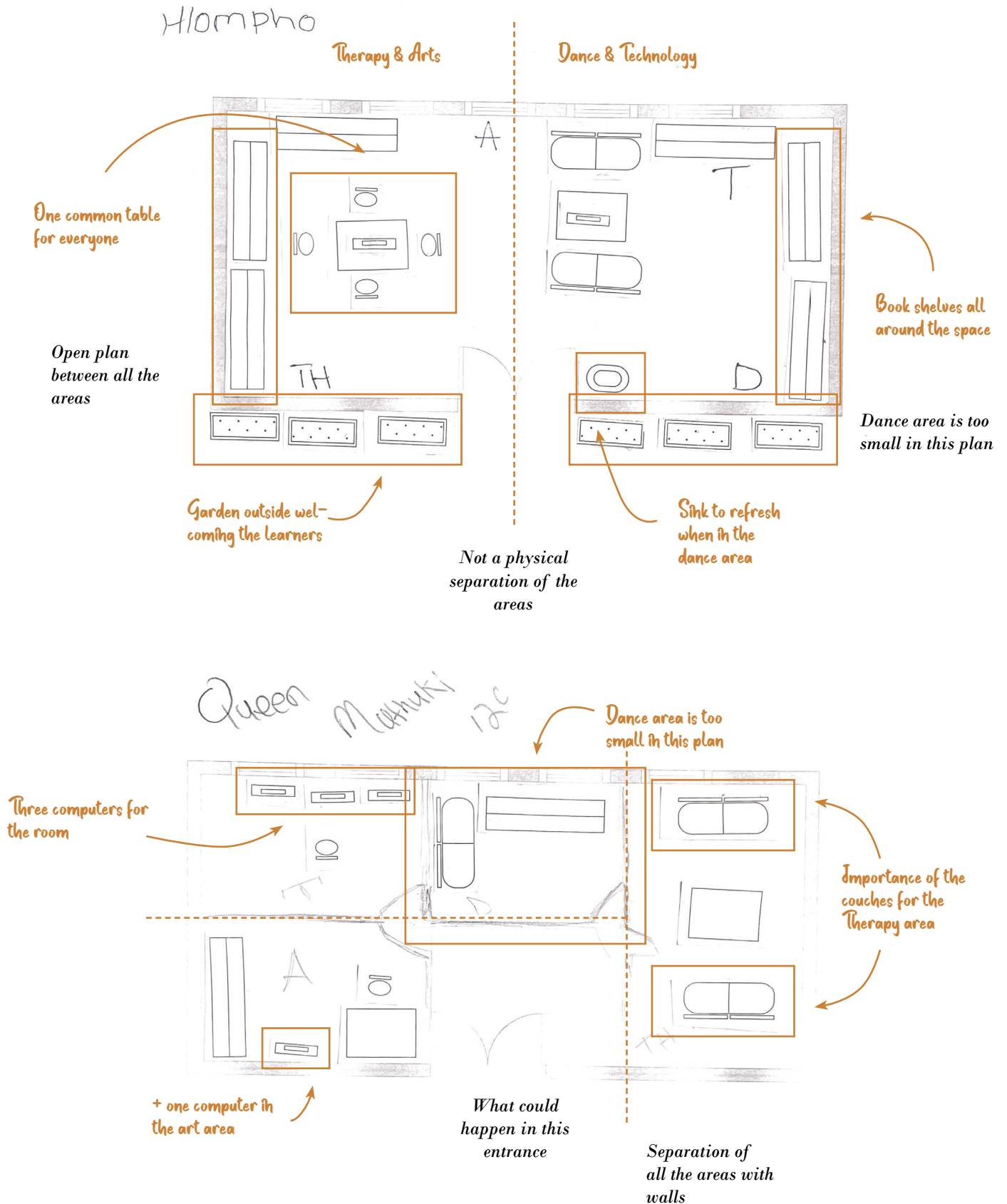
A plan of the storage room was giving to every learner with a set of furniture that was pre cut so they could place it wherever they wanted on the plan. This activity took around 30 minutes to be completed and they seemed very eager to let go their creativity. Each of the propositions were unique and it was a great success to understand better how they envision this space.

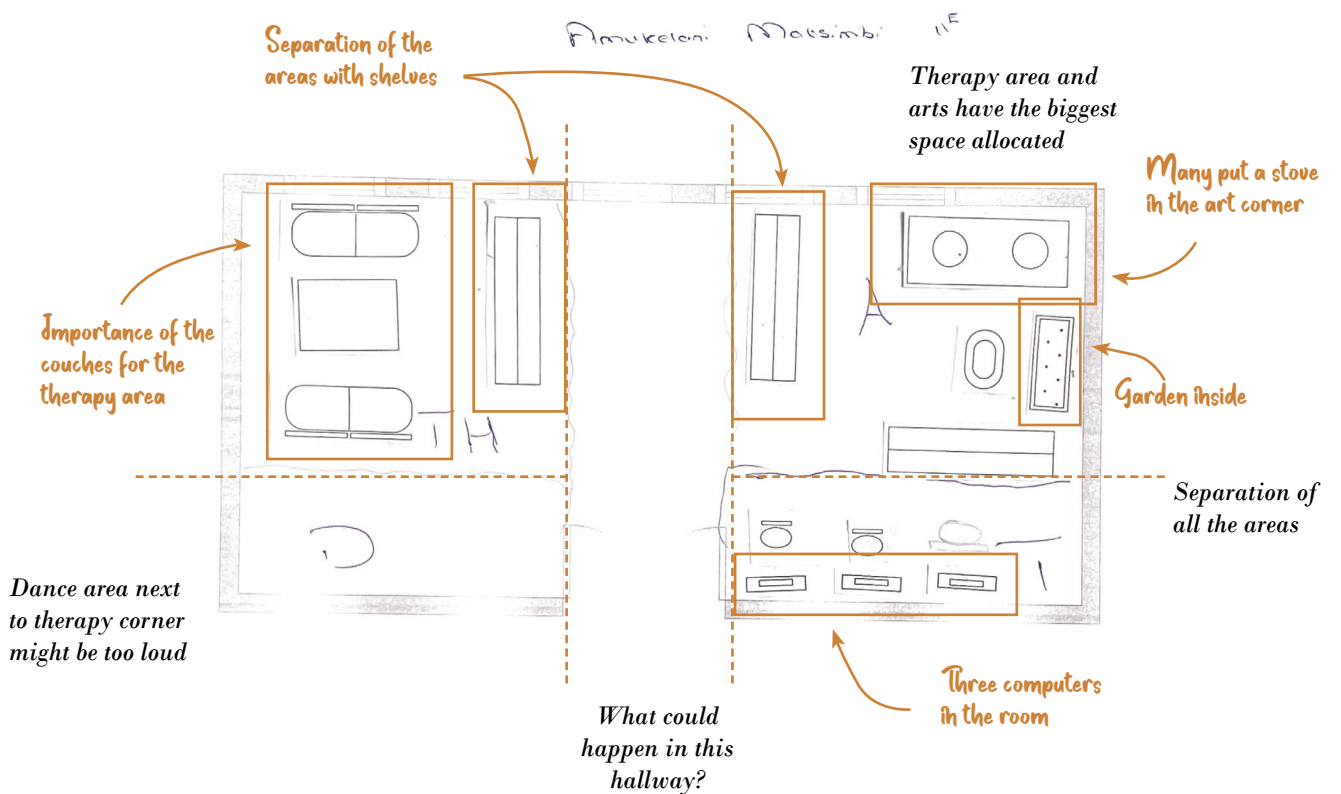
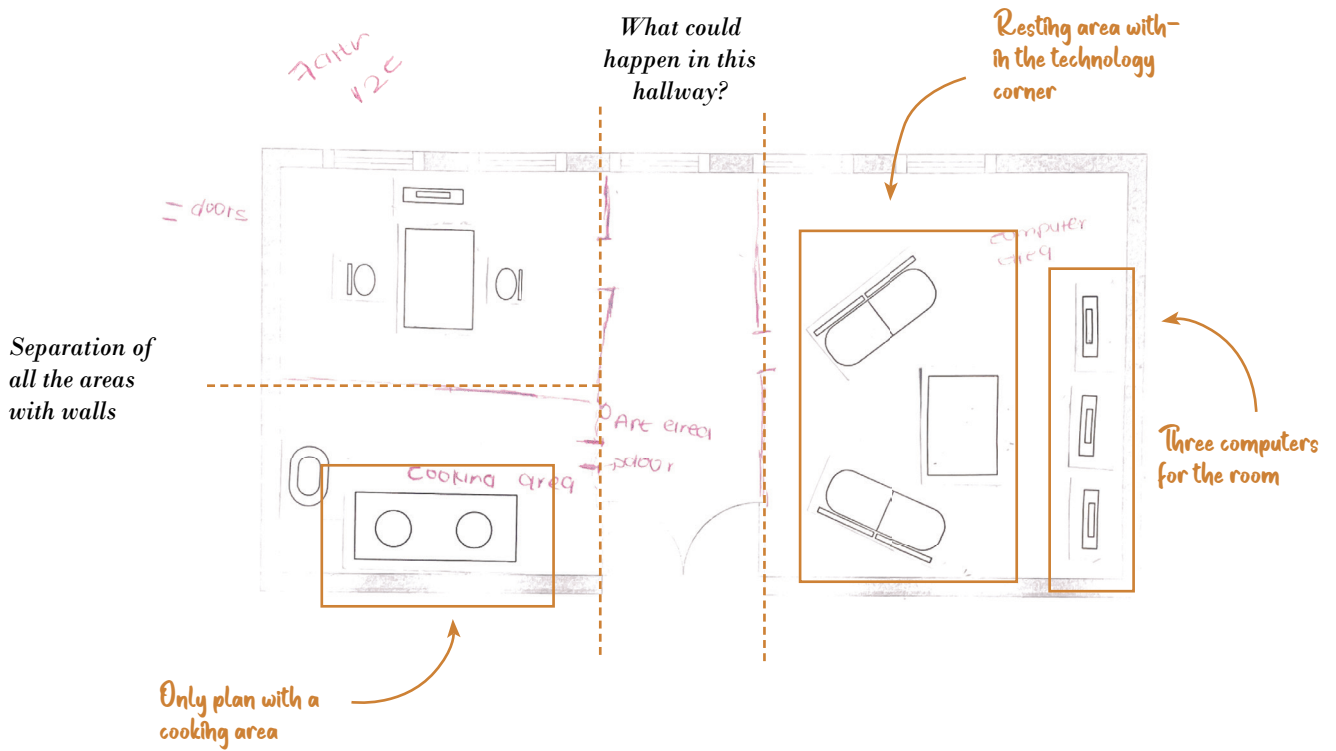
The next part was about explaining how the self-managed system work. I explained them what the Assembly constitute of and what is the executive committee. Four roles will have to be filled eventually: the presidency, the vice-president, the treasurer, and the secretary of external communications. The election will be held next week so the foundation will be settled. Many of them showed interest in the different positions which makes me very optimistic about the continuation of this project.

For the last part, we talked about the different way we could fund this project. I brought up the idea to partnership with some organisations that are already in place in Mamelodi that they might be willing to do some donations or give some help for reaching people. Then one learner came up with the idea of organising a GoFundMe on internet which is something I will look more into it so they can have access to this money. We also discussed of the way we could go directly to people and ask them for donations and we came up with the idea that we could give a slip to the donors with the signature of the principal and the emblem of the school to thank them of their contribution.

Results of the collaborative space

This is a sample of the 9 different exercise sheets that have been completed. I tried to show different strategy of the space and different choices of furniture.





Overview

Most of the learners have chosen to include the four different areas that I proposed: Therapy area, Technology, Dance and Arts. These propositions come from the last workshop, where I was able to evaluate what is most needed. In any case, Therapy and Technology were always chosen to be represented. Three out of the nine participants have an open plan proposition, whereas the others have decided to separate the different areas either with walls or furniture. I believe that the Therapy corner should be separated from the rest of the room with a physical boundary to assure calm and provide a safe space which was done by some of the learners like Faith, Queen, Bontle, Lerata, and Amukelani. Five of them represented the Technology area with a row of computers varying from three to five, which will demand a lot of investment that will take time before this space is achieved. Five of them also included some plants, sometimes in incongruous places, but I understand the will to have more greenery around the space. All in all, the learners have shown great interest in making the space an inviting place for all. The bookshelves were important for all of them as well as the Technology and Therapy corner. Books and couches are the first things they will need to look into to build up the space.

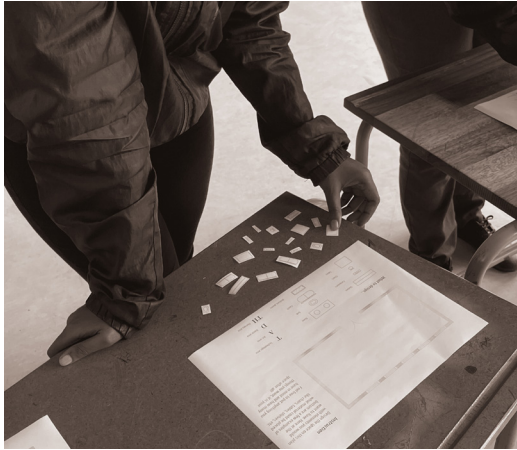


Image 29. Placing the furniture on the plan.

Reflection

This second workshop was a great success, and I am relieved that it finally took place after postponing it three times. Once again, the learners have showed great interest to this project, and I leave with good sentiment. Even though I won't be able to pursue the project when I will leave, I want to leave them with some guides on how to pursue this process. After this workshop, I understand that what is the most important for them are a technological area, and a therapy corner. They came up with great ideas for the funding and we are prepared for the next workshop where we will vote on the executive committee to put in the place the foundations of this self-managing approach.

Challenges

- + The last three weeks have been very complicated time wise to find a moment where everyone was available since it was the Easter break.
- + The classroom we used had a metal door separating that room with another one which was very noisy from time to time from the other side. It was hard to hear one another sometimes.
- + I didn't have enough pre-cut furniture for the design phase and nothing to glue the little paper on the plan so I had to take a picture and placed back all the furniture in the plastic bag I brought them in.



Image 30. Thinking about where to put the furniture.



Image 31. The group of 9 students participating at the Design Workshop.

FOUNDATION WORKSHOP (3)

What is it about

Due to the time frame, this workshop took place 25th of April, four days after the second one and it was actually a good time to keep the motion of the project going on. During this workshop, we tackled again the three different themes: collaborative design, structure of the self-management approach, and the financing of the project, for about an hour and a half. This time, two learners couldn't join us for very long since their teacher was very restrictive on their presence in class, but they were able to come for two minutes to present themselves for the different role of the executive committee. Moreover, another student joined us for the first time as she has never participated in any of the workshops and one other learner never came. In total, six students were able to join this workshop for its whole length.

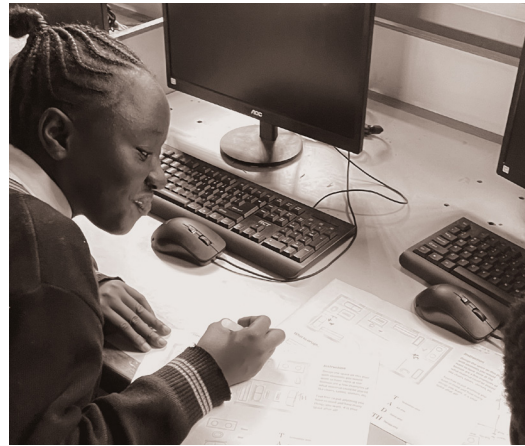


Image 32. Designing the space in teams.



Image 33. Sharing ideas from their previous exercise.

Conducting the workshop

This time, the learners had to share their design from the previous workshop and redesign the space in a common group work. They were separated in two different groups of three each, and it took around 30 minutes to complete this exercise. They really appreciated this work where they could develop their ideas together by find new space designs.

For the second topic of the self-management structure, we had to vote the executive committee. Each of the learner who wanted to take on one of the roles (president, vice president, treasurer, or secretary of external communications) had to prepare a speech so we could vote for the best candidate. Once the committee was voted, we took some pictures of the members separately and one with everyone at the end.

During this workshop, we also talked about the different methods for the fundraising. The first one was an online platform where we established the goal at 30,000R (16,800kr) for a period of one month. After talking with the principal, this fundraising could be linked to the school account which could be easier managed from there. The second strategy is a fundraising in-person. For this one, I showed them the sheet with the description of their project and the slip they could give once someone donate. With their approval, I will print it for next time so they can start collecting money.

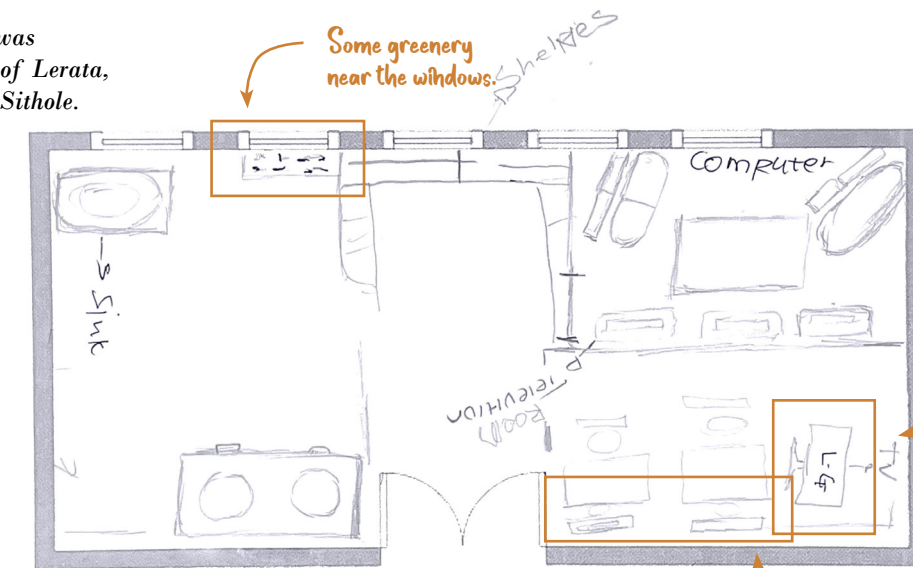
Results of the collaborative space in teams

These two drawings come from the exercise that was given to the learners during the workshop.

This team was constituted of Lerata, Faith, and Sithole.

The different areas are not well delimited. The two areas on the right side look the same.

Only plan where there is that much space for the dance area.



The television room has too many televisions.

For the dance area, to put a stove at the same place might not be a good idea, too hot.

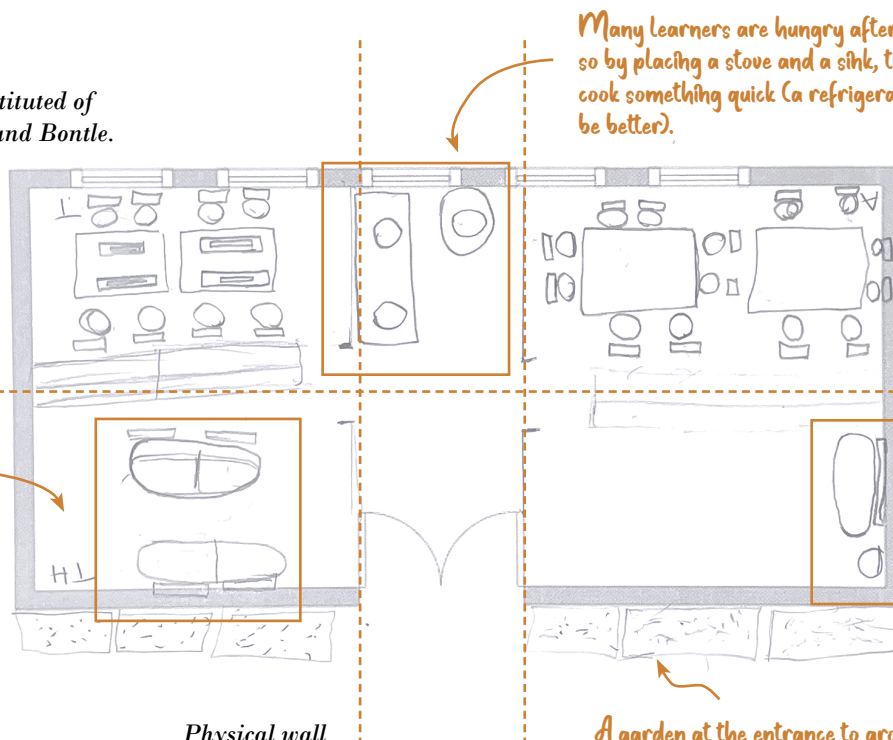
Computers beside the television.

The television would help learners who have difficulty reading to watch pedagogical programs instead.

This team was constituted of Hlompho, Andile, and Bontle.

Shelves to separate between the two spaces which would allow for flexibility.

Couches facing each other to ease the conversations.



Many learners are hungry after classes, so by placing a stove and a sink, they could cook something quick (a refrigerator might be better).

Importance of many chairs and big tables to create collaboratively.

A couch to rest after dancing.

Physical wall separating the two sides.

A garden at the entrance to grow some vegetables and make it more welcoming.

The left side is for the technology area and the therapy corner. These activities demand more silence, hence their position on the same side.

Right side is dedicated to Arts and Crafts and the dance area. Often, doing arts can be more noisy and it can be entertaining to be in the same space than the people dancing.

Overview

This exercise was very conducive to the sharing of ideas and finding new design solutions. In general, they did a great job communicating their ideas with each other, but the team of Hlompho, Bontle and Andile produced a plan with more elements taking advantage of the space. They were also able to integrate the four different areas that the students mostly appreciated. They also used shelves instead of rigid walls to separate the space, making it flexible. It shows a great understanding of the concept of flexibility for the long term. Unfortunately, the design of the team Lerata, Sithole and Faith is missing some key components. There is a repetition of technology areas. However, they did integrate a new element: the television for learners who have difficulty reading. This new element could be an excellent way to showcase pedagogical programs. However, controlling it will also take much work, especially when many learners want to watch it together. A television is also much more expensive, and I wonder if the school would approve of its usage. In conclusion, the plan of Hlompho, Bontle and Andile takes advantage of the best space and offers excellent ambiance.



Image 34. The group for the third workshop.

Reflection

Conducting the workshop during a class period can be tricky. The reason why I do it at 13h, is because during lunch it is way too loud, and most classes are filled with the students that play and run everywhere. I had to adapt around the fact that some of the learners could only be there for a few minutes, but I would have like them to participate to all the activities to have their insight. Furthermore, none of them have ever participated to this kind of committee. Even if some of them are part of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) it is not the same structure, and I think it might be difficult in the beginning to put this project in motion. I will need to keep contact with them for a while even after the thesis is finished, I believe. This is also the reason why I created three handbooks that will help the learners to continue this project; one about design, one about the learner's body structure, and one about the funding of the space (see appendix B).

Challenges



This day, we did not have access to the space we used last time. For an unknown reason, that space that day was filled with chairs and tables and a class was taking place. We had to conduct the workshop in the computer lab where the space was limited.



Two of the learners wanted to present themselves for a position in the executive committee but their teacher would not let them out of class. After talking with the teacher, she decided to let them go for a few minutes. Because of this time frame, we had to conduct the election right at the beginning and they could not stay for any other votes.



It was quite a challenge for them to prepare a speech and talk in front of everyone, but I am very proud of them for doing so. One of the learner was not confident enough to stand up and talk, so I made her write her speech before so she only had to read it out loud and she got elected for the position of Vice-President.



Image 35. The group of 9 students participating at the Design Workshop.

LEARNER'S BODY STRUCTURE OF THE SELF-MANAGING SPACE IN TSAKO THABO

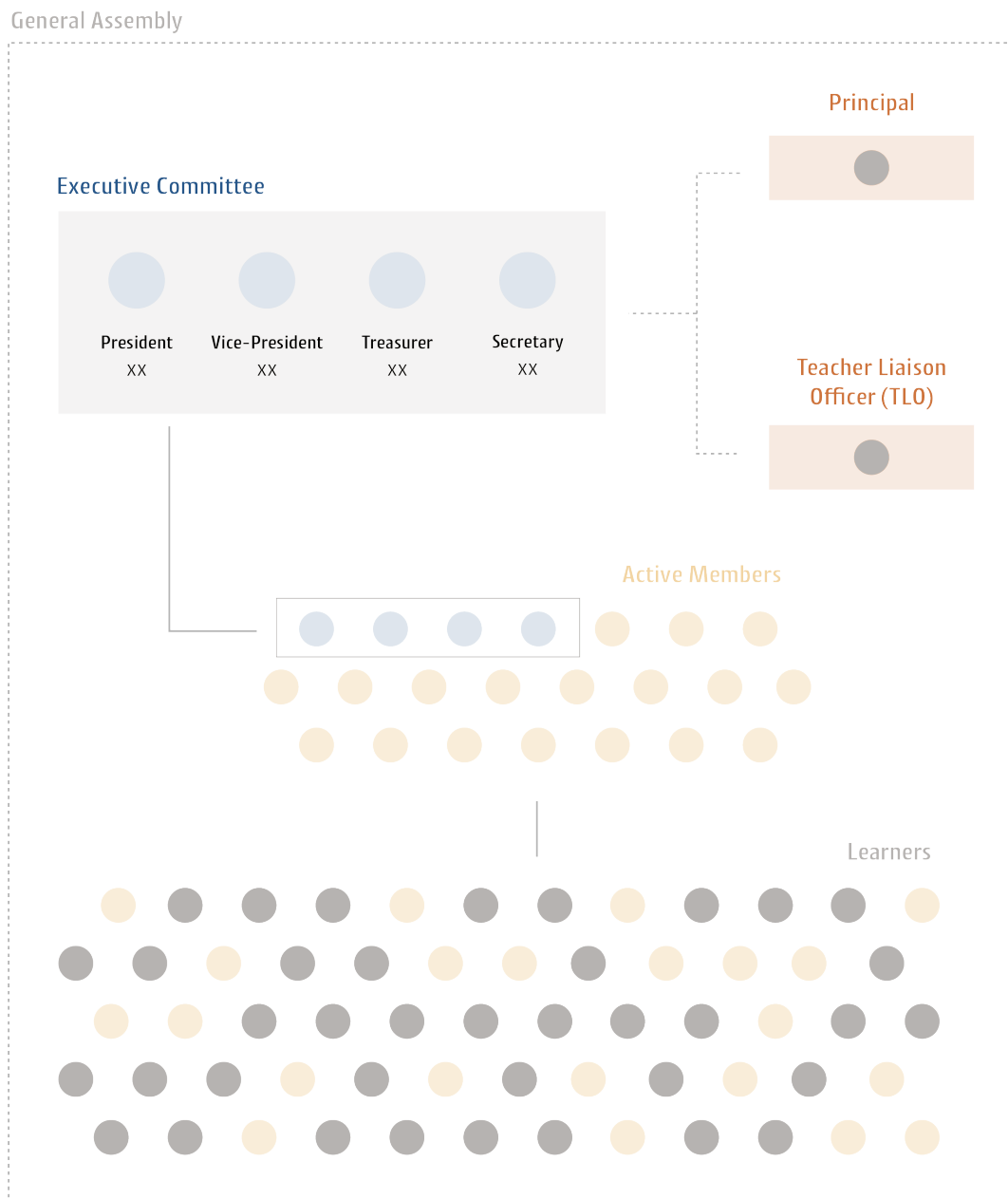


Figure 11. Structure of an assembly.

1. The name of the space was chosen by the learners members of the assembly.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

What it is about

From the experience I gained in Canada conducting different General Assembly and being part of different committees, I have developed a similar system that could be used by the learners to self-managed the space. The General Assembly (GA) would be constituted of all the active members, the one paying a monthly fee, and the four members of the executive committee. The GA is meeting once a month, or more if necessary, to present the status of the on going projects, vote on new projects that could take place in the space, decide how to use the money, organise events for fundraising, etc. In summary, the GA is the time of the month where all its members can be updated on what is happening in the space. They can vote, elect, or present whatever they consider necessary.

This step is important since part of the self-managing approach is to sustain themselves without the help of any school staff which means taking responsibility and working in a collaborative manner to build a space that reflects their values. The assembly is mainly ran by the executive committee, more specifically the president, who develop an agenda (schedule of the different topics that will be address during this assembly). This agenda is published before the scheduled General Assembly to all the members so they know what will happen during the meeting and they can prepare themselves.

Rules

- + ***Once a month.*** The General Assembly needs to meet at least once a month to follow up with all what is happening in the space with the members.
- + ***Establishing the agenda at least two weeks before the assembly.*** This is necessary so the members know what the meeting will be about and they can prepare questions or ideas if elections are needed.
- + ***Quorum needs to be achieved to hold an assembly.*** The quorum is the minimum number of members that need to be present the day of the assembly. The ideal quorum is at least half of all the members, but this setting can be changed for two third, for example.
- + ***Transcribe the assembly.*** This is the role of the Secretary who needs to transcribe everything that happens during an assembly. They take note of who is present, what questions have been made, what policies or projects have been passed, etc.

Purpose

In the context of this thesis, I decided to focus on the students enrolled in a secondary school as the prime candidates of this new self-managing space since they are at the age of developing their own identity and making choices that will impact their adult life. However, they often lack the space and opportunities to develop their full potential as individuals in the collective sphere and this is the reason why the creation of a self-managed space aims at providing a place where they can reflect on one another.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



President

The president act as the official delegate representing the assembly of students. They assure a good communication between the students and the staff that need to be aware of the different activities. They conduct the meetings of the assembly and they are the one over viewing all the activities.



Vice-President

The vice-president act as a delegate in case the president is not able to attend an assembly or another meeting. They need to be updated of all the activities that are taking place to support and help in case of a need.



Treasurer

Managing the account of the assembly by budgeting and keeping track of the transactions. They are the ones keeping the money and making plans on how to spend that money for the different projects. Need to be very responsible and being involved in the matters of the assembly by presenting the budget to the members.



Secretary of external communications

The secretary represents all the members of the assembly outside of the school. They are responsible for planning some activities for funding and maintaining good relationship with the other staff of the school. They are responsible for making the projects taking place at the space shine outside of school for parents, university students, future secondary school students, etc.

HOW TO CONDUCT AN ASSEMBLY

- 1.** *Prepare the agenda.* During a reunion of the executive committee, the delegate will establish together what are the topics that need to be address during the General Assembly. They will build a schedule stating for each point if it's informative, demand a vote, or is open for suggestions. It constitutes of three different parts which is the opening of the assembly, the different topics that will be address and the closing of the assembly.
- 2.** *Schedule the assembly.* Preferably, during school hours so everyone has the chance to participate, and no one is restrained by transport difficulties. Once the date is set, at least two weeks in advance, relay the information to each class representative so the active members of the assembly can be present. Unfortunately, with time the General Assembly are not the most popular and it is sometimes hard to get the minimum number of members. To remedy this problem, what has been done in many of the GA I have been part of was to offer some food or some compensation for their time and presence which turned out to be a great incentive.
- 3.** *Counting the quorum.* The day of the assembly, gather in the meeting room so that everyone can participate. Be aware that more than half of the members need to be present at the assembly so that decisions can be taken with the acknowledgement of half of its members. If the quorum is not met, there is no possibility to conduct the General Assembly.
- 4.** *Opening of the General Assembly.* For each assembly, the president running the meeting and the secretary transcribing it, have to be appointed and agreed by its members. The two roles are the one that have been elected for the position, but to stay in order, it is important to recall who sits in those positions.
- 5.** *Conduct the assembly.* The assembly should be about an hour long maximum, and it should go through the agenda, point by point until the end. There is generally a period of questions called "varia" as the last point before closing the assembly.
- 6.** *Closing of the assembly.* To end the meeting, there needs to be a vote and an agreement with all the members by voting the end of the assembly. Once it is finished, there is no way to go back to the topics that have been voted on. However, if something is still an inconvenience, that subject can be reiterated during the next assembly at the knowledge of the president who will integrate it in the agenda.
- 7.** *Apply the changes.* If any changes or new projects have been voted on, it is now time to apply those. During a meeting between the executive committee, the members will find a solution and pitch idea to make this happen. They can eventually invite more people to help outside of the GA and form smaller committees if needed.

FUNDING THE SPACE

Online funding

During my research, these two different websites are the ones I evaluated the most easy and accessible to conduct a campaign. Accessing donors from across the world was an important aspect of this funding since my family is still in Canada, and I am based in Sweden so I can help with many international donors. Therefore, it was essential to find a website that would

allow international donation and easy to set up. After talking with the principal of the school, the best solution will be to connect the donations to the school account and to manage it in agreement with the assembly for the projects they want to realise. In addition, an IT professional can set up the online fundraising in an easier way than if I were to do it myself.

This website specialise in fundraising for organisations (global charities, schools, religious organizations, sports teams, and marketing agencies).

Help with engagement through different activities (live streaming, events, A-thons, auctions, etc.).



Offer international payments.

Needs to be linked to an organisation like the school account, which can make the website more trustworthy for the donors.

Features custom branding, donor profiles, fundraising templates.

There is a 7,5% fee platform at the end of the campaign.

Fundraising is free with the possibility of adding premium options for 99US/month.

Fees are very low, as much as 4% per transaction.

For individual, groups and organisations, which can be easier to set up.

Easy to set up a page with different options to pay from the donor.



Offer a campaign support team to any fundraising event.

Easy to setup a page with different options to help the fundraiser in collecting the money.

DESIGN PROPOSAL OF THE SPACE BETWEEN US

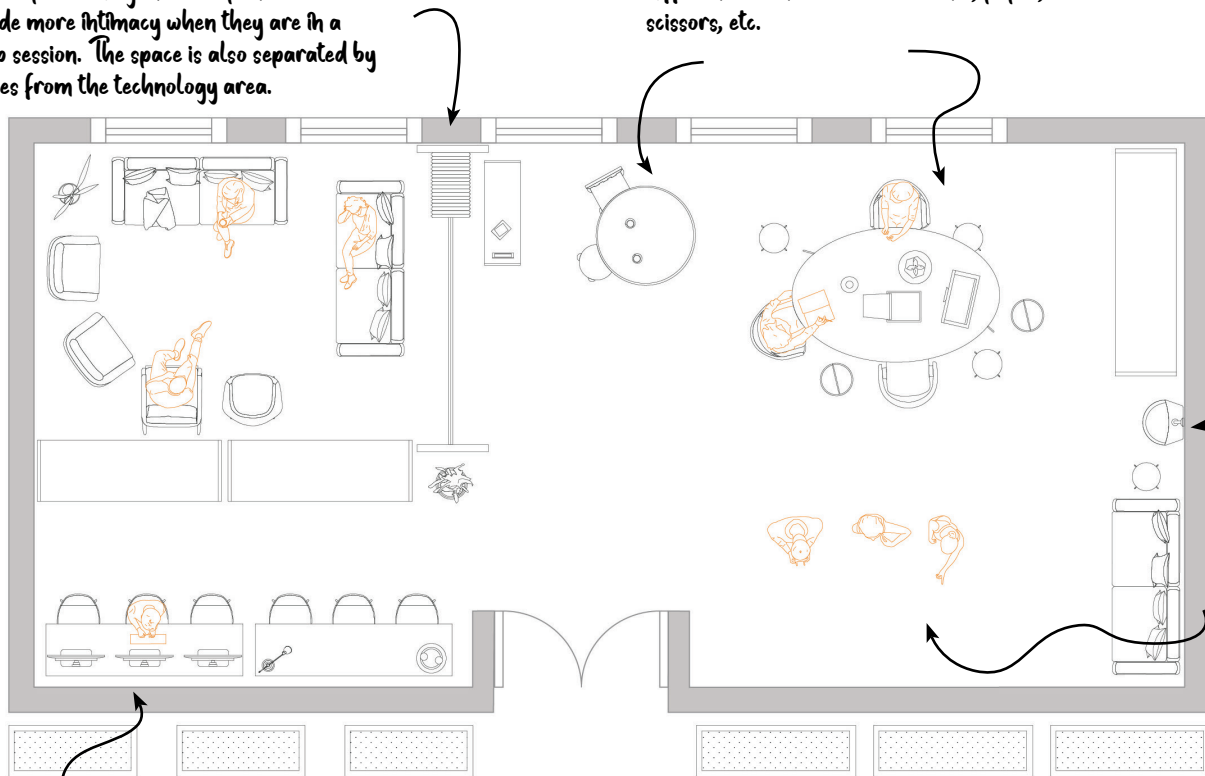
The aim was to design a space based on the workshops where the learners had to co-design the self-managed space. This design proposal is the final result combining the different ideas from the students, it consists of four different areas: the therapy corner, Arts & Crafts, the technology area, and the dance space. To assure a proper continuation of the project, three booklets have been designed to give instruction and direction to the learners after my departure. The first booklet is about the design that is proposed and also giving them some tools to continue other workshops at

some point if they want more ideas. The second one is about the new learner's body structure that constitutes of the General Assembly and the executive committee. There are details about how to run assemblies and what can be done during those meetings. The third one is about the financing of the space. Where they can find financing, what kind of activities engage the community to do donations, etc. It is about finding the ways to furnish the space. See appendix for a view of the different booklets.

The therapy corner is far from the entrance and is separated by movable panels to provide more intimacy when they are in a group session. The space is also separated by shelves from the technology area.

The art area is made of round tables to conduct the sharing of ideas in a collaborative way. Shelves are also on the side with different art material like brushes, paper, scissors, etc.

A sink is provided so they can wash their hands or paint brushes once they are done.



The dance area is an open space connected with Arts and Crafts so if they want more space, they can push aside the tables and chairs.

For the technology area, I converted it into a study place instead where computers are available for the learners aside another table for a quiet area to do homework.

All the learners agreed to place some vegetation in the front of the entrance that could provide vegetables or simply good scents. It would be a great way to take new responsibilities by taking care of the plants.

Figure 12. Final design proposal for the self-managed space.



Image 36. The therapy corner with couches and movable panels.



Image 37. Outside gate of the self-managed space with the garden box.

Rise &

Some students who participated to the different workshops.



An assemblage of the furniture that is available at the school which is quite eclectic.



The furniture that is wanted for the Rise & Shine space (couches, computers, shelves, etc).

The different staff of the school constitute of teachers, janitors, secretary, etc.

The workers renovating the school.

Shine

The name of the space that will be self-managed by the students themselves. They chose that name.

Some vegetation added to the space would provide a better environment and more welcoming.

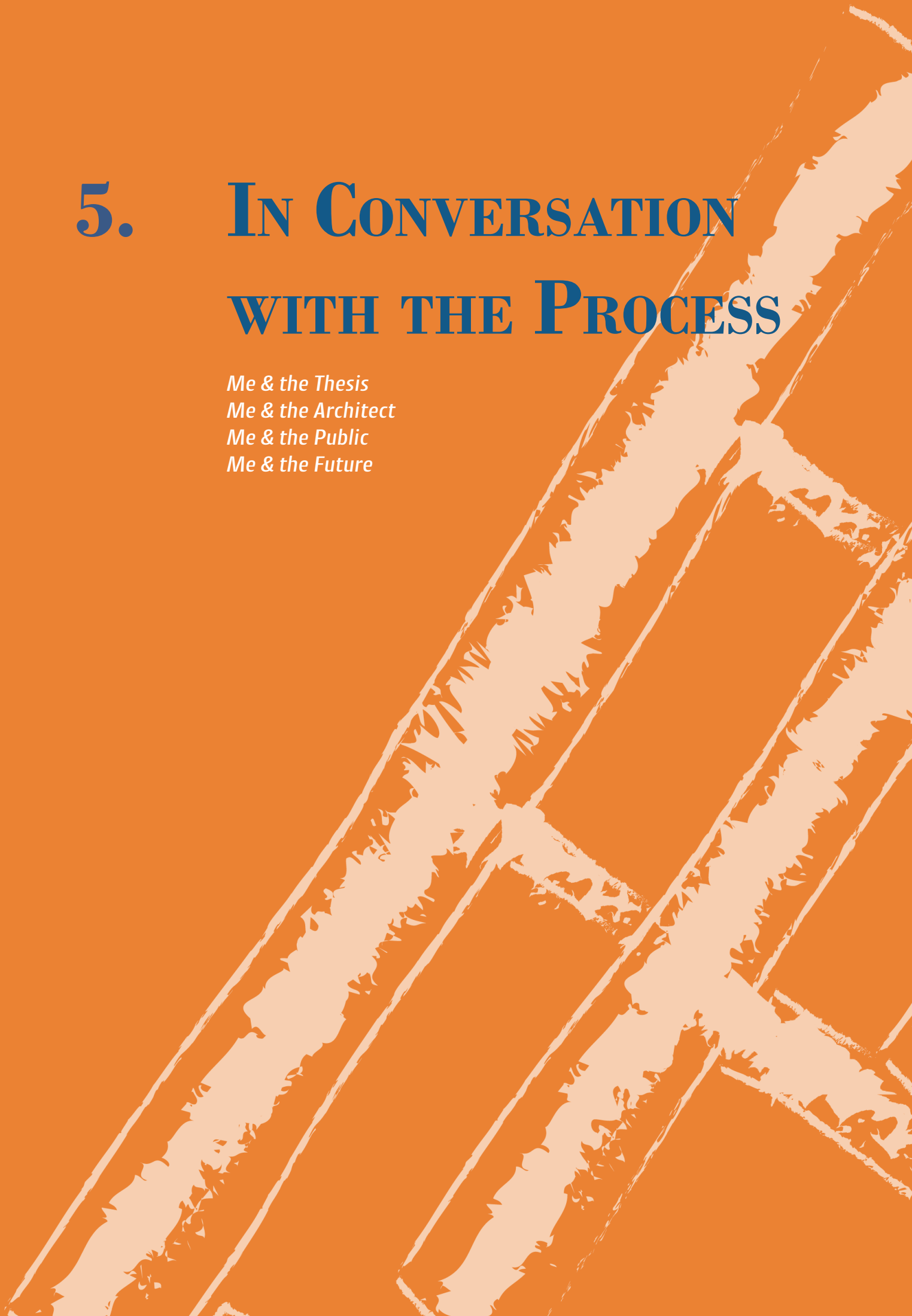


Figure 13. Final collage representing the ambiance of the final self-managed space.

The workers renovating the school.

5. IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PROCESS

Me & the Thesis
Me & the Architect
Me & the Public
Me & the Future





TSAKO THABO

ME & THE THESIS

Let me start by saying this was not an easy process for me. These past months have been very challenging, from finding a direction for my thesis to getting around a new country to conducting workshops on my own, until the very end of writing a report; every step had its own challenge. I initially had one vision, combining a self-managing approach with education. However, it needed more refinement and to relate to architecture, which turned out to be the first main obstacle. Then, concepts, ideas, and actions progressively started to fall into their place. This thesis would be about how a self-management approach can enable the creation of collaborative spaces and how those spaces introduce the notion of responsibility and ownership.

Through contacts from Chalmers and the University of Pretoria, I established my case study, the secondary school Tsako Thabo in Mamelodi, Pretoria, South Africa. At first, I wanted to conduct field studies in Southeast Asia, but due to the time frame and the limited connections I had with Southeast Asian organizations, I decided to change my destination to access a network of people that was already in place. Conducting a master's thesis is already a complex task, and to add to the challenge, it was in a country I had never visited before. It was about learning

everything from scratch; the systems, the politics, the economy, and so on, so I could conduct a thesis resonating with the context. The communications were difficult, and getting out of the township was challenging, but one of the main obstacles was that my thesis relied heavily on external aspects. In fact, this hindered me from achieving the workshops on time and from collecting accurate data. Since my thesis depended on the students' responses and their desires, I had difficulty understanding where my thesis was heading. In the end, I managed to handle the situation and collect the data on time.

All in all, this thesis has seen an enormous development to the point where an executive committee has been created, fundraising for the space has started, and a design proposal has been made that would allow the different activities the learners are looking for to take place. This self-management approach has facilitated the making of a knowledge-maker space by providing the tools to ensure good cohesion throughout the process. Self-managing means providing for themselves, and the different workshops that have been taking place set the foundation for a good design proposal, a committee that would act, and a way to finance this project. The rest is up to them.

ME & THE ARCHITECT

My role as an architect has been challenged many times during this process. I do not consider myself as someone who builds but rather someone who transforms, and I believe this is the purpose of architecture. It is about transforming spaces and engaging with the community to provide viable places that reflect its context.

To achieve this process, there were two “me” that were brought to the table; the “me” that has been acquiring knowledge throughout my whole life, and the me “architect” who is specialized in a field. The first “me” was able to create a system that would follow the self-management approach. Since I have been part of many different committees and involved in different projects back in Canada, I have acquired some knowledge on how to run this kind of system and allow inclusivity. The research that was done at the beginning of this thesis set the theoretical framework of a self-management approach, which led me to design a system that would enable this approach. Through an assembly, everyone’s voice is heard, and it gives the opportunity to be part of the project; as for the executive committee, they put the actions into place so the ideas become a reality. The second “me” is the one that has developed a sensitivity to tackle community issues that consider the political, economic,

and geographical aspects. Me, as an “architect”, was able to reveal and expose a need for a specific space in that specific case study, which is a safe space that provides the opportunity to grow as a learner. Being an “architect” is about working with the community and understanding their needs and dreams; it is about creating systems and models to make these happen in relation to the context. Architecture is, for me, a way to transform the environment and allow new opportunities.

In the educational context, especially in South Africa, where the need for better quality education is acute, this kind of architecture allows a variety of initiatives to take place finally. Through a community-based approach, architecture can respond to a need, making it more sustainable and approachable to the community. In fact, the architect is only passing through where he lands; therefore, the project’s future relies on its occupant, and it is crucial that they see a meaning to it and appropriate themselves the process. It is about them, for them.

ME & THE PUBLIC

The rewarding part of this thesis is that it impacted people's life. From giving hope to the students to providing essential information about the school for the principal, to even the people I met and explained to them the topic of my thesis, everyone was intrigued and touched by this subject. It is a current problematic, and especially in South Africa, everybody is affected by this problem one way or another. It is about creating a movement with the population and spreading the word about what is being done through a bottom-up approach to improving people's life. It is a way of empowering those people and that actions are possible. The learners from Tsako Thabo were fantastic, open and welcoming. They accepted my project as if it was theirs, which will become eventually, and they participated with me with vivid interest. This is the future generation, and they are already thriving; they simply need good support and opportunities to flourish. One of the students even wrote me:

"It's nice that finally there are people who are actually taking action in revamping our school. All the others were scams".
- Andile, student at Tsako Thabo

As for the principal, Mr. Gama, I sent him my thesis and all the questionnaire results I conducted during my first

workshop, and some of the results struck him. He told me that these answers would help him greatly in better assessing the situation of his school, what material is needed, how the learners feel about their school, what hinders them from achieving what they want, etc. He was thankful for my passage at his school since I provided him with new information that he had never been aware of before. I received the same feedback from Mr. Luthuli, the history teacher at the school, who had been following this project and helped since the beginning. I would not have been able to conduct this whole project without him, and he had been the most supportive. I believe I am lucky to have been part of this school for a while and have had the opportunity to work with learners who are enthusiastic about their future and proactive in whom they want to become.

Another interesting demographic this project has touched is the people I would meet in various contexts—old, young, artists, business people, etc. I had the chance to talk with many different people. Since there are still a lot of prejudices around black people for the white demographic, me talking about what I have seen and accomplished would make them change their perception and show them the potential of the black youth. Change is happening and there is hope in the youth.

ME & THE FUTURE

Now what is the next step? Where does this thesis lead concretely? How can I ensure the progression of the project? A thesis is never the end of a topic but rather the beginning of a more extensive program. Although I cannot lie, this project is based in South Africa, and I do not live there. Hence the reason why the approach of a self-managing system is so important, and by setting the proper foundations of it, it is my way of ensuring the project's survival as long as they desire. Choosing a demographic of teenagers was also in the intent that they are at an age where they are mature enough to make decisions by themselves and conduct those projects. I believe that it is on the good path, and the project will continue even when I am gone since they have been very proactive throughout this process. Moreover, they have been provided with three handbooks helping them pursue the project in its different aspects (see appendix B). However, as said before, this project depends heavily on the people making it happen, which is the whole project's force and weakness. The driving force will no longer be external; in this case, it was me, and it will have to be themselves from now on.

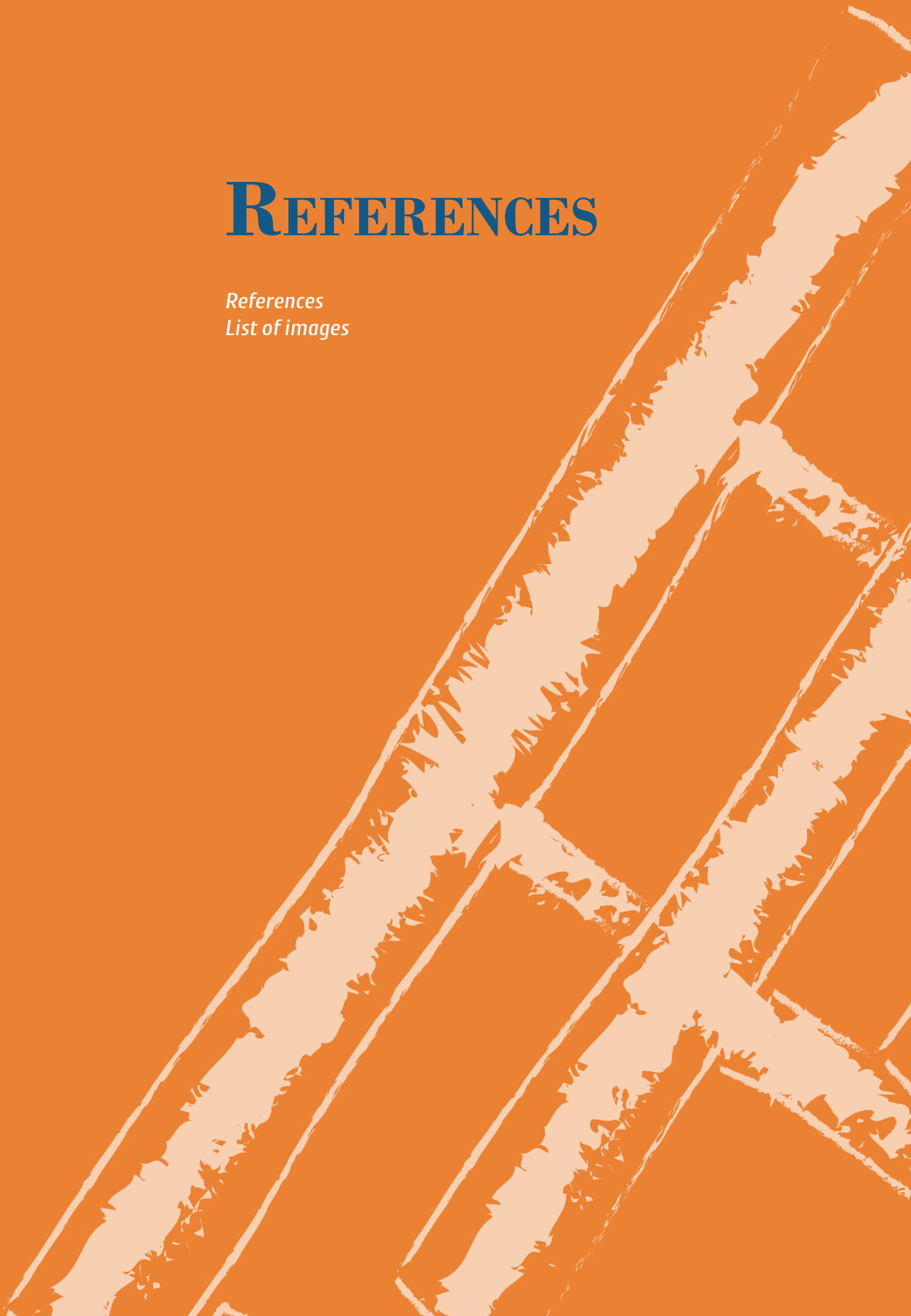
This leaves the question; can this approach be implemented in other schools? I believe it can. By following the development

of a general assembly with an executive committee, students can take part in the school matters in a more accessible way and take responsibility. To make this space happens, I have developed a handbook going through the different steps of a workshop to help whoever would like to build a self-managed space (see appendix C). However, the school board must be aligned with this mentality and provide the freedom to conduct those activities, which depends heavily on the school's principal. Indeed, since it is taking part on the school grounds, the learners are subject to the principal decisions, and this can vary enormously from one school to another, but discussions can lead a long way.

Another obstacle to creating this kind of space is the accessibility of a space that can be transformed. Indeed, without any space allocated to the youth, students cannot organize activities around it. Some solutions to this problem could be to share the space with other activities; for example, drama class could also hold the kind of initiatives that would come out of the assemblies. In any case, the concept of self-management has seen many derivatives depending on the context, but the main idea still focuses decentralizing the power to those being part of the system.

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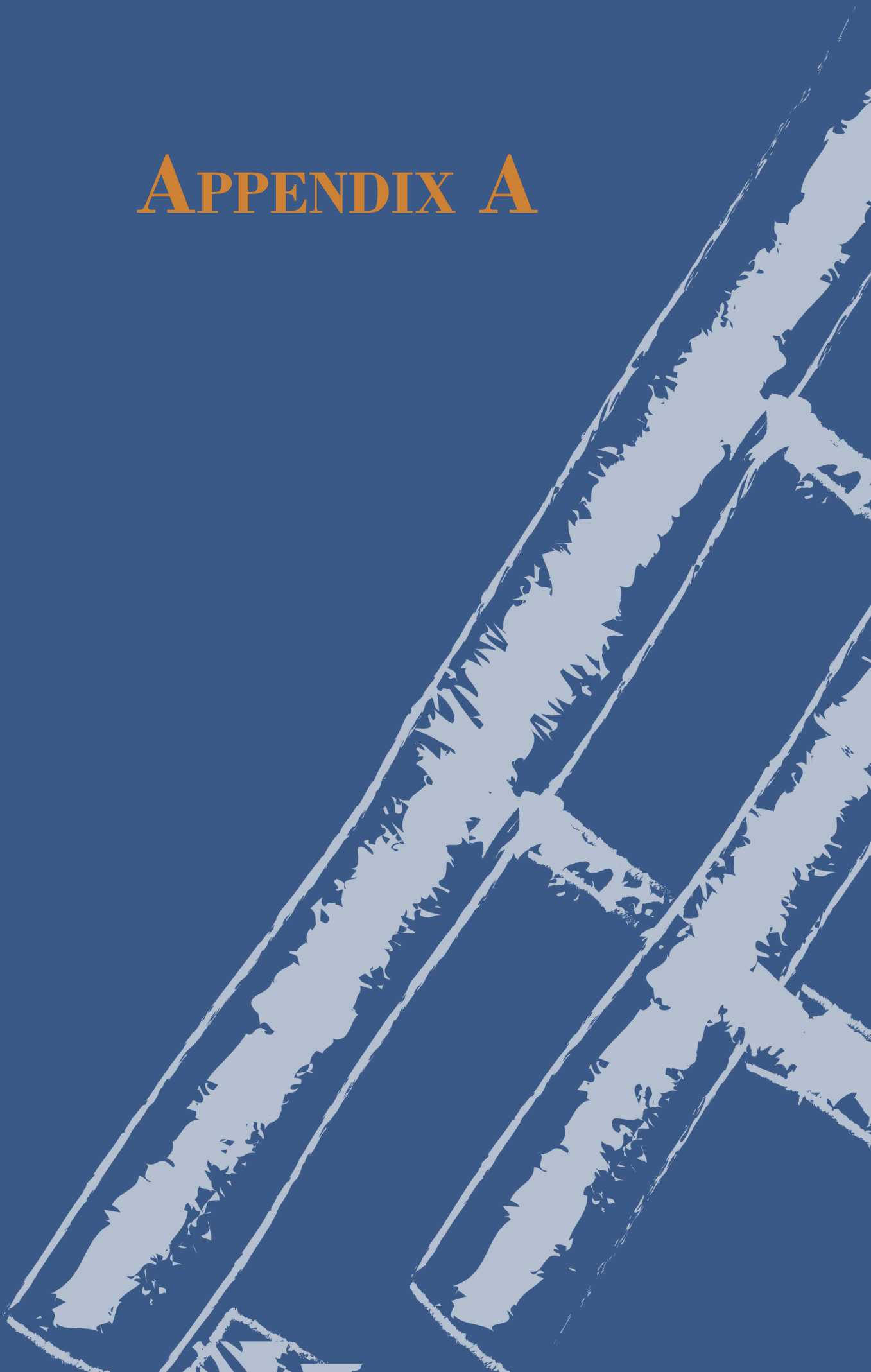
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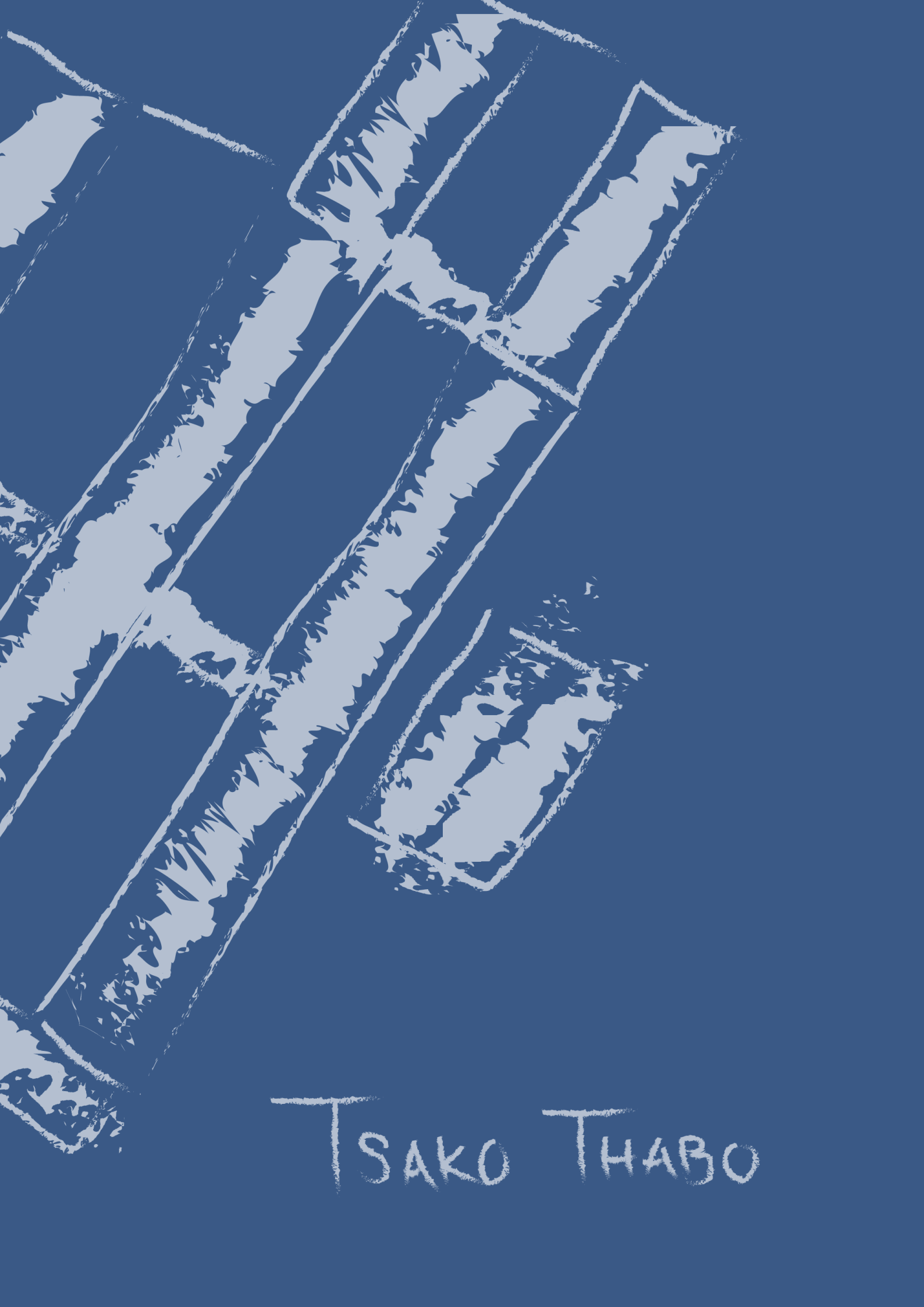
Image 13. Masweneng, S. (2021, May 8). *Dancer in Phokwane*. [Photograph]. Unsplash.

Image 14. Coffin-Grey, J. (2021, January 24). *Rural South Africa* [Photograph]. Unsplash.

****If not stated otherwise, all other documents are produced by the author.**

APPENDIX A





TSAKO THABO

Survey for the school Tsako Thabo Secondary - Creating a space

Thank you in advance for your answers on this survey. This questionnaire is being conducted to learn information about your life as a student, including things that may influence your success in school, outside of school and after you graduate Tsako Thabo Secondary School. The reason I would like your participation in this survey is so that I can better understand your wants and needs so that we can collaborate together to the creation of a space in Tsako Thabo Secondary School at the image of you, the students. Your honesty and openness is important. If you agree to participate, this survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. There are NO right or wrong answers. Do not worry about spelling, grammar, or typos. Please check the first box to confirm that you agree to participate and understand that this survey is completely anonymous.

1. I agree to participate and understand that this survey is completely anonymous.
2. I choose not to participate and will immediately alert a staff member.

Question 1. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other

Question 2. What is your home language?

1. Sepedi
2. Tsonga
3. Zulu
4. Tswana
5. Other

Question 3. What grade are you in currently?

1. 8th grade
2. 9th grade
3. 10th grade
4. 11th grade
5. 12th grade

Question 4. How old are you currently?

1. 12
2. 13
3. 14
4. 15
5. 16
6. 17
7. 18
8. 19
9. 20

Question 5. How many years have you been at Tsako Thabo Secondary School?

1. 1 year
2. 2 years
3. 3 years
4. 4 years
5. 5 years
6. 6 years
7. 7 years

Question 6. What led you to enroll in Tsako Thabo Secondary School? How is it different from where you were before?

Survey for the school Tsako Thabo Secondary - Creating a space

Question 7. Which of the following statements do you agree with about going to a secondary school? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

1. My mom wants me to go to school
2. My dad wants me to go to school
3. Regardless of what my family thinks, I want to go to school
4. I am going to a secondary school so I can attend a university
5. It is not my wish to go to Tsako Thabo Secondary School
6. I do not want to go to university after Tsako Thabo Secondary School
7. Tsako Thabo Secondary School is not the right school for me

Question 8. After graduating Tsako Thabo Secondary School, do you plan to...? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

1. Attend TVET college (vocational and education training in a skilled trade)
2. Attend a college (to obtain a diploma)
3. Attend a three year program at university (to obtain a degree)
4. Find part-time employment
5. Find a full-time employment
6. Work at home helping my parents
7. Join the military
8. Other _____

Question 9. Are you part of any of the extra-curricular activity offered by Tsako Thabo Secondary School? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

1. RCL (Representative Council of Learners)
2. Soccer
3. Netball
4. Volley Ball
5. Girls rugby
6. Tennis
7. Choir
8. Drum
9. Chess
10. Segarona (cultural activities)
11. Debate
12. Drama
13. Robotics
14. Environment club

Question 10. What other extra-curricular activity would you like to have at Tsako Thabo Secondary School?

Question 11. Where do you live? If you are from Mamelodi, which part of Mamelodi are you from?

Question 12. How do you usually travel to school from your home? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

1. Walking
2. Bicycle
3. School bus
4. Public transport
5. Car

Question 13. What is your current living situation?

1. Living with my parents
2. Living with only siblings (taking care of brothers and sisters)
3. Living with my grand parents
4. Living with my parents and other family members (aunties, uncles, cousins, etc)
5. Living on my own
6. In a shelter

Survey for the school Tsako Thabo Secondary - Creating a space

Question 14. How many people currently live together in your home, INCLUDING YOU? How many bedrooms are in your current home? Pull down to select an answer for each row,

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 or more
Number Of People										
Number Of Bedrooms										

Question 15. How many times per week are you late for school at the beginning of the day?

1. Never
2. 1 time per week
3. 2-3 times
4. 4 or more times

Question 16. When you were late during the school year, how many times has it been because you...

	Never	1 Times	2-3 Times	4 or more Times
Overslept				
Had transportation problems (late bus, late drop-off, etc.)				
Hoped to avoid gang members, bullies or others GOING TO SCHOOL				
Had morning family responsibilities (watching younger kids, cleaning up, etc.)				
Just didn't want to go				
Stopped for food or drink				

Question 17. Have you missed any days of school this school year?

1. Yes
2. No

Question 18. When you missed a day of school during this school year, how many times has it been because you were...

	Never	1 Times	2-3 Times	4 or more Times
Tired				
Sick				
Depressed				
Hungover or altered by drugs or alcohol				
Avoiding confrontations with students				
Avoiding outside confrontations GOING TO or FROM with gang members, bullies or others				
Helping AT HOME (watching younger kids, etc.)				
Helping OUTSIDE the home (work, etc.)				
Unable to afford transportation to school				
Just didn't want to go				
Other reasons				

Question 19. What do you usually do during your free time? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

1. Help the parents with the house
2. Hang out with friends
3. Play some sports
4. Drugs or alcohol
5. Studying
6. Working
7. Helping in the community
8. Other

Survey for the school Tsako Thabo Secondary - Creating a space

Question 20. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school experience?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel close to people at this school					
I am happy to be at this school					
I feel like I am part of this school					
The teachers at this school treat me fairly					
Teachers are good at handling bad behavior between students					
I feel safe in my school					
My school is clean					

Question 21. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school experience?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I can talk to a school teacher when I have a problem					
I can get help from my school counselor when I need it					
My teachers care enough about me to give me help when I need it					
I am able to express my feelings and opinions					
I enjoy coming to school					
My teachers let me know when I do well on my assignments					
I am able to work out disagreements with other students					
The school provides me a positive place to learn					
My school counselor is approachable and easy to talk with					

Question 22. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school's commitment to fairness and mutual respect of students and staff?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Adults at this school treat all students with respect					
Students treat teachers with respect					
The school rules are fair					
All students are treated fairly when they break the rules					

Question 23. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school's environment for academic learning?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Adults encourage me to work hard so I can be successful in college or at the job I choose					
Overall, my teachers work hard to help me with my school work when I need it					
Overall, teachers give students a chance to take part in classroom discussions and/or activities					
Teachers promote academic success for all students					
Overall, this school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn					

Survey for the school Tsako Thabo Secondary - Creating a space

Question 24. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how you feel at the present time? Do you feel...?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Unmotivated					
Sad or depressed					
Nervous or anxious					
Overwhelmed					
The need to talk to a counselor or trusted adult					
Confused about my future or career					

Question 25. Do you agree with any of the following statements? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

1. I've had traumatic experiences that affect me to this day
2. I witnessed something violent, dangerous or scary that still bothers me
3. I suffer from the inability to sleep or nighttime restlessness so I wake up not feeling refreshed at least once per school week
4. Social workers have come to my home.
5. I feel hopeless about my future
6. None of the above

Question 26. What issues are currently going on that affect you personally, your family members and/or your close friends? CLICK ANY THAT APPLY.

	Affected you personally	Affected your family	Affected a close friend
Depression/Anxiety			
Mental illness			
Teen pregnancy/parenting			
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender issues			
Chronic/ongoing illness			
Immigration/deportation			
Jail/probation			
Alcohol use			
Marijuana use			
Drug use (other than marijuana)			
Unemployment/underemployment			
Death			
Hospitalization/life-threatening injury			
Relationship break up, separation or divorce			
Housing/eviction			

Question 26. With which issues has school helped you, your friends and/or family? CLICK ALL THAT APPLY.

1. Depression/Anxiety
2. Mental illness
3. Teen pregnancy/parenting
4. Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender issues
5. Chronic/ongoing illness
6. Immigration/deportation
7. Jail/probation
8. Alcohol use
9. Marijuana use
10. Drug use (other than marijuana)
11. Unemployment/underemployment
12. Death
13. Hospitalization/life-threatening injury
14. Relationship break up, separation or divorce
15. Housing/eviction

Survey for the school Tsako Thabo Secondary - Creating a space

Question 27. In the past school year, how often have you personally been the victim of any of the following types of harassment, bullying or mistreatment by fellow students:

	0 Times	1 Time	2-3 Times	4 Times or More
Physically (hit, shoved, kicked, slapped by someone who was not just kidding around)				
Been afraid of being beaten up				
Cyberbullying online or via text				
Had mean rumors or lies spread about you				
Had sexual jokes, gestures or comments made to you				
Been made fun of because of the way you look or talk				
Had belongings stolen or deliberately damaged, such as clothes, books or devices				
Socially -- been deliberately excluded, humiliated or gossiped about				
Bullying based on your sexual orientation and identification (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered)				

Question 28. In the past school year, how often on the school property have you personally witnessed:

	0 Times	1 Time	2-3 Times	4 Times or More
Student racial/ethnic tensions				
Bullying based on sexual orientation and identification (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered)				
Student bullying based on appearance				
Student bullying based on special needs or handicaps				
Student sexual harassment of other students				
Student verbal abuse of teachers				
Students acting out and disrupting the classroom				
Gang activities				

Question 29. Where is the harassment been taking place?

	0 Times	1 Time	2-3 Times	4 Times or More
Courtyard				
Classroom				
Bathroom				
Lunch area/Cafeteria				
Sport field				
Other				

Question 30. How strongly do you feel a sense of belonging with Tsako Thabo Secondary School?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 31. Would you like to have a safe space where only students are allowed?

1. Yes 2. No

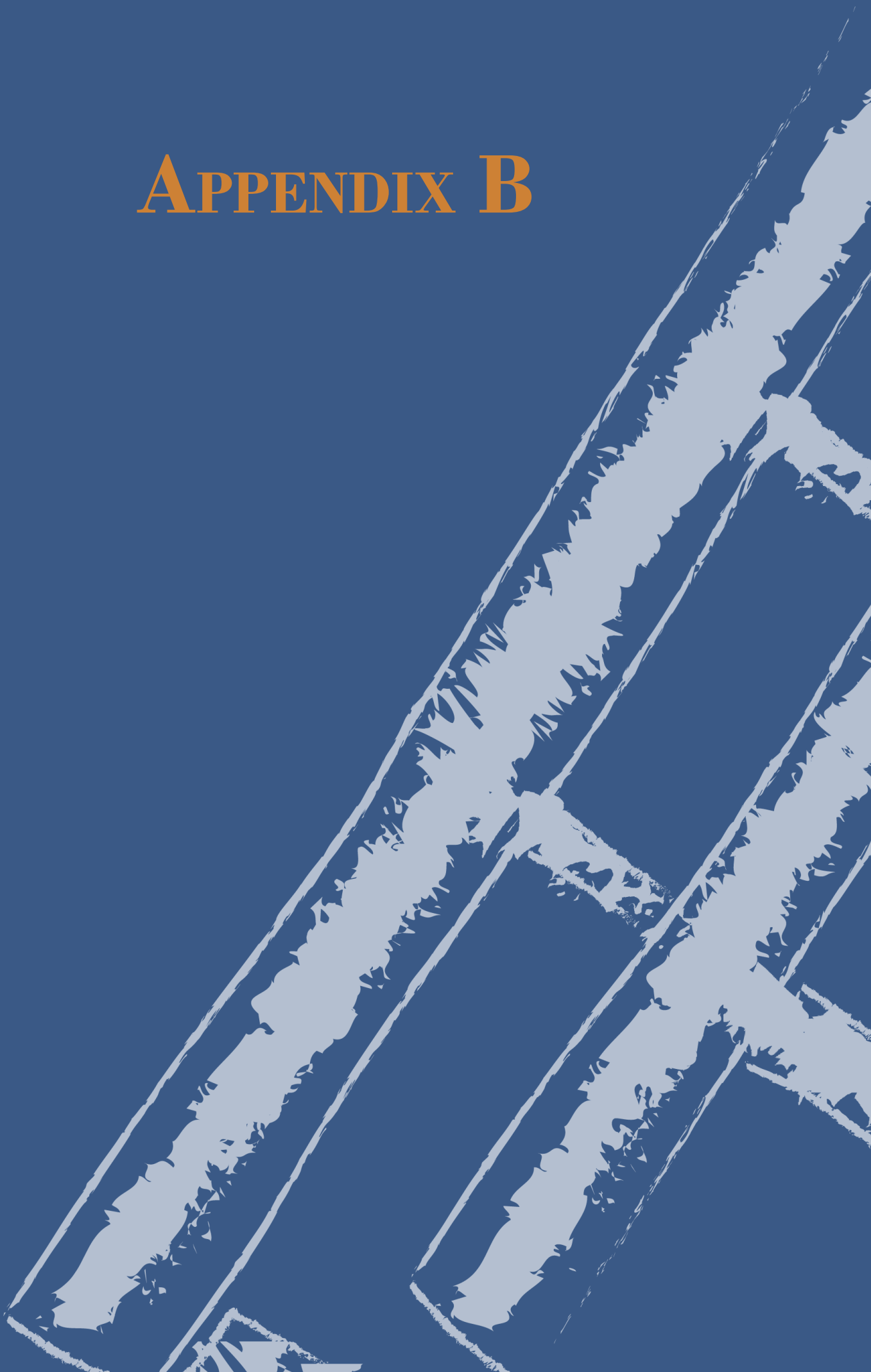
Question 32. Do you think this space could be managed only by students?

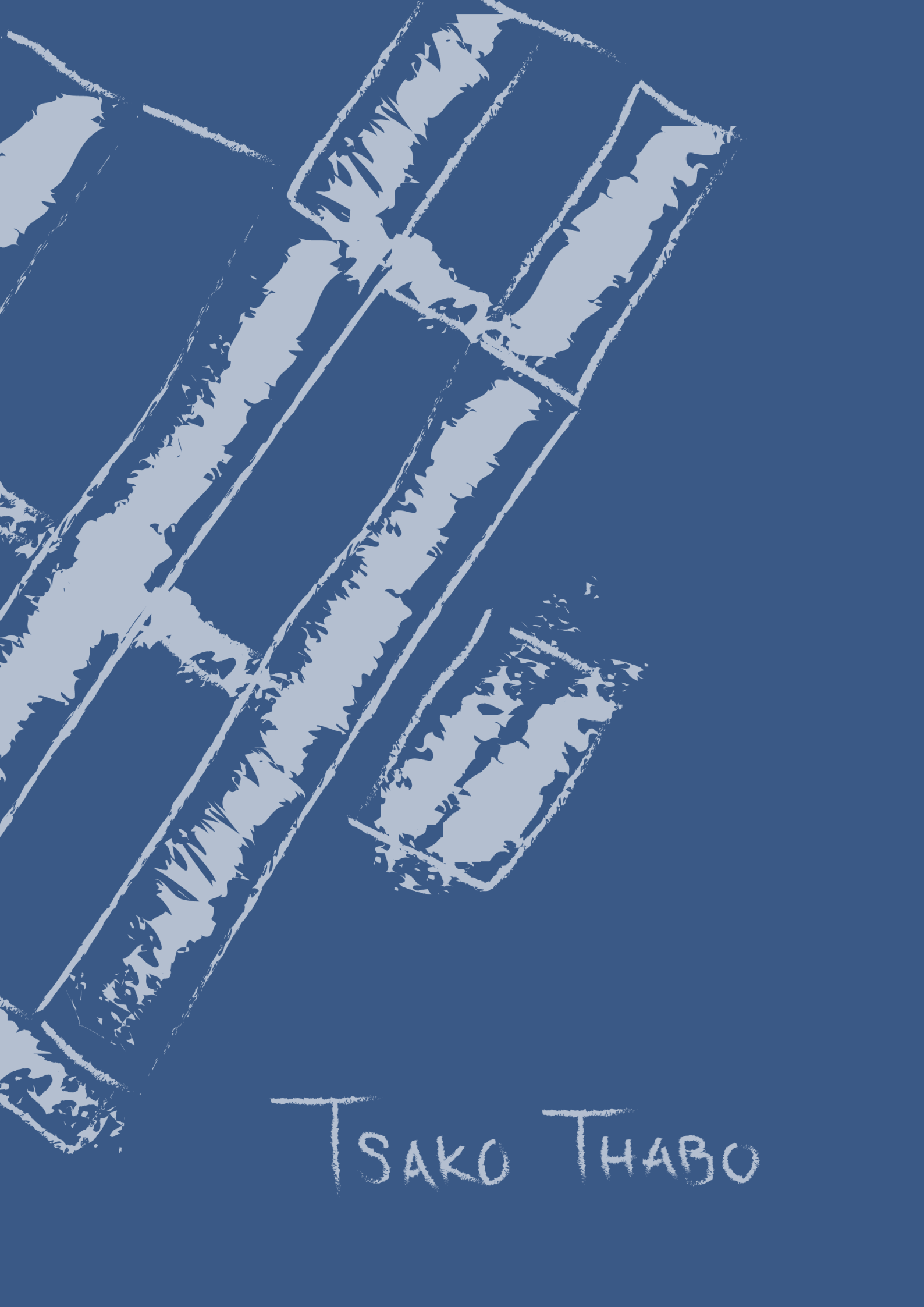
1. Yes 2. No

Question 33. What kind of activities could take place in that new room?

Question 34. Is there anything else you want to share about your experiences at Tsako Thabo Secondary School?

APPENDIX B

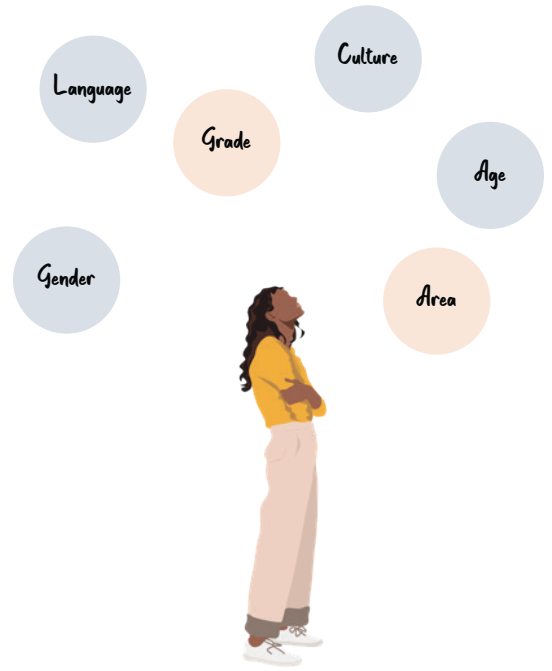




TSAKO THABO

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN

- Why do a collaborative design
- How to co-design
- Some examples
- Photos of the Design Workshop
- Plan of a typical room at Tsako Thabo
- Example of Workshop sheet
- Furniture
- Proposition



Working in a collaborative approach means everyone's voice is heard and considered. It is about giving a chance to each learner to participate in the process of designing the space. It allows inclusivity and a final result that reflects your true values as students of Tsako Thabo.

How ?

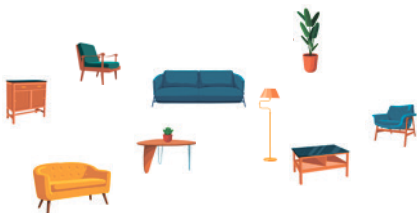
1. Get people to participate at the workshop!



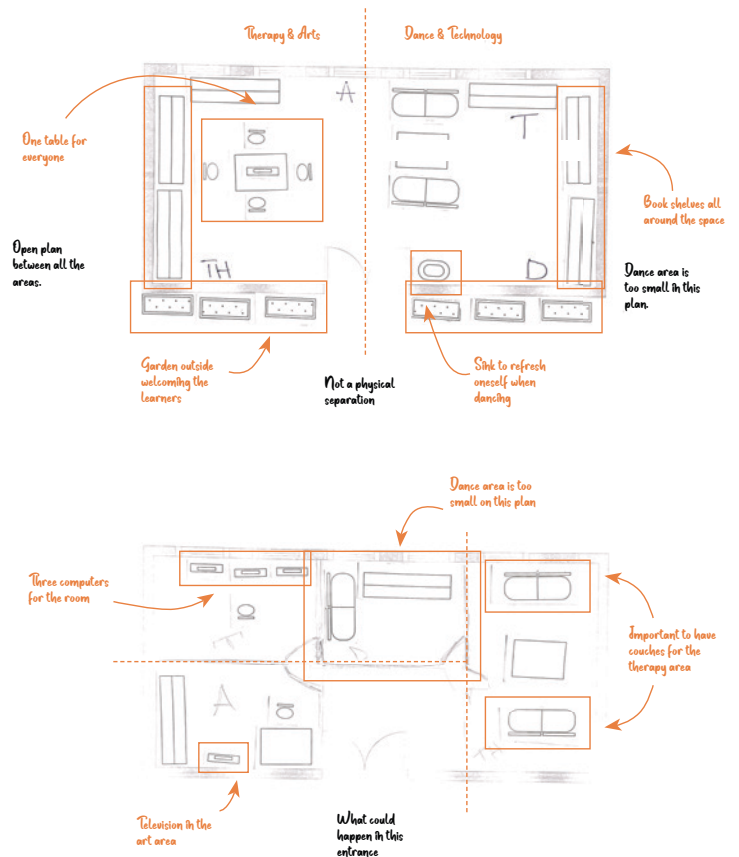
2. Print the material.

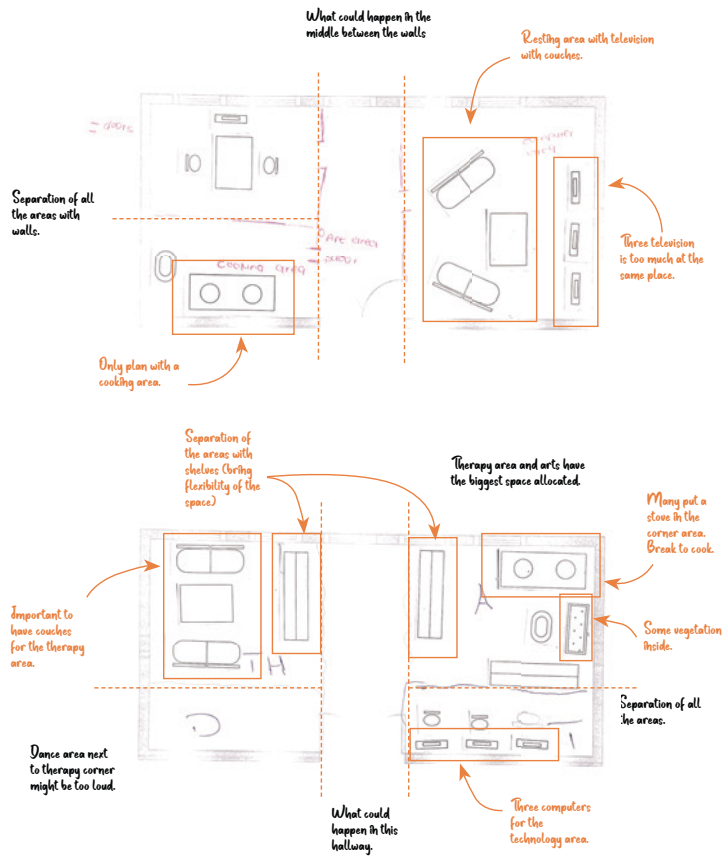


3. Design!



SOME EXAMPLES...

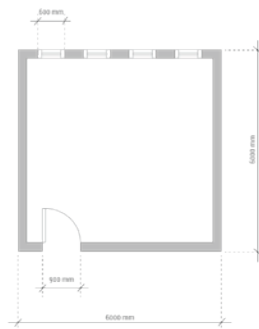




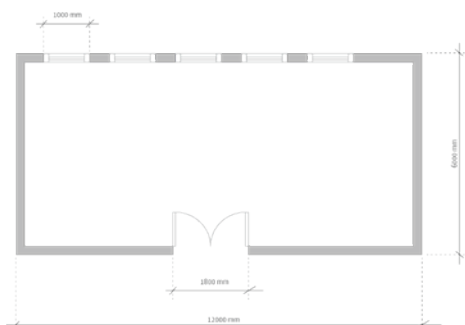
PLAN OF A TYPICAL ROOM

EXAMPLE OF WORKSHOP SHEET

Typical classroom



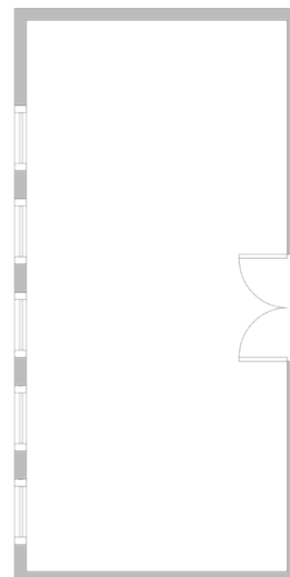
Storage room



Instruction

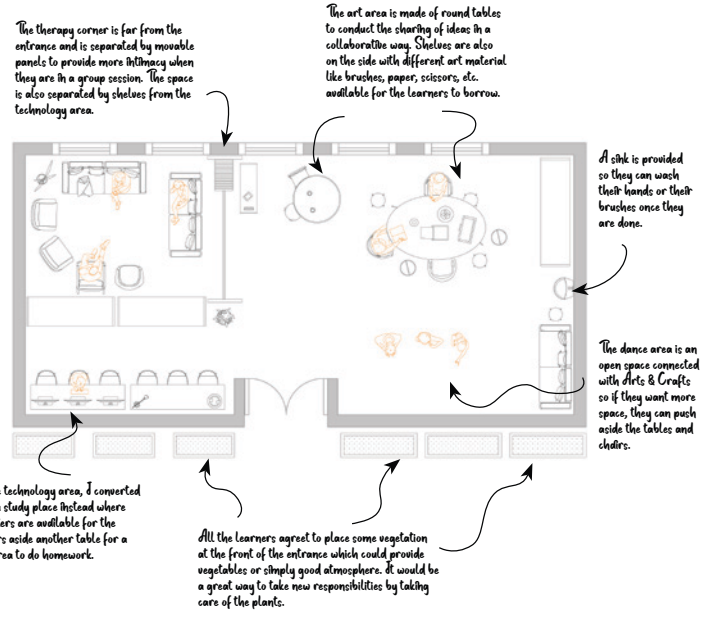
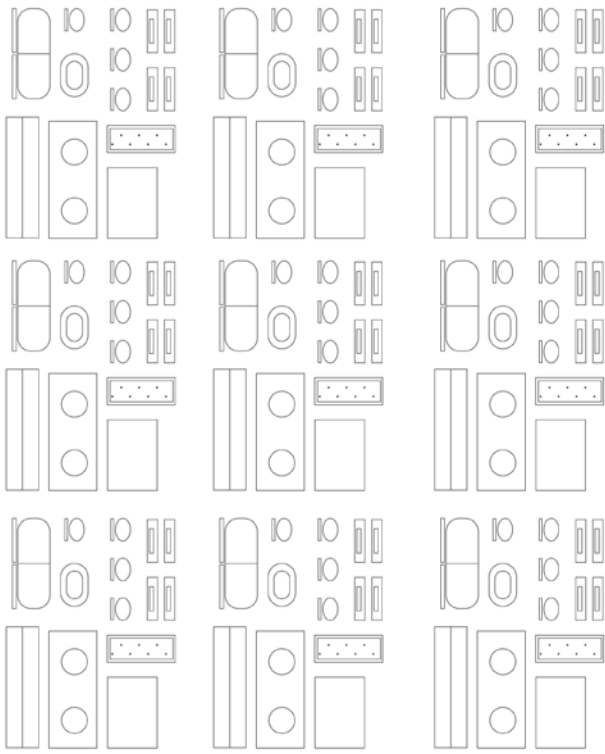
Design the space on this plan with elements you would want to have. Here at the bottom are a few examples of what furniture could be placed like chairs, tables, shelves, etc.

Feel free to put anything you have in mind and how many things you want, it is your space after all!



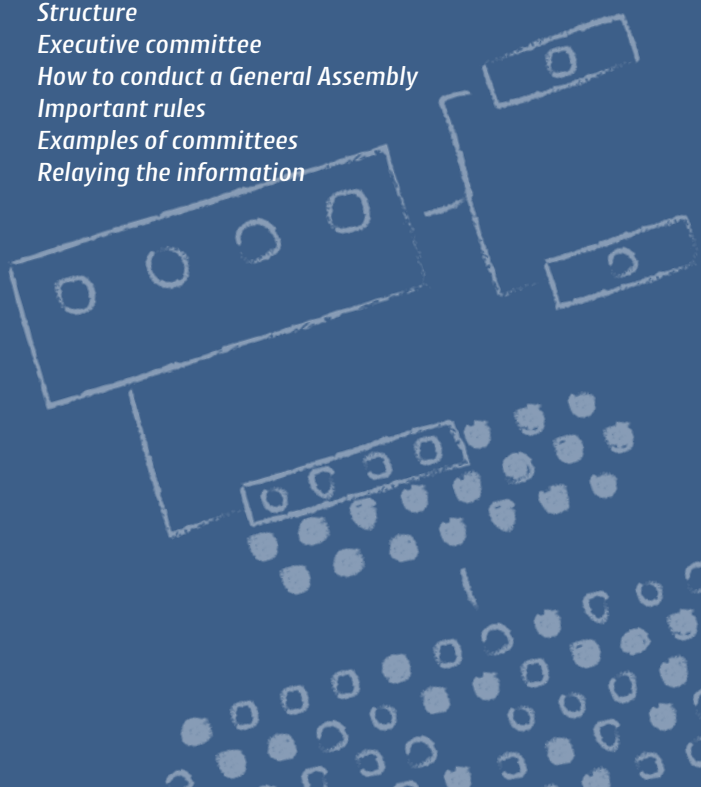
What to design...

Shelves	Stove	Technologic area
Computers	Sink	Art area
Chairs	Couch	Dance area
Tables	Orchard, plants	Therapy area

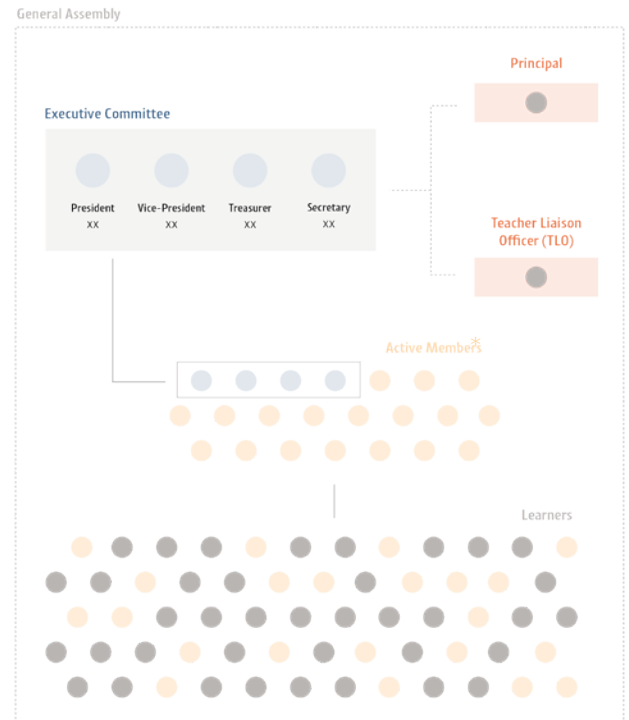


LEARNER'S BODY STRUCTURE

- Structure
- Executive committee
- How to conduct a General Assembly
- Important rules
- Examples of committees
- Relaying the information



Rise & Shine



*An active member is a learner who pays a monthly fee to participate to the space. This fee is determined among the members of the general assembly.



President

- Very responsible.
- Act as the delegate of the members of the assembly toward the teachers and principal.
- Prepare the agenda (topics that will be talked about) for the General Assembly.
- Conduct the General Assembly.



Vice-President

- Help the president in the tasks of organizing the meetings.
- Act as a delegate in case the president cannot be present for a General Assembly or other meeting.
- Work in close collaboration with the president.



Treasurer

- Managing the account of the assembly.
- Keeping track of the transactions.
- Presenting how the money is distributed for the different projects.



Secretary of External Communication

- Represents all the members of the assembly outside of the school.
- Responsible for planning the activities that will fund the space.
- They need to make the project happening in the space shine outside the school for parents, university and students.

1. Prepare the agenda.



- Schedule the topics that need to be address during the General Assembly.
- It can be a vote, an open discussion for new projects, or just giving information.

2. Schedule the GdA



- Schedule a date for the GA two weeks in advance.
- Relay the information to each RCL so they can tell the active members of their class.
- Offer food or other compensation for their time if there is not enough people.

3. Obtaining the quorum



- Gather all the members in the Rise & Shine space to start the GA and count who is present. At least half of all the members need to be present to start the Assembly.

HOW TO CONDUCT A GENERAL ASSEMBLY...

4. Conduct the General Assembly



- Maximum 30 minutes.
- The president is the one conducting the assembly and going through each points that have been decided.
- The secretary takes notes of the questions, ideas that are proposed, everything that happens during the GA.

5. Apply the changes



- Now it's time to take actions! Apply the changes, put in place the new ideas, find a way to make the projects concrete. It is time to work together!

It is your space!



For things to happen, you need to take responsibility!

IMPORTANT RULES

+ General Assembly once a month

+ Establishing the agenda at least two weeks in advance to share it to all the active members so they can have a look at it before the GdA.

+ Quorum needs to be achieved before starting the GdA.

+ Transcribe what happens in the GdA.

+ When someone talks no one can talk over!

+ Votes are with eyes closed.

Social Life

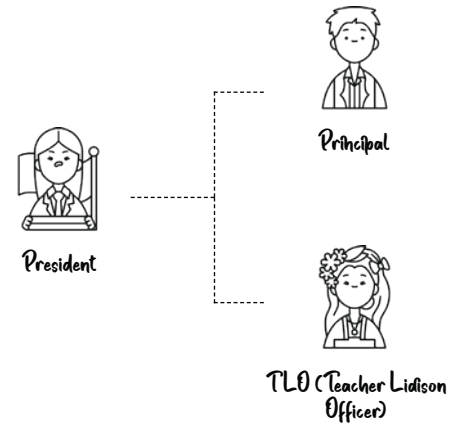


- Organise the schedule of the activities in the *Rise & Shine* space.
- Study period to help each other in mathematics, or science, or history, etc.
- Dancing evening to invent a choreography to film and put on social media.

Funding



- Organising a day “Bring your old stuff” to the school and renovate together to have new furniture in the *Rise & Shine* space.
- Contact different shops that would volunteer into giving material to the space.
- Organise a fundraising events where you sell something to get money that would be use for the space.



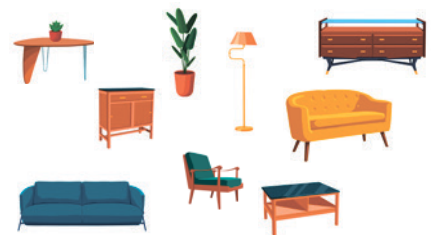
- + Meeting once a month between the President and the principal and the TLO to talk about what are the development of the space.
- + Some projects will demand the approbation of a TLO or Principal.

FUNDING THE SPACE

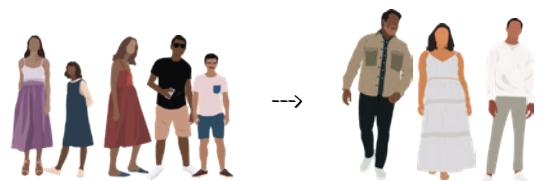
What for...
 In-person
 Example of sheets for fundraising
 Online platforms
 Tips and tricks

WHAT FOR...

- + Furnishing the space with the right material (computers, couches, tables, etc.)



- + Creating connection from the school to the outside with the community.



Learners of Tsako Thabo

Community of Mamelodi

- + Ask friends and family if they want to contribute to your project.
- + Get in touch with the teachers who would want to participate.
- + Contact organisations that may be able to help you with funding or directly furniture.



Greetings,
 Us, the learners of Tsiko Thabo Secondary School, are currently in the process of building a safe-space that would make everyone feel free by providing resources such as computers, books, study desk, etc. We want to make this space alive, so we can have the opportunity to complete our studies and stay away from trouble. To do this, we need funding, and we will accept any amount you can offer us. Your support will be highly appreciated.
 From all the learners of Tsiko Thabo,
 Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



Name	Amount	Date

This is a sheet to take notes of who is donating. Write the name, the amount, and the date of the donation to keep track of the financing.



Blue & Shine
 Safe Space at Tsiko Thabo Secondary School
 Mamelodi, Pretoria, South Africa
 Donation receipt

Receipt # _____
 Receipt issued: _____

Donated by: _____
 Date of donation (DD/MM/YYYY): _____
 Amount donated: _____

Thank you for your donation that will contribute to the Blue & Shine space in Tsiko Thabo Secondary School. The money will be used to furnish the space and create opportunities so that we, the learners, can develop our full potential.

 M. Clement Gama
 Principal of Tsiko Thabo

Everytime someone makes a donation, fill out this slip that states what was the donation with the signature of the principal to make it official.

- + Get in touch with the principal to set up the campaign allowing fundraising through internet. Choose between Rally Up and Go Get Funding.

This website specializes in fundraising for organisations (global charities, schools, religious organisations, sports teams, and marketing agencies)

Help with engagement through different activities (live streaming, events, A-thons, auctions, etc.)

Offer international payments



Fundraising is free with the possibility of adding premium options for \$9.99/month

Needs to be linked to an organisation like the school account, which can make the website more trustworthy for the donors.

Features custom branding, donor profiles, fundraising templates.

There is a 25% fee platform at the end of the campaign.

Fees are very low, as much as 4% per transaction.

For individual, groups and organisations, which can be easier to set up.



Easy to set up a page with different options to pay from the donor.

Offer a campaign support team to any fundraising event.

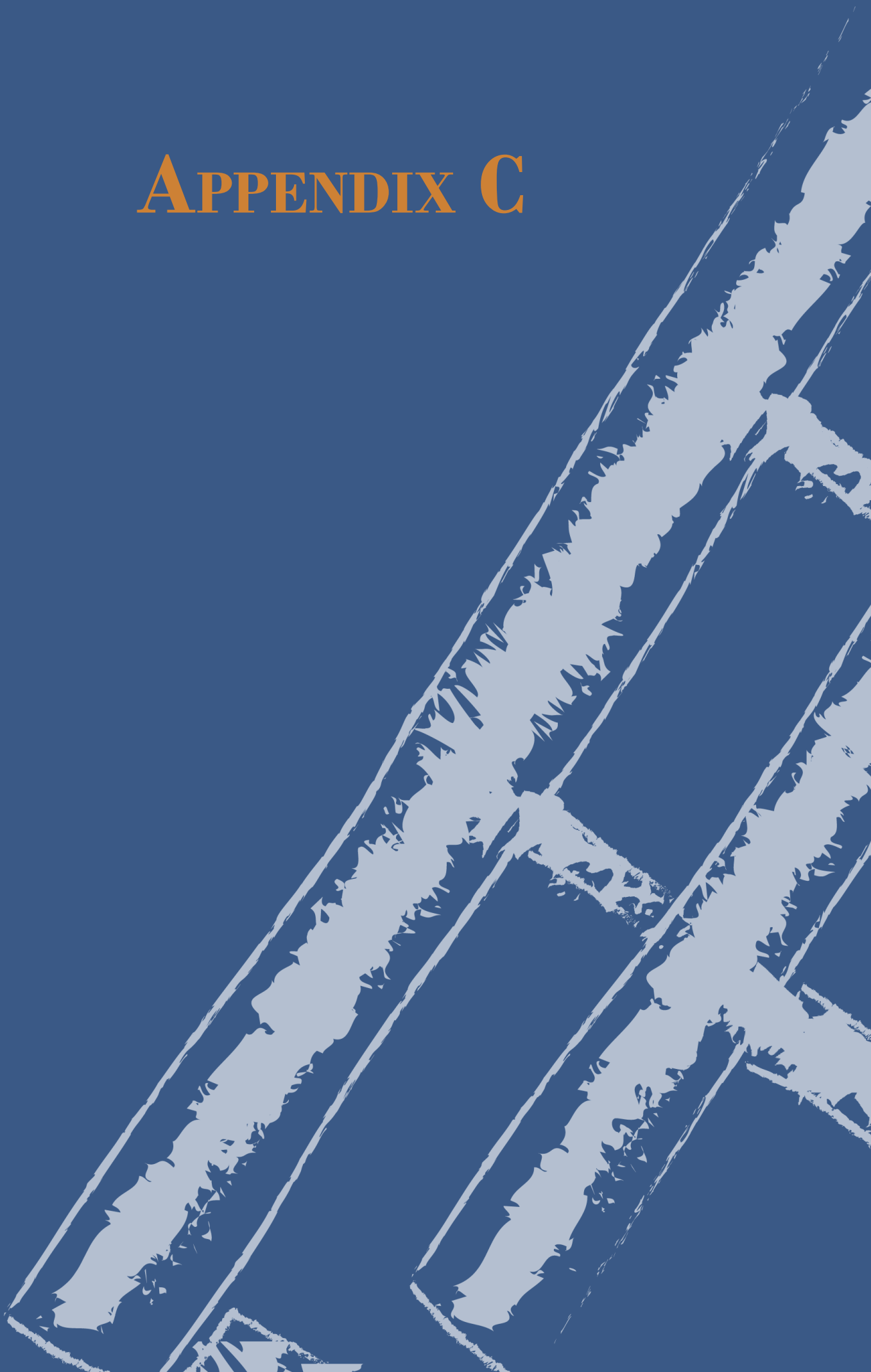
Easy to setup a page with different options to help the campaign in collecting the money.

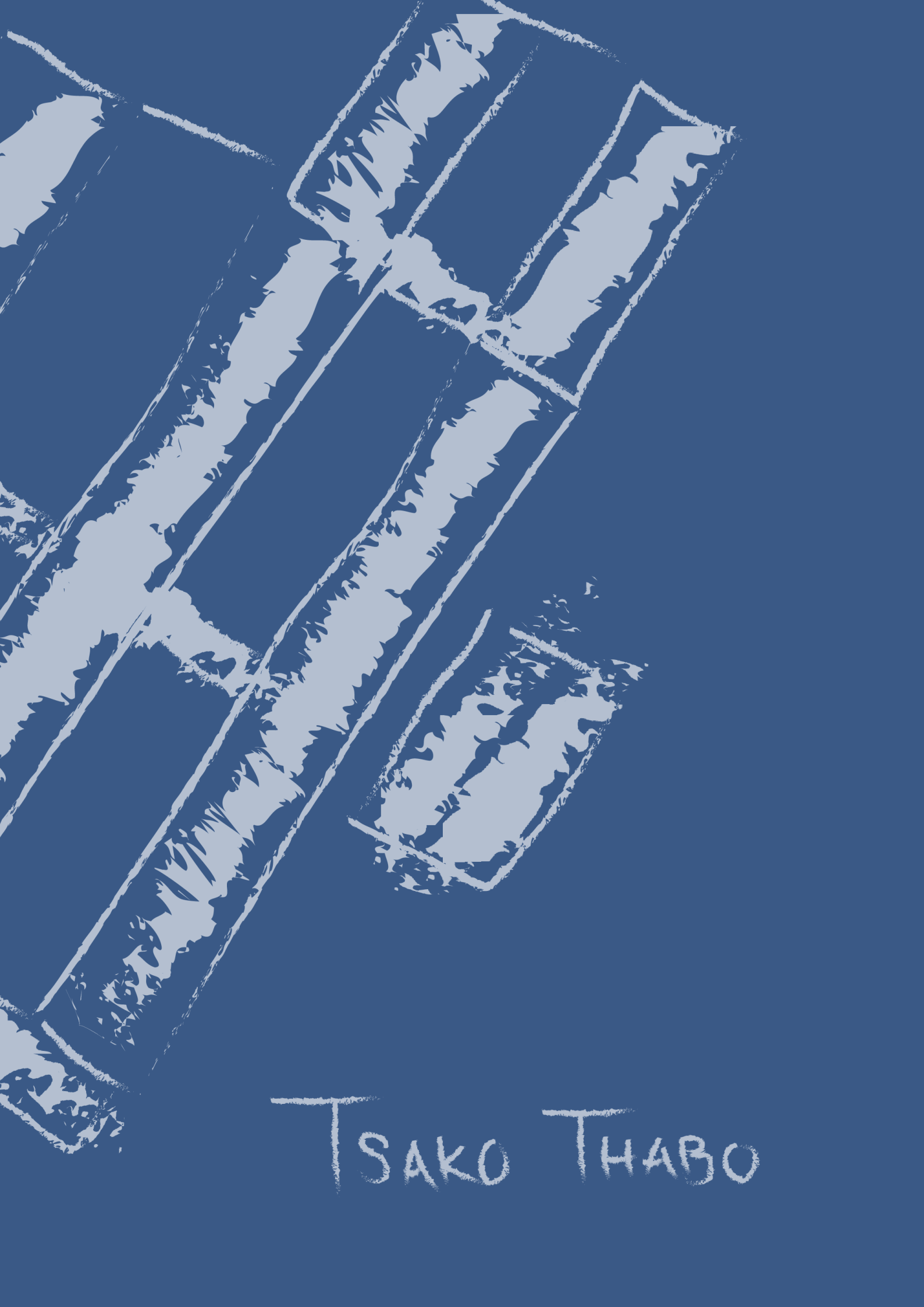


- + Write a 2 minutes pitch that you know by heart that describes the project so you can tell people what it is about in a very simple and efficient way.
- + Spread the word about this project to as much people as you can.
- + To get donations, tell the story of the space and what their donations could achieve for you as learners.
- + Show the development of the space to the people who make donations with photos or journal so they know where their money goes.



APPENDIX C





TSAKO THABO

SELF-MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

A GUIDE TO CONDUCTING WORKSHOPS
ABOUT SELF-MANAGEMENT IN
TOWNSHIPS IN SOUTH AFRICA

- What is it about
- Why in South Africa
- How to get in contact
- Workshop flow
- Example of final design proposal
- Example of system proposal



- + Designing a system and a materiality that creates new opportunities for secondary school students in weaker-socio economic groups.
- + Building a sense of responsibility and ownership toward their future.
- + Creating leadership skills that will serve them as a strong foundation for their adult life.
- + Engaging in a collaborative learning with their community including the other students, the teachers, their neighbours, etc.

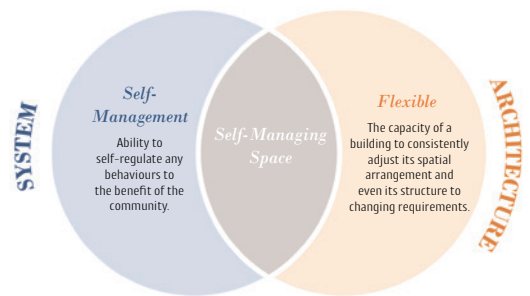


Figure 1. Diagram of the self-managing space

WHY IN SOUTH AFRICA



- + Education system that is deeply segregated between White students and Black students, hence an enormous lack of opportunities for the Black youth.
- + English speaking country which enables easier discussions with the learners.
- + Secondary school in the township of Mamelodi that is very open to new initiatives.

HOW TO GET IN CONTACT



Martina Jordaan - University of Pretoria

Position: Head: Community Based Research & Postgraduate Studies
Academic / Support: Academic Department Faculty/Department: Mamelodi Campus
Help in getting in contact with the schools in Mamelodi.



Mr. Clement Gama - Principal of Tsako Thabo

Tsako Thabo Secondary School, South Africa
Position: Head: Director of Tsako Thabo Secondary school
Understanding the context and getting permissions to conduct the thesis.



Mr. Alfred Luthuli - Teacher at Tsako Thabo

Tsako Thabo Secondary School, South Africa
Position: History teacher
Getting around the school and neighbourhood, supervisor on-site.

1. Set a date



- People in South Africa use primarily WhatsApp, so it is best to communicate on this platform for fastest responses.
- It should prioritize a week day since not all the students have access to transport outside of school hours.

Tips & Tricks

- Communications are very slow sometimes, so if there is no response after a week, it is best to go on site directly once they know who you are. They are normally very open and welcoming.
- Be aware of the school calendar and their breaks which are very different from the western one.

2. Prepare the workshop



- A workshop should be around 1 to 2 hours to allow enough time for the activities but not too long away from their classes.
- Separate the activities into different section so you can easily manage your time.
- Bring some snacks and beverage to share at the end of the workshop.

Tips & Tricks

- All the material that will be used for an activity should be ready before going to the school (consent form, paper, pen, online activity, scissors, tape, etc.)
- Prepare the activities on different medium if for example internet cannot be access, then a paper option is available.

3. Go on site



- If you don't have a car, the best way to travel in South Africa is through Uber. It is safe and cheap.
- If you have your own car, be sure to park the car inside the school gates for security reasons.

Tips & Tricks

- It was usually easy to go to the township which was at 30 minutes from where I lived but quite hard to find a ride on Uber to go back to the city. What is best is to use Bolt when leaving a township and to pay cash since Uber does not allow this type of payment and most of the drivers prefer that way.
- It is a good idea to have a regular driver that you can text when you need to go to the school or back to your place so you can settle a fix amount with him for the trip.

4. Conduct the Context workshop



- This workshop is to give you insight of the context in that specific school. How the learners relate to their environment, the teachers, their fellow companions, etc.
- Prepare the questionnaire online (www.questionpro.com) or another platform and the consent form.
- Ask the learners to identify the "good" and "bad" places around the school on a plan.
- Introduce the concept of self-management and what does it mean.

Tips & Tricks

- Arrive very early to turn on the computers, log in, open internet, etc. It is often very slow so it will require a lot of time to prepare if you want to make the time for this activity efficient.
- Not all the learners are comfortable with using a computer, so you might need to assist some of them.
- For some, the internet page never opened so I lent my phone to one of the learners which had access to cellular data so he could complete the online form.
- Bring a friend that can help you with the workshop and the learners who have difficulty with computers.

Some results of the questionnaire and "good" and "bad" places

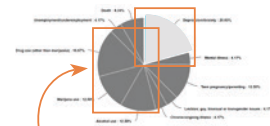
Question 16 - When you were late during the school year, how many time has it been because you...



Two of them answered they are late at school to avoid gang members.

Many face transportation problems when going to school.

Question 27 - With which issues has school helped you, your friends and/or family?



Five students have answered suffering from depression/anxiety. Luckily it seems that the school is helping them.

It is known, learners suffered a lot from the drug and alcohol use that is prevalent in the school unfortunately.

Identification of the "good" and "bad" places around the school.



5. Conduct the Design workshop

- This workshop is to start a collective reflection on how the self-managed space could look like. What are the main areas and furniture needed.

Prepare the material; pre-cut some furniture, identify areas that were desired from the questionnaire, make a plan of the potential room.

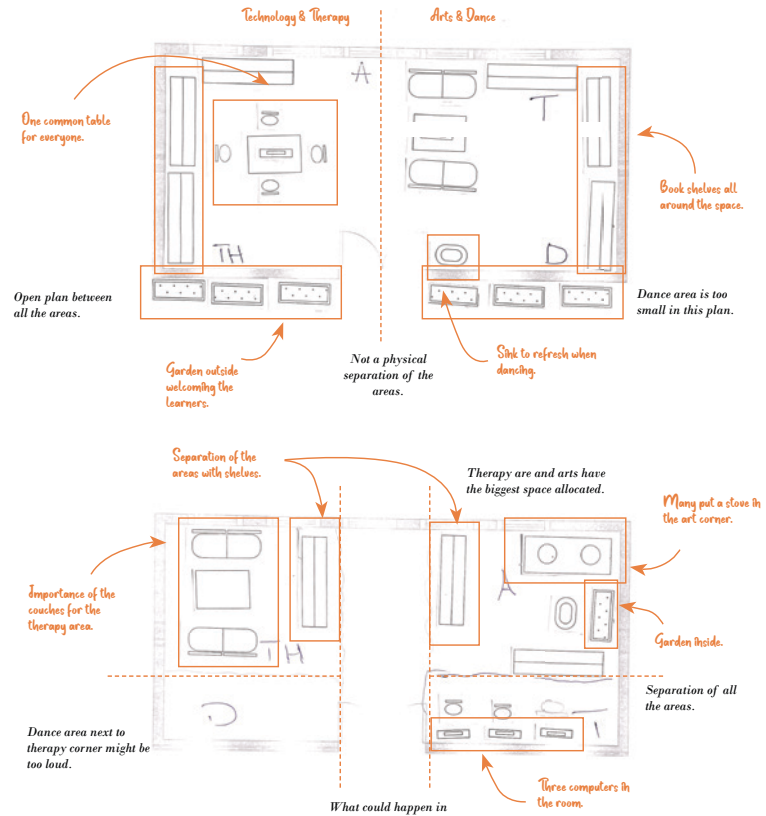
- Introduce the concept of self-management through a General Assembly and an executive committee elected to run the space.
- Talk about the funding, maybe they have some ideas of where to find it since they know their neighbourhood better than we do.



Tips & Tricks

- Prepare the room for the learners with the right material. That means placing the desks and chairs in an inviting way. Offering pen and pencils since they often don't have themselves. Be prepare to loose some of those pen..
- Sometimes they are shy to speak out loud, so go around them so they can ask you questions when you pass by.
- For better participation, plan an activity that is in smaller groups so they can interact with each other more easily.

Some results of individual plans



6. Conduct the Foundation workshop

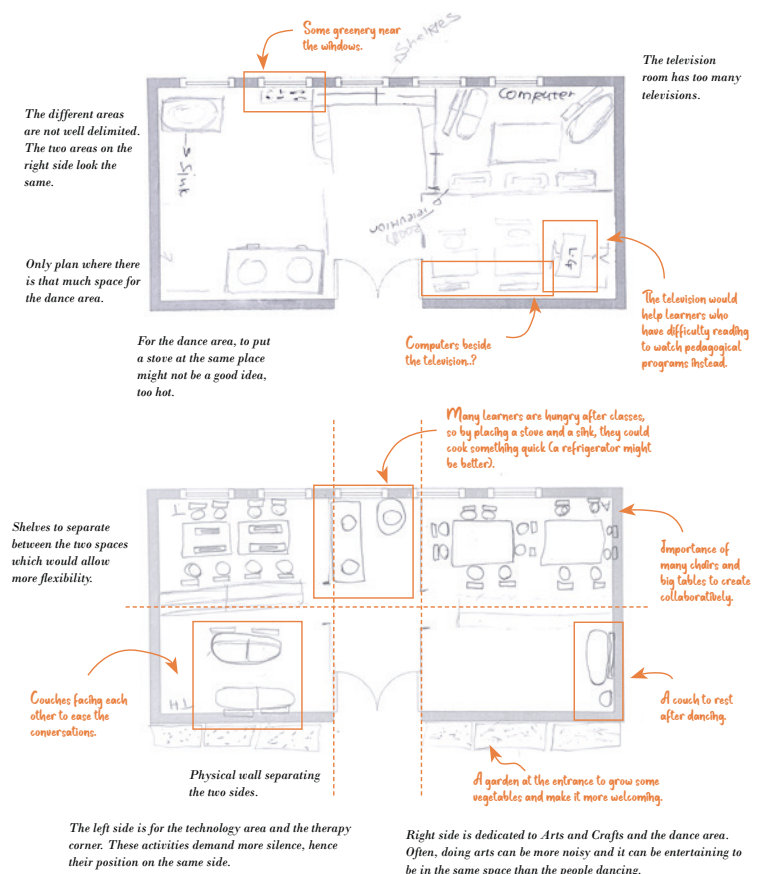
- This workshop is to put together what has been done in the previous workshop to set up a strong base for the self-managed space to work.
- Team up the learners together so they can share the plan they did previously with each other and ask them to create a new plan based on their ideas and mixing everyone's input.
- Set up a strategy for the fundraising either online or in-person.
- Elect the executive committee for the different positions.



Tips & Tricks

- Teams of three is a good number so they can learn to work in team without anyone overpowering the others.
- It can be hard for them to talk in front of everyone and to present themselves. To make it easier, ask them to write the speech they would like to give so they can read it out loud.
- It is important to give the space for each learner to talk and be strict about not interrupting others, they sometimes say hurtful things to each other when it's not their time to talk.

Some results of collective plans





5. Concluding the workshop

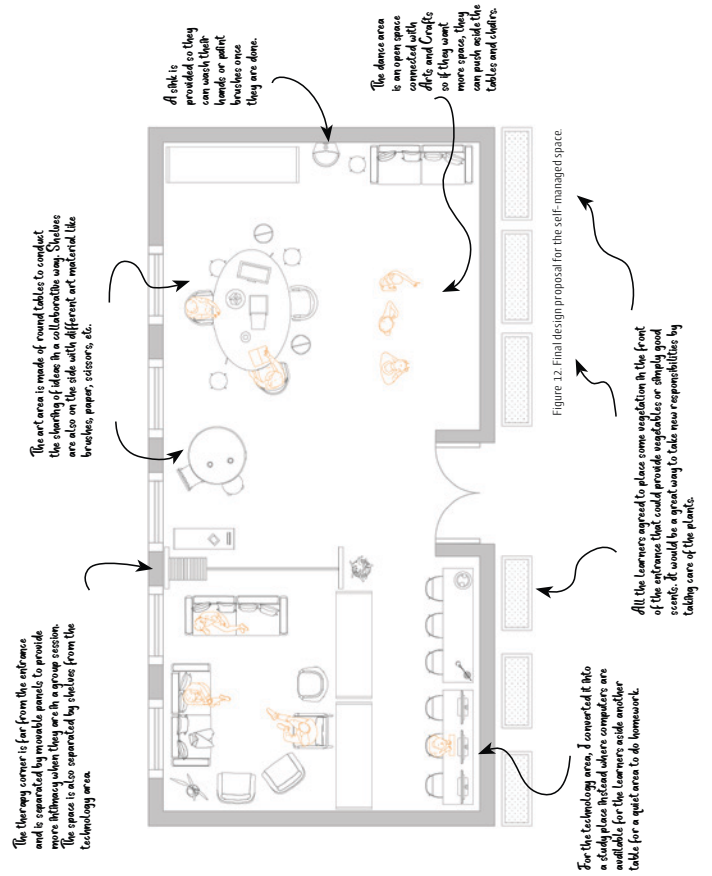
- It's time to conclude the workshop with a discussion all together to highlight the most important points that have been brought up.
- Time for some snacks and beverage to thank them of their time and participation.
- Don't forget to clean up the space after you finish the workshop!

Tips & Tricks

- Their favourite crisps are Nick Nacks and Chutney crisps and their favourite beverage is Stoney which is a ginger soft drink. With these, you will make them very happy!
- Ask for their help to clean up so they also take responsibility for the cleanness of their school.

6. Analyse the results

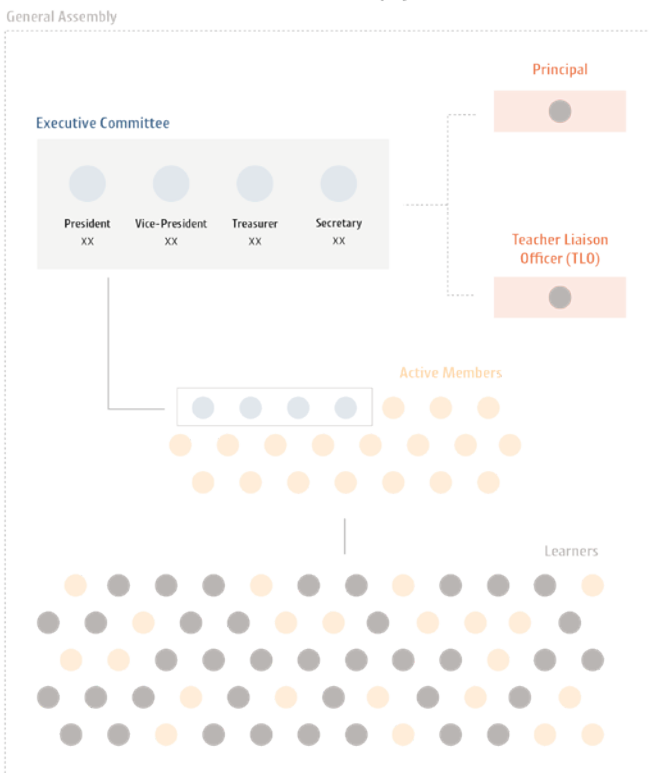
- Gather all the results and do a summary so it is easy to share and to understand what has been done.
- Share those results with the learners and the principal of the school. This can be used as a great insight of the school context.



EXAMPLE OF SYSTEM PROPOSAL

HAVE FUN !!

Rise & Shine



Have fun !!



CHALMERS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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MASTER THESIS 2023