

Design and Sustainability in an African Context

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This abstract is about an idea concerning design and sustainability, that though it has not been implemented it is hoped to be soon. Sustainable development in Africa is a very interesting topic that brings hope for Africa to do its share in the global fight for better use of resources as well as the reduction of waste through the use of design (be it design techniques or other ways) in Africa. The earth started off with enough resources to sustain the then human population as well as the animal kingdom at large. With the passage of time and revolutions that have taken place, it has become clear that the consumption or depletion of the earth's resources have to significantly slow down for the next generations to have a future to look forward to, in an environment that is conducive to living. Looking at the future through the eyes of the past, suggests that ***mind set changes*** is where it all has to start, even before one can think of the use of design to achieve any lasting solution.

The earth's resources are always scarce at any point in time, because the need for them is seemingly always bigger than their availability – especially in the presence of open-minded people and their many innovative ideas.

Stakeholders: It may be helpful to identify, the right number of categories of stakeholders that serve to cover a wider spectrum of representatives for wider views. Some people have solutions to certain problems but are never afforded the platform to air their views because of the language barrier, education or even age gaps. Widening the net may catch more fish - that is, more ideas that could lead to solutions. Ideas steaming from different platforms may help broaden the quality of the solutions like the beauty of a rainbow amid its various colours, or the honey sweetness that arises from an array of pollen from many different flowers.

Persons as young as primary school children may be considered, through creation of competitions to promote awareness and draw ideas from them, for example: asking them to express what planet earth is and the resources that are extracted from it through drawings (to give a fair chance for many who find difficult to express themselves in an essay but can draw). *A story is told of a truck that got stranded due to a fly-over bridge that was crossing its path. The driver and those with him failed to find a solution as they could not just off-load the goods. After a whole day of contemplation, some little children playing nearby, (when finally allowed to give their input) suggested the tyres be deflated and for the vehicle to then be pushed through. It worked! The tyres were then pumped back after the truck passed through.*

The older citizens of the world are also often overlooked. The African culture in its wider context recognizes that older people may contribute to sustainable solutions in conflict resolutions. It may therefore be said that finding a way to also include them may be helpful because they may know a thing or two that could bring about good solutions.

I am interested in joining both the ICED21 Conference and the AFRICA DESIGN workshop.