



# **USAID** | **SOUTH AFRICA**

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GENERAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE CONTRACT (GMAC)

**Contract No: 674-C-00-01-00051-00**

## **INNER CITY FASHION/GARMENT PROJECT**

Grantee No. 0144-0404-G-GA45

### **BEEES TRUST**

This report was produced for review by the USAID. It was prepared as a performance milestone under Mega-Tech, Inc.'s prime contract. The contents of this report address activities performed under USAID/South Africa's Strategic Objective No. 9: Increased Market-Driven Employment Opportunities

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### **Activity Summary and achievements:**

The original project objective of BEES Inner City Garment Project was to:

- Upgrade technical skills of 75 garment operators;
- Organise networks to allow for pooled resources and skills, tenders, large-scale orders, continuous learning and skills upgrading;
- Business skills to be implemented in individual businesses and in the networks;
- Establishment of an informal association to represent and promote the interests of the garment industry
- Increase customer base through market linkages
- Increase income generation, both in the individual businesses and in the networks; and
- Increase sustainability of the individual businesses, the networks and the informal Association as measured by income generated, market linkages. Transactions and increased Social Capital

### **Project Highlights:**

- During the course of the BEES Inner City Garment Project, 22 Networks have been established comprising of between 4 to 12 operators in each Network.
- Sales have increased yearly from R100 000 to R477 000 in 2005. New target of R800 000 has been set for 2006.
- 8 Workshops in Business development services have been held with between 12 – 40 operators in attendance.
- 6 Operators completed Haute Couture training , 40 operators received training in Soweto, with a total of 8 new courses being developed for future training.

Refer to the Final Report for a summary of the activities, achievements and lessons learnt under this grant.

### **Contents of this report:**

1. Final Report
2. Evaluation Report on Haute couture training

## FINAL REPORT

Grant Agreement 0144-0404-G-GA45

### BEES INNER CITY FASHION GARMENT PROJECT USAID FINAL REPORT FOR ORIGINAL AND PROJECT EXTENSION DURATION

#### USAID FINAL REPORT INCLUDING EXTENSION FOR PROJECT DURATION

<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Project Performance</u>
1.	<p><u>MARKET LINKAGES</u> Public Relations, Awareness Raising, Market Research, Client Targeting, Export Marketing, Contracting. Participation in Proudly South Africa, Electronic Data Base, Development and Marketing</p>	<p>Sales of R 460 000 in 2005 Sales of R240 000 January to June 2006</p> <p>Client Base: See attached Black Clients: - Woman Clients: -</p> <p>Contracts Delivered: From January 2005 to June 2006 R240000 <i>Pls. see attached schedule</i></p>
2.	<p><u>BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES</u> Prepare workshop programmes, schedules, and material and conduct workshops. <u>In the extension period other funding was secured for a Designers Workshop.</u> (Pls. see attached Gillian Godsell's paper) <u>Development and registration of Charidean (Pty) Ltd as the Fashion Garment Entity to succeed the Fashion Garment Project.</u></p>	<p>Workshops Held: 8</p> <p>Operators in Attendance: 12 – 40 per workshop <u>Extension period Designer workshop</u> <u>Designers in attendance 20 – 25</u> <u>(Pty) Ltd registered and in operation in 2006.</u></p>
3.	<p><u>NETWORKS</u> Coordinate Production and Network Collaboration, Ensure Equitable and Efficient Contract Distribution, Graduate Networks to Higher Skill Niches, Expand Number of Networks, Encourage Independent Contract Sales and an establishment of an informal association that will represent and promote the interest of the garment operators <u>Extending Bargaining Council Medical Aid benefits scheme to informal sector network operators including a formal agreement.</u></p>	<p>Number of Networks: 22</p> <p>South African Networks: 14</p> <p>West African Immigrant Networks: 8</p> <p>(All comprised of between 4 and 12 operators)</p> <p><u>Initial 6 – 7 Network operators participating with being recruited.</u></p>
4.	<p><u>TRAINING</u> High Value "haute couture" training for graduating enterprises and networks. Department of Labour Basic Multi-skilling Training to Continue throughout the project. <u>High Value "haute couture" training completed and an evaluation report prepared.</u></p>	<p>DOL Training Secured. Report on restarting networks. <u>Haute Couture training completed for 6 operators.</u> <u>Training conducted in Soweto for approximately 40 operators.</u> <u>Training completed with Central Johannesburg College for approximately 25 operators</u> <u>Total for new courses 8</u></p>
5.	<p><u>MENTORING</u> Mentoring in Basic Marketing, Instruction in Pricing/Costing, Financial Management Advice and Support, Higher Order Assistance to Graduating Enterprises and Networks. <u>Mentoring manual prepared in electronic format.</u></p>	<p>Mentoring has successfully begun and initial modules have been completed. Initial Report has been attached. <u>CIDA affiliated mentors working with BEES staff have prepared mentoring materials and continued through 2005 / 2006 to work with network operators. The electronic disk has not been located.</u></p>

6.	<p><u>PUBLICITY/CAPACITY BUILDING</u>          Publicity to create greater market niches for networks, and Capacity Building to capitalize on greater production numbers.  <u>Particular emphasis has been placed on electronic marketing as it expands possible contacts and is cost efficient.</u></p>	<p><b>Delivered Advertising Events:</b></p> <p><b>Planned Events:</b></p> <p><b>Brochure Design/Print: First Copies Printed, Electronic Copies available</b></p> <p><b><u>Electronic Marketing</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Customer Database 2250</u></b>  <b><u>Mail brochure products +- 100</u></b>  <b><u>Special offers +- 6 per brochure</u></b></p>
7.	<p><u>Other Activities</u></p> <p><u>Research and Evaluation</u></p>	<p><b><u>A 2006 Survey and Research Evaluation will begin in July 2006</u></b></p>

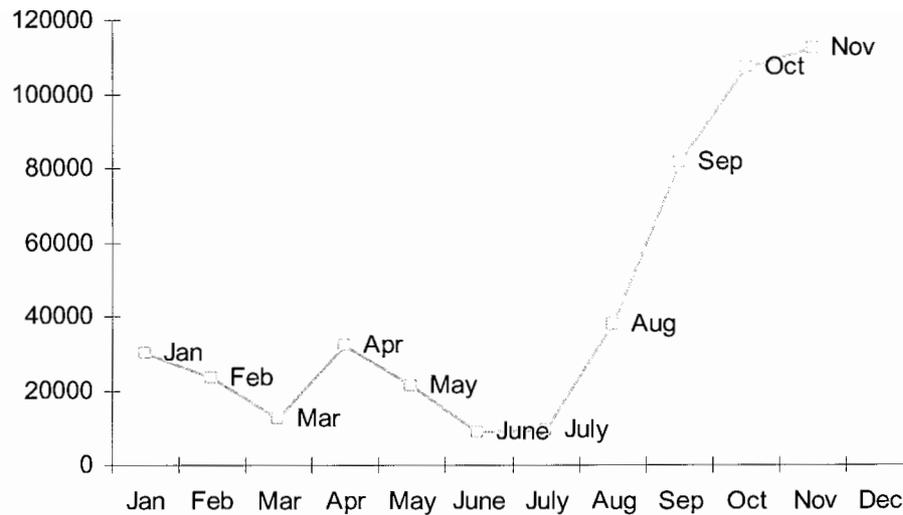
**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE RELATIVE TO KEY MILESTONES AS DESCRIBED IN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2005**

Task 1

**MARKET LINKAGES**

1. Sales

The Market Linkages of the project continues to grow at close to exponential rate. The focus on Client Targeting and Publicity has opened up newer and more lucrative revenue streams for the project. The relationship that we have been able to foster with the publicity and marketing house Glam Slam (through the direct sponsorship of USAID) has been critical to the greater presence which we currently enjoy in the Johannesburg Inner City. In addition to raising the level of awareness within the industry about the project, the increased exposure has allowed the project to be recognized as an upcoming leader in the niche fashion and home décor markets. Our corporate gifts and beaded items remain hot sellers on the market and are particularly in demand this festive season. Below is a chart illustrating sales for the year:



*Pls. refer to attached sales schedule*

As the chart shows, the seasonal upswing in demand has been extremely profitable for the project. The increase in sales, as has been noted above, was due to the increased publicity raised for the project. However, the introduction of Ms. Rasheeqa Kleynhans as a production officer to manage orders and ensure greater quality and customer satisfaction has also contributed to this. With her experience and contacts within the industry, she has added new impetus to the projects marketing and production, and we are currently unable to keep up with all the orders for the festive season. She works closely with BEES' Marketing team of Rosemary Hopkins, Faith Malatse and Refilwe Molwantwa.

The BEES Marketing Team has exceeded its year target of R 400 000 (having doubled sales yearly from R 100 000 to R 200 000 and so on) by concluding orders of approximately R 477 000 approximately (November approximated). This is a particularly satisfactory result in light of the fact that our forecasted demand for the month of December is in excess of R 100 000. A new target of R 800 000 has been set for the calendar year 2006. The following lessons have been learnt over the course of the project:

- PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISMENT

In an industry such as the fashion Industry, one cannot overstate the importance of publicity in raising the awareness within the industry of the services one offers and the products that we have available. The USAID grant has allowed the project to uncover existing revenue streams which would have remained hidden without “spreading the word” about the project’s activities. In addition to uncovering new revenue streams, the publicity and advertisement has exposed the developmental side of the project to the wider public and created a buzz of excitement around the prospects for the model currently being used in the Inner City Fashion/Garment Project to be replicated in other sectors.

- **MARKET FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION**

The project marketing team has focused its efforts on niche markets in the fashion industry. This was a strategic decision owing to the fact that we reasoned that it would be impossible to compete in sectors of the fashion industry which are currently being squeezed by competition from importers and other new market entries. The niche markets are attractive for smaller producers as ours who cannot produce beyond a certain output level. The project markets itself, correctly, as an initiative which tries to economically uplift individuals who would have otherwise not been able to generate the income raised from the project; it does this while at the same time guaranteeing the type of quality and timeous delivery a client would expect from a strictly commercial entity. This has been an enormous marketing bonus especially with corporate clients who are interested in their social responsibility mandates.

- **COST STRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS**

As the project has to compete with organizations which run purely for profit, it has had to compete with the prices these competitors offer. In the earlier stages of the project, products were sold at a premium under the erroneous assumption that our initiative was worth the extra price paid. Recently, we have had to ensure a slimmer structure run under conditions almost identical to our competitors. This ensures that our prices are competitive and that profit generated from the project sales is retained and driven into the projects activities. It should be noted, however, that the USAID grant has, to a large extent, subsidized such operational costs that any other commercial entity would have had to

bear. In the long run, even greater levels of productivity are needed to make the project independent and self sustainable.

- **QUALITY**

This has been the byword of the successful increase in sales over the last couple of years. Our quality ensures client satisfaction and return. This secures sources of income which can ensure that the project keeps running profitably even in the lean months of the year between the year-end-year-beginning upswings.

## Task 2

### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

The following have been held for network operators, staff, clients and other stakeholders in the project:

1. Informal Garment Operators Association Workshop

This workshop was conducted to target individuals who were more interested in learning about what the advantages of the Informal Garment Operators Association was for them as informal garment operators. The workshop was a venue for existing members of the association to interact with their peers on how they could become part of the BEES network of operators. Key areas for discussion were the following: Networking, Knowledge and Information Sharing and strengthened industry through strengthened Community. The workshop drew heavily on the ideas from Gregg Lichtenstein's Entrepreneurial League System, a system for entrepreneurial development through networking currently in wide use throughout the US and UK.

2. Client – Producer Workshop I

This workshop was held to encourage interaction between the project's clientele and the network operators who produce the products. The main aim of the workshop was to encourage the operators to understand the delivery chain through which the orders which they complete

are sourced and finalized. BEES' role as a broker of orders was discussed. The workshop was aimed as a preliminary discussion aimed at helping all stakeholders see the greater picture on how they can work together to help each other.

### 3. Production Management Workshop

This was a follow-up workshop to the Client – Producer workshop. The workshop targeted South African network operators to examine the relationship between client and producer. Each party was engaged in trying to understand the mutual benefits stemming from the relationship, and the costs and benefits of total quality management and on time delivery.

### 4. Technical Problems and Possible Means of Addressing them

This workshop was directed by the project team of quality controllers and network facilitators, and was directed mainly at our South African networks (which are comprised exclusively of female, black seamstresses). The workshop aimed to identify skill/sewing gaps amongst the various groups and decide on a strategy concerning how they would be tackled. Practical demonstrations were held on specific sewing concepts which we believe were lacking in our group of networks. This workshop was especially important in light of the fact that such skill gaps have led to bad quality and poor delivery times. While the general reception to the workshops was positive, we have identified the fact that this imbalance in skills amongst the producers has persisted and, consequently, orders demanding higher skill levels are directed to those networks which can accomplish them.

### 5. Marketing Strategy for Festive Season

The seasonal upswing in demand for fashion and gift items during the festive season is widely documented and acknowledged by all of the network operators. However, in spite of this knowledge, there has been a recurrent scenario of a lack of readiness for this spike in demand. This has naturally led in the past to wasted opportunities to generate income. This workshop

discussed strategies to counter this and fully exploit the opportunity which the festive season represents.

#### 6. Mentoring

The project conducted workshops with each of the networks to introduce them (in some cases reintroduce them) to the Mentors and the Mentoring Programme. In the mentoring workshops, the following were discussed:

- What the network operators expect from the mentors.
- The curriculum and any possible oversights concerning what is to be taught.
- What the mentors would like from their various networks.
- What is expected as a satisfactory end-result of the project?

#### 7. Forming a PTY

This workshop brought together all the various stakeholders in the proposed PTY to be formed by the middle of 2006 through donations from the Ford Foundation. A workplan on how this is to be accomplished is to be accomplished was agreed upon. A shelf company has been purchased for this purpose, and over the coming months, we intend to turn the project into a fully thriving trading entity which, as we plan, shall pay dividends to the network operators, beaders and other crafts people who have so far been the heart and soul of the project.

#### 8. Bargaining Council/Medical Benefits

Workshop held to explain the Medical Benefits which has been secured by BEES from the Bargaining Council for Association Members.

### Task 3

## **NETWORKS**

### 1. Coordinate Production and Network Collaboration

The project team continues to manage its team of twenty two networks through regular site visits (networks are typically visited at least twice every day due to order supervision and the need for quality management). Our network facilitators and quality controllers have developed a personal relationship with each of the individual operators, and they are frequently consulted from matters involving their daily work and personal matters. This tight bond is the result of years of continuous communication between the operators and the network operators, with the Inner City Fashion/Garment Project being the point of departure for the building of these relationships.

To coordinate production more efficiently and centralize decision making in the Inner City, BEES has introduced Ms. Rasheequa Kleyhans to the project. She is based in the Inner City from whence she conducts and supervises all production for the project. She works closely with the other members of the BEES Marketing/Production team: Rosemary Hopkins, Faith Malatse and Refilwe Molwantwa. Except for Rosemary, every other member of this team is a designer who has worked extensively within the industry in their own capacities and has used these contacts to benefit the organization and its activities. Customer satisfaction since this team has been operational has been 100%.

Collaboration between the networks is encouraged through exchange programmes organized between the various networks in which operators are encouraged to work with each other in the completion of orders. This helps to encourage a skills exchange where practical lessons can be given in an environment which is conducive for learning amongst peers. It has been noted that this sort of informal learning is generally more efficient than rigorous formal courses designed with the specific goal to transferring a set of skills. While such formal courses attempt to effect a relatively large skills transfer in a short time, the daily communication on problems

and orders amongst operators skilled at different levels ensures a gradual, incremental and continuous transfer. It is generally noted that such smaller skill transfer has a greater net effect over the long run.

## 2. Graduate Networks to Higher Skill Niches

Various networks have improved their skills over the course of the project. These improvements have been possible through the frequent meetings and on-site mentoring from our team of network facilitators and quality controllers who have ensured that at every opportunity, skills and knowledge is passed from them to the operators whom they manage. This is done during daily one-on-one meetings to supervise orders which are being produced. In addition to these daily meetings, periodic workshops were held in which particular skills which were absent were discussed and demonstrated. Through the course of the year, this general skills increase has been evidenced by a 100% client satisfaction rate due to better quality and timeous deliver, and greater order generation by accepting orders where such orders, in the past, would have been impossible to produce.

## 3. Network Expansion/Retention and Establishment of Informal Garment Association

The Inner City Fashion/Garment Project has expanded its number of networks to twenty two. There has been a deliberate focus on network retention and skilling instead of expansion. This has been in conjunction with our strategy of concentration and focus. Due to the increase in the profile of the project in the fashion industry, it has been essential that we take full advantage of this, and ensure efficient order delivery and the highest quality of production. To take on newer networks while broadening the base of the project would have diluted the efficient base of producers which had been "groomed" into those roles. However, the project managed to add-on two high value networks that have helped increase the general production capacity of the organization.

An Informal Garment Association has been established which gives benefits to all participants and members (including non-networks). To date, the association has been a major success. Some of those benefits include:

- Medical Aid Benefit Scheme for all Association Members
- Reduced Input Costs at selected Stores
- Access to BEES' network of clients and producers

#### Task 4

### **TRAINING**

#### 1. High Value "Haute Couture" Training

Clive Rundell, South Africa's top international and national fashion designer, agreed to allow our six of our network operators into his highly guarded design studio in the Johannesburg Inner City for a six month training programme. Within these six months, all six network operators upgraded their skills to haute couture level and participated in the manufacture and sewing of numerous garments for some of Clive's many exhibitions during the period. This process was monitored by Gillian Godsell an Industrial Psychologist at the University of Johannesburg and Refilwe Molwantwa our in-house design specialist.

The Clive Rundle Training Programme has come to an end, producing 6 haute couture seamstresses with skill levels much higher than their peers. The project hopes to assign these seamstresses to the various networks for periods of mentoring and guidance in which we hope that some of the skills learnt at the Clive Rundle Training will be transferred to the other operators.

#### 2. Department of Labour (DOL) Training

BEES has finally been able to secure funding for various training programmes from the Department of Labour. The funding includes the following:

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Courses</b>	<b>DoL Total Amt</b>
Sedibeng College	Manufacturing W/Wear	R 31,525.00
	Clothing Painting	R 114,075.00
CJC	Basic Domestic	R 75,600.00
	Home Décor	R 87,720
	Curtain	R 117,600.00
Soweto	Manufacture Clothes&Design	R 192,600.00
	Pattern Making	R 164,400.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>R 783,520.00</b>

These training programmes will run for 24 months (with the duration of each training programme depending on its own unique set of factors). Sixty Seven (67) operators will be training during the course of this grant in at least one of the courses outlined above.

#### Task 5

#### **MENTORING**

After months of delays and an impasse at the Johannesburg CIDA campus, BEES was unable to reach any agreement with the CIDA campus. In order to restart the mentoring, BEES decided to contract the individual mentors directly. This year's mentors were chosen after an advertisement was placed in the CIDA campus about the need for mentors. Most mentors were chosen after a full analysis was made of their CVs and academic records.

The 8 mentors have all signed consulting contracts with BEES Trust, and have been introduced to their various networks. The curriculum which shall be taught will follow that developed earlier for BEES in earlier mentorships.

Weekly meetings are held with the mentors; in these meetings, the curriculum and other technical matters are discussed. Mentors have to submit monthly reports on the progress of their various networks, and assess whether or not the networks comprehend the business skills which are being transmitted to them. In turn, the networks are interviewed monthly to determine whether or not the mentors communicate the ideas in language which is accessible and useful. Through this process, the project is able to grade individual networks into Gold, Silver and Bronze, depending on the level of their advancement in the mentoring programme.

Due to the current exam season and the coming seasonal upswing in the Fashion Industry, mentoring has slowed down. We intend however, to continue the process when Mentors and Networks are less pressed for time.

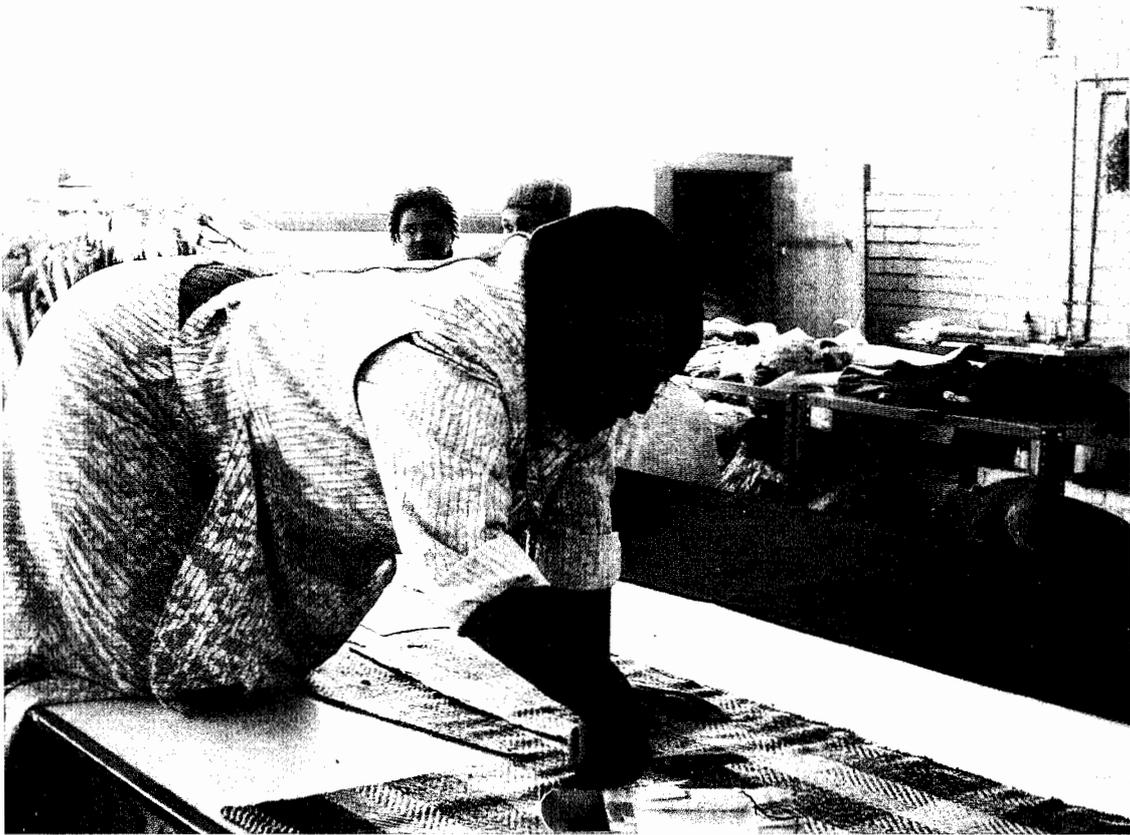
Task 6

#### **PUBLICITY/CAPACITY BUILDING**

##### 1. Publicity and Staffing

Over the term of the project, BEES has been involved with Glam Slam, a publicity and marketing house, in publicizing the project. This has been through a schedule of publicity events which have been carried out through various media including radio, TV, print media and so on. In recent months, with the restart of training, there has been greater interest in the activities of the project. Attached is a list of publicity events which have been concluded.

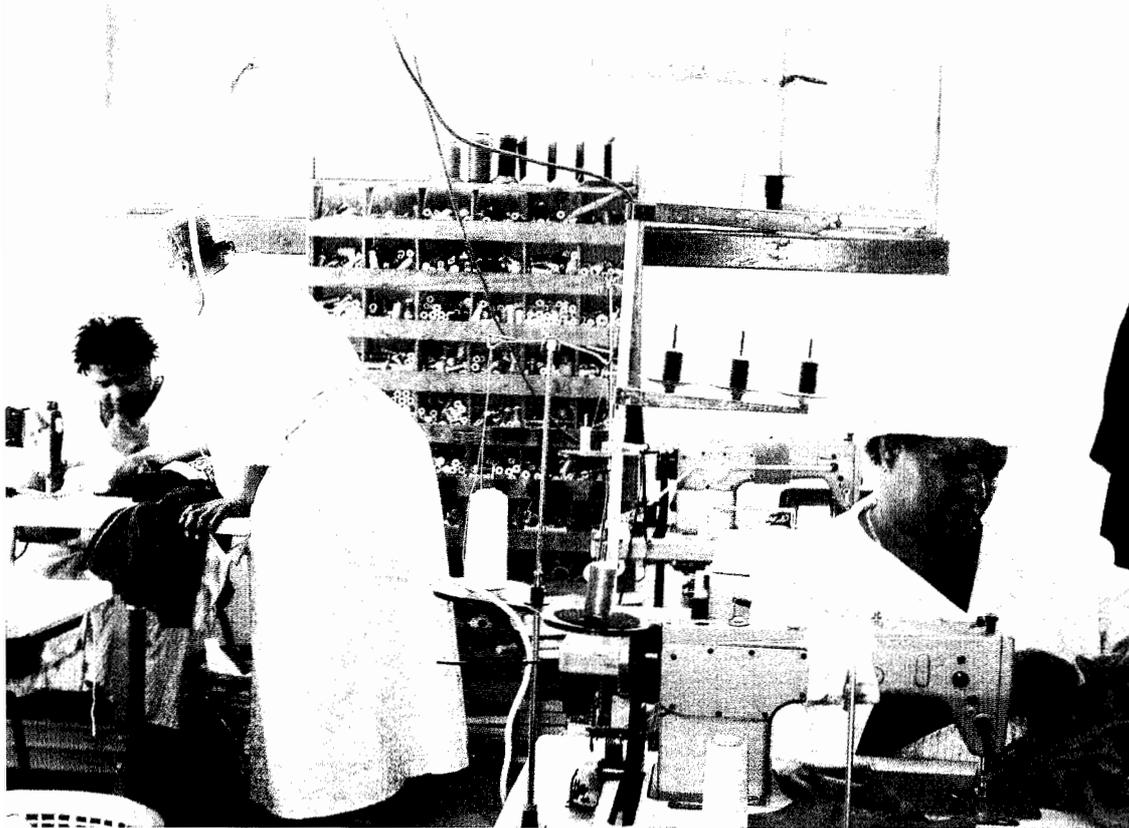
*Extreme sewing: A case study of on the job training in a fashion studio.*



(DRAFT)

**SUMMARY**

This audacious programme placed six seamstresses of varied skills and limited formal training, in a high-end fashion studio in Johannesburg for six months. This meant that women whose output had ranged from toilet seat covers to simple garments, were exposed to and involved in the production of couture garments for fashion shows and an international clientele. They worked alongside the men and women who cut and stitched fashion garments, under the guidance of the two women who manage the studio.



The informal vocational training these students received had the following outcomes:

Business outcomes: The students learned the importance of keeping to a promised delivery date. They learned that the quality garments they could now produce could be sold into their existing market plus new customers, for higher prices. Some changed premises, e.g. from Soweto to the Joburg inner city. Some expanded existing premises, e.g. by devoting one room of a dwelling to their sewing business. One student obtained employment sewing for another fashion designer while keeping her own business in the inner city going. All reported improved incomes.

Fashion outcomes: The students learned to recognise and produce quality garments. They learned that great care must be taken placing pattern pieces and cutting fabric, as even very small pieces of fabric can be used. They became more innovative in fabrics they chose and how they used them. They learned to take more care cutting and sewing to produce higher quality garments. They learned the importance of and acquired different equipment, such as overlockers and steam irons. They produced a wider range of items than they had been making

before exposure to the studio.

## **BACKGROUND**

The programme: A grant from USAID to development agency BEES funded this programme,, aimed at enhancing the business and fashion insights of the participants and enabling them to develop their own businesses. BEES selected the original participants, replaced participants who dropped out, but was not involved in actual training.

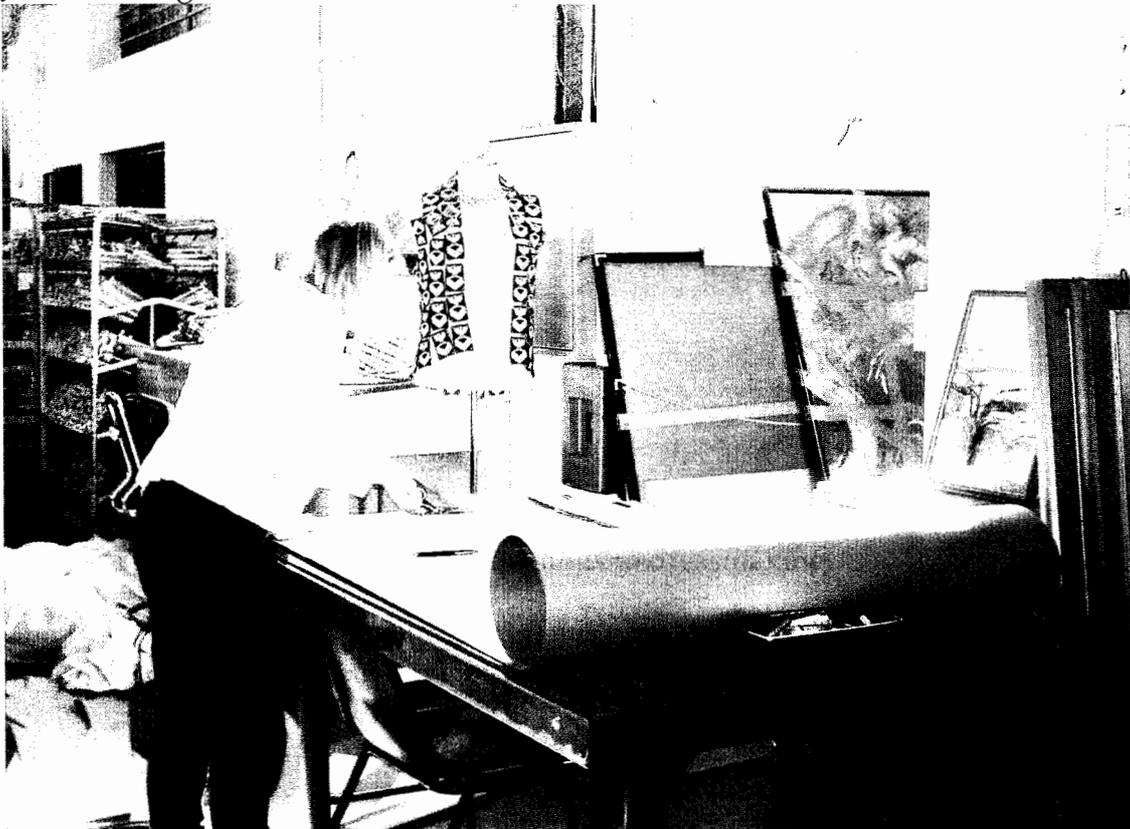
The students: Although the programme accommodated only six students at a time, some dropped out and were replaced, so some had only two or three months training, and a total of ten students received some training. The women were chosen by the development agency BEES, which has been doing development work in the inner city for ten years, with a particular focus on garment producers.



Some of the students had been through several BEES training programmes, and had been taught sewing skills at the Witwatersrand Technikon, and business skills through a mentoring programme using business students at CIDA inner-

city university. One of the students had neither previous sewing skills nor business skills. Most of the students were running small businesses ranging from making cushions and other soft furnishings to dressmaking.

The studio. Clive Rundle is the doyen of the Johannesburg fashion scene. He has a fashion outlet in Rosebank which has been open for 20 years, has many overseas clients, and regularly participates in couture shows such as Fashion Week in Johannesburg, Milan and other centres. His studio is situated in the inner city, in the area which the city hopes to develop as the Fashion District of Johannesburg. His studio employs seven workers, five of whom focus on sewing and two on cutting, supervising and communicating. Because his studio is in the inner city, it is easily accessible by taxi, and in a familiar area to women already working in the garment industry in the inner city. The huge contrast between the dilapidated buildings surrounding the studio, and the beauty and high standard of the garments produced in this unpromising environment, is an unspoken lesson about possibilities in Johannesburg.



The training. The training received by the students can be categorised as informal vocational training. A special programme was worked out for the students in the beginning, but no special teachers were employed. The trainers

were all the people working in Clive's studio; the standards were the usual studio standards, very high indeed. When they began, the students were given materials to make uniforms for themselves and the employees in the studio. The idea behind this was that they would be receiving inputs of time and expertise from the regular studio workers, so they should begin their sojourn in the studio by making something (i.e. uniforms) for the people who would be teaching them. Everyone, students and employees, would wear the same uniforms, so that no-one walking into the studio would know the difference between students and regular employees.



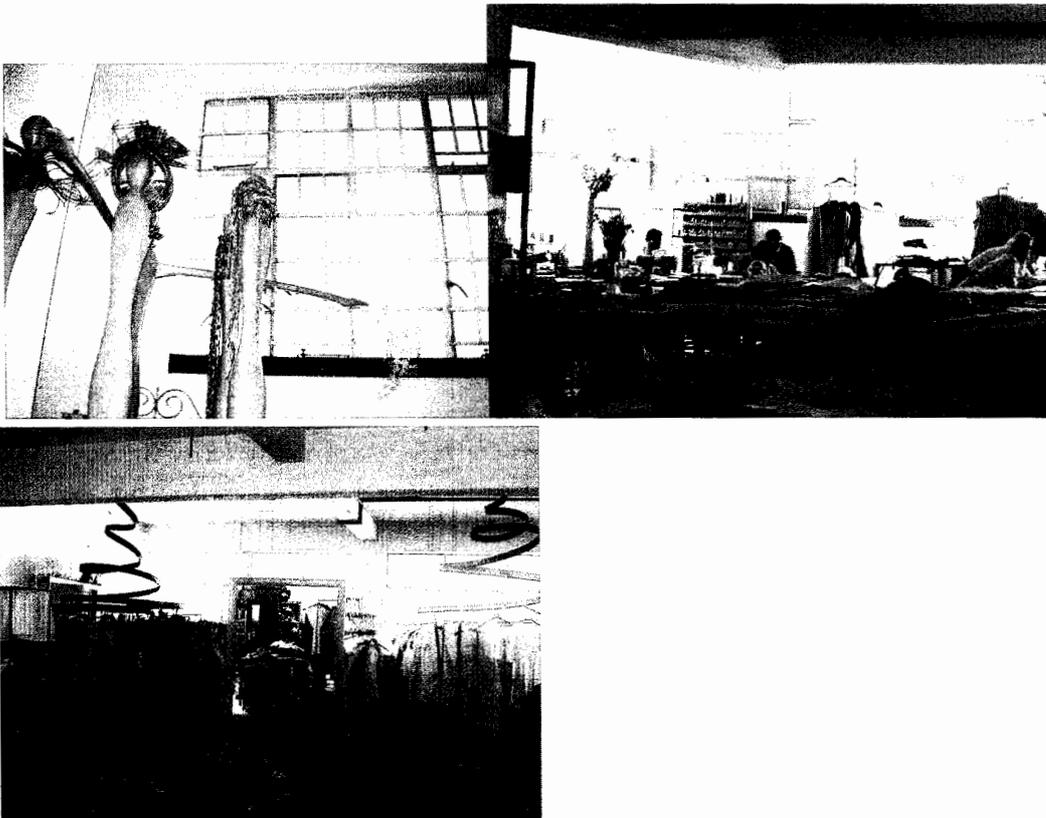
The fabric for the uniforms was straightforward to sew. The patterns were difficult. The uniforms consisted of multiple pieces such as skirts, jackets, dresses and camis. The uniform garments were reversible and incorporated some of Clive Rundle's signature design characteristics such as fabric pieces linked in a spiral pattern. They were difficult to sew and high standards were insisted on. When it came to sewing the camis, students were encouraged to be innovative, to use small fabric pieces from the studio, to produce unique garments. When the uniforms were completed, the students moved on to cutting and sewing other garments being made in the studio.

The students learned by watching, listening, asking and doing. Lots of feedback on their work was provided, in an environment where constant feedback was given on all work in progress in the studio. Everyone in the studio provided advice and helped when asked, although the regular work of the studio had to carry on alongside the learning.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DEDUCTIONS

### Training.

The studio: Clive Rundle's studio operates on visual and spoken communication. Nothing, as far as an observer could see, was written down. This makes it an excellent training venue for people who do not necessarily have good literacy skills. The studio is filled with colour and shape – cardboard rolls containing rolls of fabric, and piles of smaller fabric pieces on a table. Many smaller tubes of buttons, which may also on occasion spill over a table. Great chandeliers of green wine bottles. A wire piano. Hard hats cut into fantastical shapes for soccer supporters. The studio is a constant and changing visual feast.





The dummy: A dressmaker's dummy hangs opposite a mirror in the centre of the studio, exercising as much influence as if she were a strict and demanding teacher or client. Garments are hung on this dummy and returned to sewing machine or pattern table in a constant circling flow. Everyone in the studio can see the discussion round the dummy, the tweaking and pinning of the garment, and its rejection or final approval. A garment which is finally approved is steamed, wrapped in plastic and hung on a rack for removal to shop or fashion show.

The cutting table: This huge table takes up a lot of time and space. Students can be seen clustered round it. One of the women running the studio may be seen climbing on the table to get a cut exactly right. Garments do not move only in one direction, from the cutting table to the machines. A problem at the sewing machine or on the dummy may be referred back to the original brown paper pattern on the cutting table for resolution. Sewers, garments and pieces of garment move backwards and forwards between machines and cutting table, as well as moving round the studio, to the dummy and eventually to the hanging

racks. This flow embodies a process of experimentation, examination, criticism and improvement which is central to any learning.



The whole environment: The importance of how a garment looks, hangs, moves is constantly communicated, both visually and verbally. A lot of discussion and demonstration goes on as ideas in Clive Rundle's head are translated into garments, and fashion week garments re-interpreted into clothes which can be sold in the shop. The process of modifying a fashion garment into a shop item can, according to Clive Rundle, take as long as three years. This constant public process of labeling, translation and adaptation makes the studio a potentially rich learning environment. Students can see, in a real working environment, how important it is to find a particular tiny piece of fabric for a belt, to choose exactly the right button, to save every scrap of fabric, to combine resources in the studio innovatively.

### Gains

All students interviewed felt that they had learned about the role of cutting and sewing in producing quality garments. The fit and hang of garments had become

more important to them. They all reported both making different products and making previous products in a different way. During interviews it became clear that seamstresses producing soft furnishings such as curtains often choose fabric for customers as well as making it up. They act as mini interior designers. The students' choice of fabric, and the way they used fabric, changed after the training. They were more aware of colour, texture, and innovative use of fabric.

The students were aware of different sewing aids such as overlockers and steam irons; some had acquired such aids. They had all learned about the importance, and possible costs, of delivering on time: "if delivery is Friday, delivery is Friday, even if you don't sleep on Thursday". They had all observed studio staff sleeping in the studio the week before Fashion Week. They had seen a tiny piece of fabric, last used several years ago, hunted down for the perfect belt to complement an outfit. They had seen a whole pair of pants sewn from material left over from carefully cut out patterns. They had observed the complementary skills of thrift and parsimony in cutting, and boldness and innovation in design. They had learned to unpick a seam, and work on a garment until it hung exactly right.



### Changes

Students showed increased confidence: some moved premises, some acquired additional equipment, some took on additional work, all improved quality as well as producing garments which had not been part of their range before. All students interviewed reported an expanded client base and improved earnings.

### Costs and difficulties:

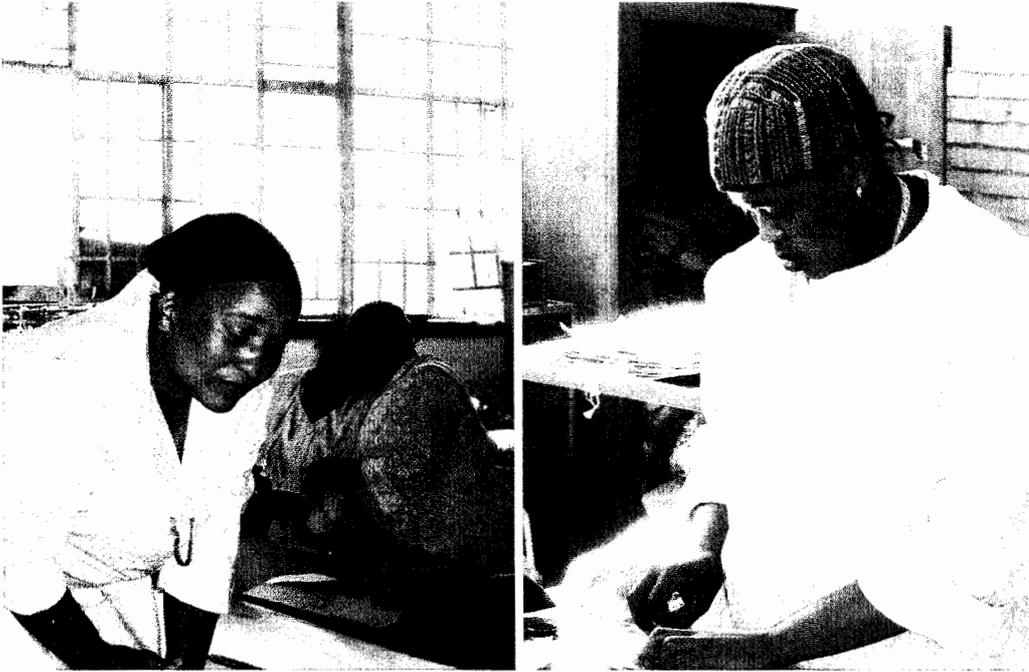
Personal pressures: students were trying to work in the studio all morning, sometimes until 15h00, then run their own businesses and manage home and family. This proved too difficult for some students, who dropped out.

Learning expectations: Students came in with an expectation of a linear learning process. To benefit from the learning available in the studio, they needed to become active learners, taking their learning where they found it. This was hard for them to do. Students were both angry and frightened when initially presented with the demands of the studio. They wanted their own teacher to show them what to do, and correct them. The teaching that was fitted into the normal course of studio work left them feeling inadequate. They did not perceive the studio as a rich site of life learning. Rather they saw it as a defective college. This made it difficult for them to benefit from continuous learning possibilities. "The door is open" they were assured; this meant 'come in and see what we are doing and learn from it, even though you are not a student here any more'. The students wanted something else: "can we bring you our problems?" they asked. An honest answer to that would be "No". A working studio cannot stop what it is doing to solve someone else's problems. "Perhaps after work" was the face-saver offered.

The linear expectation of learning also involved place and equipment. The students explained that they had been disappointed and frustrated because they did not move directly to the sewing machines when they arrived in the studio, but spent a lot of time at the cutting table first. As far as they were concerned, if you are going to learn anything about sewing, it should be behind a sewing machine. They had not accepted the view in the studio, that the pattern table was where you cut carefully enough to prevent most difficulties behind the sewing machine, and where you went back to sort out the difficulties you did encounter.

When the students were interviewed initially, while they were doing their training in the studio, they all volunteered the information that learning to lay out the pattern pieces carefully on the fabric, and cut fabric carefully and parsimoniously, was one of the most important things they had learned. But during a group discussion some months after they had left the studio, they complained about time spent at the pattern table. Had they forgotten the value initially learned? Did they need the presence of the group members to gather the courage to complain about something that had been an unacknowledged problem from the start? Or was the pattern table both a place of problems and a place of learning?

Costs and gains to studio: The major cost was born by the two women running the studio, who had to teach the students and maintain regular studio output.

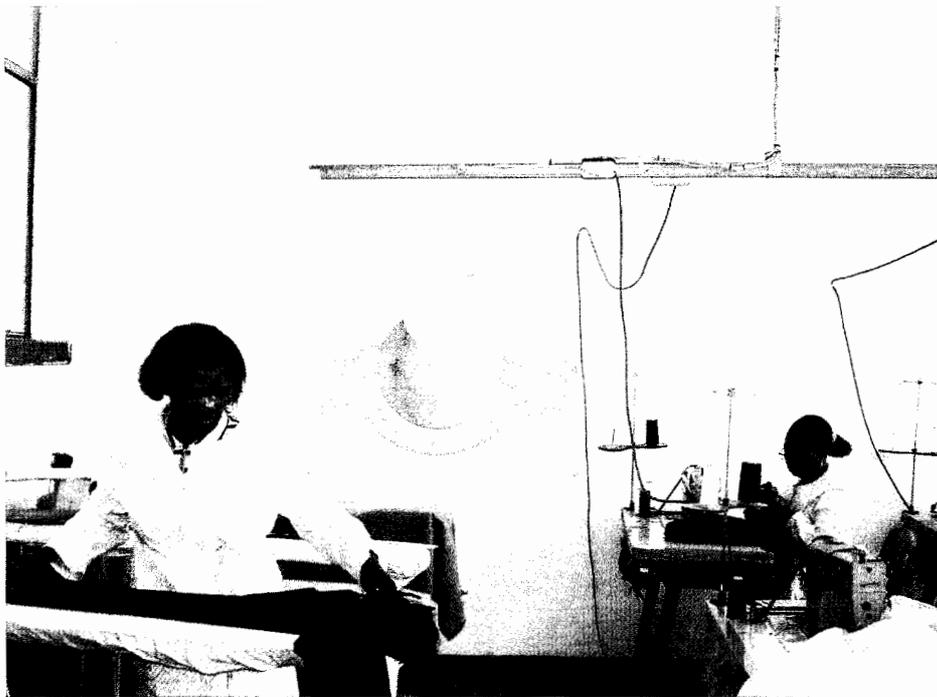


They made a substantial personal investment in the students, and were not sure that this investment was valued.

Clive Rundle was paid for each student, and also had some labour available for simple cutting before Fashion Week. On the other hand, having to explain and supervise during the stress of Fashion Week in the studio was difficult. The preparation for Fashion Week was stressful for the students as they were doing boring and repetitive work and no-one had time for them.

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

The gap between the sewing skills present in Clive Rundle's studio and the sewing skills of the students did not present an insurmountable obstacle. The students acquired both sewing and business skills. Most of what they learned could not have been learned in a classroom.



They developed confidence in their own sewing skills, and courage to innovate and try out new ideas. It is too early to tell whether this will be a sustained process of innovation, or a single burst of innovation that fades as their distance from the studio grows.

Some orientation to match expectation to reality might help in the future. The students need to understand the informal nature of the training, and be given some skills to enable them to maximize learning opportunities. Perhaps a course such as the Dependable Strengths course, which teaches awareness of inner resources and self-reliance, could be helpful here.

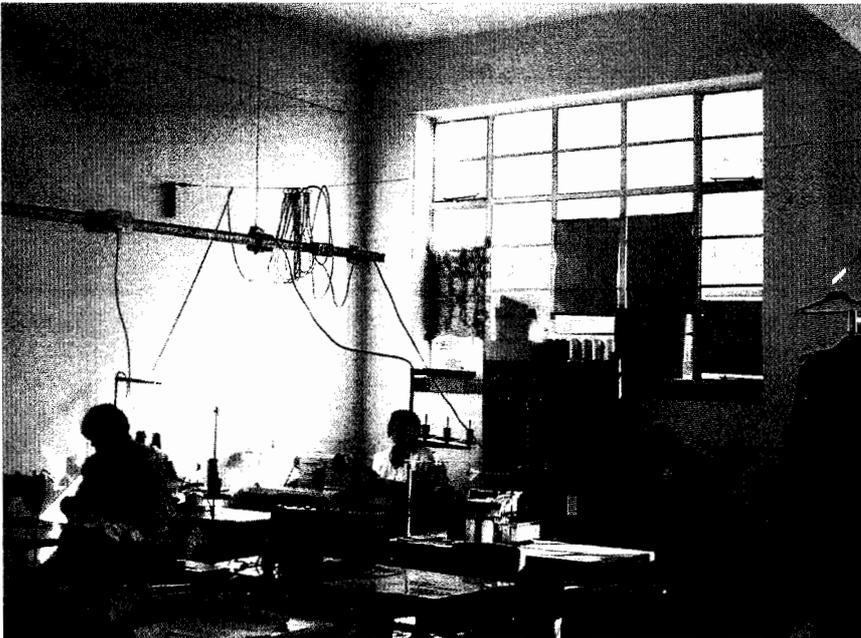
A debriefing process, repeated at regular intervals, labeling learning and gains, might increase perception of learning. A process of debriefing for regular workers in the studio is essential, because of high cost to them. These workers were devastated when some students dropped out: they had made a huge investment in these students, of time and personal effort, and felt that this had been spurned. They were also angered when students missed days and expected someone to take time out and recap what had been learned in the studio when they were away. It would probably not be possible to run such a training course more than once a year, because of strain on regular studio workers.

Could this be replicated in other studios, or run at a larger scale? It is possible to label the learning, even put a value on it, but probably not to quantify it. It seems most unlikely that it would be possible to fit this informal learning into the

National Qualifications Framework. It would be quite possible to present a certificate at the end of the course.

Could other studios do this? An independent professional offering services across studios suggested that Clive Rundle's studio is unusual and probably unique in the welcoming attitude and commitment to upliftment encountered there. The interactions with the students are intense, and it seems unlikely that they could be replicated on a larger scale.

Not all the anticipated outcomes appeared. It was hoped that the students who had worked together so closely, in exciting and difficult conditions, would form a network and continue to share learning and work. This did not seem to happen in the short term. It is too early to tell about the long term. There was not any evidence of the learning trickling down to anyone else. Perhaps if the students' businesses grow to the level where they can employ someone else, they might pass on some of their training. Follow up interviews in a year's time will provide more information.



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11 July 2006

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Dear Lynne

Please find attached the Grant Activity Completion Report together with a report from Gillian Godsell who evaluated the Clive Rundell training. The disk containing the mentoring modules cannot be located however we have enclosed the Mentoring report and the general background to the modules together with module 2.

If you have any queries please give me a call.

Yours sincerely

  
PP KEVIN KANE