

SUPPORTING A COMMUNITY THROUGH DESIGN: MELVILLE, JOHANNESBURG

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Abstract

In 2012 the Melville Community Development Organisation (MCDO) approached the Department of Strategic Communications at the University of Johannesburg for a collaboration between the University and the Melville community, with the support of the Melville Residence Association (MRA). These Melville institutions requested groups of Honours students to research and propose a solution for the urban degeneration within the area, as perceived by its businesses, tourists and residents. After extensive research the majority of the Honours students in Strategic Communications recommended that Melville should follow in the footsteps of the Madibeng area and Braamfontein, both in Johannesburg's central business district, as well as other international examples like London's Camden Town and Overhoeks, Amsterdam, to design a brand for the area. The University of Johannesburg's Department of Graphic Design BTech class of 2013 was consequently approached to apply the research in the form of a brand for Melville.

From interviews with various stakeholders and interested parties within Melville, however, it became clear the community's more settled bohemian residents pride themselves on their individualism, and that they would not be open to one singular brand for their suburb. Their response correlated with a similar reaction in Hamburg, Germany, where residents openly rebelled against what they perceived as a brand that was enforced on their community without their approval (Beckman & Zenker 2012). The interviews also confirmed the theory of user experience design that socially responsible design should in practice not be about the designer, but rather about the experiences of the community utilising and viewing the designs.

The sixteen Graphic Design students were thus tasked with identifying an existing challenge or community initiative and its stakeholders, with the help of the MCDO and MRA. By supporting and strengthening, or creating new so-called sub-brands, the perceived 'umbrella' brand of Melville could potentially be strengthened. The end-goal of the project was implementable design solutions that could potentially boost tourism, bolster economic growth, encourage new residents to buy property and stimulate community participation. This paper reflects upon the challenges and complexities inherent in the task of urban regeneration through branding and presents several case studies of the Graphic Design students' design solutions, including how problems were perceived and conceptualised and how the designs were received by the Melville community and individual stakeholders.

In this paper I argue that communication design can be positioned as a discipline that can help solve problems within communities in impactful and innovative ways, if the community is allowed to be involved in the shaping of the project. By framing design projects as a problem-led praxis situated within and constrained by complex communities, students learn skills that allow them to enter the world as aware innovators who feel comfortable approaching communities to offer support through socially relevant and responsible design.

Keywords: *Communication design, branding, urban regeneration, Melville.*

Introduction

In 2012 the Melville Community Development Organisation (MCDO) approached the Department of Strategic Communications at the University of Johannesburg for a collaboration between the University and the Melville community, with the support of the Melville Residence Association (MRA). These Melville institutions requested groups of Honours students to research and propose a solution for the urban degeneration within the area, as perceived by its businesses, tourists and residents (Modiba 2012:1). Students were asked to find solutions to market and develop "the broader Melville community as an embracing, dynamic, diverse and progressive community, (...) preserve the heritage (including) history, architecture and natural resources(...) and to promote a vibrant and sustainable business community" (Lambert, Fortuin, Calteaux & Bezuidenhout 2012: 3).

After extensive research the majority of the Honours students in Strategic Communications recommended that Melville should follow in the footsteps of the Madibeng area and Braamfontein, both in Johannesburg's central business district, as well as other international examples like London's Camden Town and Overhoeks, Amsterdam, to design a destination or place brand for the area (Achary, Bvuma, Modiba & Schwartz 2012: 2).

Place or destination branding can be defined as "...(u)sing the qualities, images and, in most cases, stereotypes of the place and the people living in that place to (create a) brand" (Kavaratzis 2006: 2). According to Beckman and Zenker (2012:2) a place brand is a "... network of associations in the consumer's mind based on the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values and general culture of the place's stakeholders..." The city "... takes its form, content and meaning in peoples' minds. People 'meet' and understand cities through accepting their own perceptions and processing those perceptions into their own understandable image of the city." This image created by both residents and visitors is similar to how consumers view products and companies, both managed through branding. By this reasoning "...in essence, people create brand associations with cities and evaluate these associations in the same way as they evaluate associations of other brands. In other words, people understand cities in the same way as they understand brands..." (Kavaratzis 2006: 1). By improving people's perceptions of Melville, and thus its brand, its economy could potentially be managed better and improved.

In the past few years there has been increased competition amongst international cities to attract funds, foreign investments, business relocations, tourists, and residents. As people, capital and knowledge are becoming less location-specific, developing places as brands helps promote an environment capable of attracting new activities and key groups (Konecnik-Ruzzier & Petek, 2013:45). The reputation of a destination thus needs to be attractive and relevant to a variety of target markets in order to attract new businesses, investors, residents, tourists etc. (Herstein, 2012:1). Melville has in recent years started facing more competition from surrounding areas like Parkhurst and Greenside for new business, tourists, nightlife and new residents (Lambert, Fortuin, Calteaux & Bezuidenhout 2012: 9-11).

On 11 January 2013 Rene Benecke from the Department of Strategic Communications, along with Marie-Lais Emond from the MCOD, approached the University of Johannesburg's Department of Graphic Design BTech class of 2013 to apply the research in the form of a place brand for Melville. From interviews with various stakeholders and interested parties within Melville, however, it became clear the community's more settled bohemian residents pride themselves on their individualism, and that they would not be open to one singular brand or logo for their suburb. Many of the 2012 Honours studies had specifically highlighted this level of individualism, as well as the more problematic lack of unity (Achary, Bvuma, Modiba & Schwartz 2012: 16). Melville residents' response correlated with a similar reaction in Hamburg, Germany, where residents openly rebelled against what they perceived as a brand that was enforced on their community without their approval (Beckman & Zenker 2012:5). The interviews also confirmed the theory of community-based design that socially

responsible design should in practice not be about the designer, but rather about the experiences of the community utilising and viewing the designs (Shea 2012: 110).

Through various further conversations, specifically with Marie-Lais Emond from the MCDO in February, 2013, it was decided that the Btech Graphic Design students would still continue with the community engagement project within Melville. The project would instead focus on aspects of place branding such as sub-brands, as well as some of the problems highlighted by the 2012 Strategic Communications honours students.

In this paper, I reflect upon the challenges and complexities inherent in the task of urban regeneration through branding and presents several case studies of the Graphic Design students' design challenges, engagement strategies, design solutions, outcomes of the projects as well as the lessons individual students learned. These case studies include how problems were perceived and conceptualised, the designs themselves and how the projects were received by the Melville community and individual stakeholders, where relevant. I argue that communication design can be positioned as a discipline that can help solve problems within communities in impactful and innovative ways, if the community is allowed to be involved in the shaping of the project. By framing design projects as a problem-led praxis situated within and constrained by complex communities, students learn skills that allow them to enter the world as aware innovators who feel comfortable approaching communities to offer support through socially relevant and responsible design.

Body: Building Melville's brand through its initiatives, culture and entertainment

The sixteen Graphic Design students were tasked with identifying an existing challenge or community initiative and its stakeholders, with the help of the MCDO and MRA. Students were briefed to "(d)velop and promote the broader Melville precinct (Melville, Auckland Park, Westdene) as a unique, enchanting, suburban village within the greater Johannesburg through branding, either for current community initiatives and cultural events that need a brand and campaign, or a viable precinct brand (with all its elements) for the area and its surrounds or other identifiable media" (Van Zyl, 2012:2).

By creating, supporting and strengthening new so-called sub-brands or flagship projects, the perceived 'umbrella' brand of Melville could also be strengthened. According to Mihalis Kavaratzis from the Urban and Regional Studies Institute of the University of Groningen, "...(e)specially the organisation of small or bigger scale art, sport and other types of events and festivals are seen as instrumental in establishing and reinforcing the place's brand" (2006:1). "Culture in the form of urban history, architecture, cultural facilities and events is the main ingredient of city promotion campaigns (Kunzmann, 2004 in Kavaratzis 2008: 4). Culture also strengthens the city's identity or as Kunzmann (2004) puts it, "...in times of globalisation local identity has become a key concern and the arts are, apart from landscape features, the only local asset to display such difference (...) the cultural content remains the last bastion of local identity" (2004:387)" (Kavaratzis 2008: 4).

When developing a relevant brand or identity, especially in place branding, a variety of stakeholders need to be interviewed on their needs, desires and vision on their area. For that reason various interested, involved and passionate members from the surrounding community were identified and requested to attend the briefing at Melon Restaurant in 7th Street, Melville on Monday, 25 February 2013 at 12:00. Each one of the community members is a knowledgeable stakeholder within the precinct, involved in one or more community initiative(s), which were viewed as sub-brands to a greater community brand or identity. After sharing general information on the community projects with the various interested parties, students were required to interview individual stakeholders on their projects, the area, as well as on what each stakeholder would require from communication designers for his or her specific project.

The case studies presented in the rest of this paper are based on feedback forms completed by the students at the end of the project, personal blogs students kept to track their projects as well as the final presentations.

Case Study: 'Jo'burg City Bylaws' by Jamie Camfferman

Design Challenge

Nicky Rofail, one of the managing members of the MRA, gave Jamie Camfferman the challenge to help educate new and existing residents of Melville regarding Johannesburg's by-laws. The laws were chosen specifically to address the current problems in the area. Jamie needed to get the message across in an efficient and aesthetically pleasing manner, using the MRA's corporate colours. (Camfferman 2013: ujmelville.blogspot.com/2013_02_27_archive.html)

Engagement strategy

After an initial visit by Nicky Rofail to the class on the 27th of February, Jamie learned that Melville is viewed as a suburb people visit, but that the MRA wished it to also be a good suburb for people to live as well (Camfferman 2013: http://ujmelville.blogspot.com/2013_02_27_archive.html). Jamie's engagement strategy was, through various interviews and e-mail correspondence with Nicky Rofail, to decide which of the hundreds of by-laws were of real importance to the MRA, and then summarise them. Nicky and Jamie both agreed that it was better to make the residents happy and comfortable first before trying to attract tourists, as this would be a natural consequence when the community is content. Together they came up with the slogan "Melville: the heart of Jo-burg culture". Her main target market would be prospective residents of Melville, and her secondary target market would be current residents (Camfferman 2013:

http://ujmelville.blogspot.com/2013_03_08_archive.html). Jamie also designed a poll to ascertain the current level of knowledge on the by-laws within the community. This poll was e-mailed to residents with the help of Nicky. From the poll it became apparent that residents only had partial knowledge of the by-laws, confirming the necessity of the project (Camfferman 2013: ujmelville.blogspot.com/2013_03_11_archive.html).

Whilst at times frustrating, Jamie found it helpful to work with an existing, unique client with specific requirements, rather than just following a general brief supplied by her department.

Design strategy

The project's design strategy was to create a booklet that summarises Johannesburg's bylaws into concise, easily understood typographical paragraphs in a pocket-sized A5 booklet. The booklet focuses on laws specifically for outdoor advertising, informal trading, pets, public health and hygiene, accommodation establishments, pest control, litter, noise control and public spaces. Jamie made the designs simple and aesthetically pleasing, in order to make them more palatable to the residents. This look and feel, based on the MRA's corporate identity, will potentially enhance Melville's brand (Camfferman 2012: http://ujmelville.blogspot.com/2013_03_17_archive.html). The booklet is supposed to be available on its own through the MRA and online through their website and as a Smartphone application. Individual pages could also be taken out, enlarged and used as posters. The booklet will also be available as part of a 'Welcome Kit' designed for new Melville residents. The kit also includes a safety whistle, license disc sticker, USB flash drive and a loyalty card to support local businesses. Each element also directs residents to the Melville Smartphone application, helping to create dialogue, enhance communication and create a sense of community, with a focus on safety within the Melville precinct (Camfferman 2013: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gk9pr2pqbnzddo/mIYVM6AB8J>).



Figure 1: By-law booklet, loyalty card, license disk sticker, panic whistle, flash drive and smart phone application.

Outcomes

The MRA plans to have the booklet printed when funding permits and made available to the general population of Melville (Camfferman 2013: ujmelville.blogspot.com/2013_03_26_archive.html). The project has also been entered in the 2013 Loerie awards for excellent design.

Case Study: 'The Melville Architectural tour' by Osmond Tshuma

Design Challenge

Osmond Tshuma wanted to find a cheaper form of entertainment that would help highlight the strengths of Melville. He also strove to promote daytime tourism in the area as a whole, not just in 7th street, and to help improve Melville's image (Tshuma 2013: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gk9pr2pqbzddo/mIYVM6AB8J>). On his first visit to Melville he was impressed by the wide variety of architecture in Melville, ranging from Victorian, Art Deco and 70s modernist buildings to interesting new designs by architects and interior designers in the area (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/melville-swot-analysis.html>). Osmond thus decided to develop an architectural tour of the area.

Engagement strategy

Osmond worked closely with Marie-Lais Emond from the MCOB to develop the tour via e-mail. Through his correspondence with her he was introduced to Monika Läufer & Judith Mavunganidze, TSICA Architectural Heritage consultants, who had completed an architectural survey of Melville in 2008. Their research included floor plans, architectural drawings, old photographs and histories for many of the historically relevant buildings in the suburb (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/email-from-marie-lais-mond.html>). TSICA was excited by Osmond's project and gave him permission to use their images and research to strengthen his designs for the tour (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/meetings.html>). He also interviewed residents from the area,

including Denver Hendricks, a lecturer in Architecture at UJ (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/architectural-research.html>), as well as members of the Melville Kruisgemeente about their church building's history (<http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/melville-meetings.html>). Sadly, most of the owners of the restored historical buildings that he wished to include, were not willing to participate or to be interviewed (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/meetings.html>).

Design strategy

Osmond wanted the booklet and marketing materials to be educational, elegant, historically themed and inexpensive to reproduce (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/melville-architectural-tour-branding.html>). The logo is inspired by the Edwardian architecture in Melville, specifically the beautiful pressed ceilings still found in many of the houses, as well as the Victorian illuminated letters. The brand identity places two ideas in juxtaposition: the Victorian classic design of the logo and the modern design of the *sans serif* font, inspired by the modern architecture that will also be included in the tour (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/creative-built.html>).



Figure 2: Melville Architectural Tour logo

Figure 3: Tour Plaque

Osmond furthermore designed plaques to be placed on architectural structures featured on the tour. Initially the plaques were meant to be made of wood, but after various consultations he changed it to engraved steel due to its durability (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/creative-mock-ups.html>). The plaques contain relevant information about the featured building, such as the construction date and history (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/concept.html>).



Figure 4 & 5: A6 tour booklet

Tourists will be able to buy an A6 tour booklet, available at featured buildings, galleries and stores in the area for ten rand. These black and white pocket-sized booklets include a map of the area, old photographs, floor plans and architectural drawings (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/marketing-plan.html>). All proceeds from the sale of the booklet will go towards printing, marketing, as well as to an urban architectural regeneration fund to restore more buildings in the area (Tshuma 2013: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gk9pr2pqbnzddo/mIYVM6AB8J>).



Figure 6: Smart phone application.

Osmond also designed a smart phone application as an alternative option to the tour booklet. The application will enable visitors to follow the tour using their smart phones. The application will be linked to a Melville Architecture Tour website and Facebook page. Visitors can also use their smart phones to take pictures of their tour to be posted on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram through the App. The application will be available for download on the iStore and will cost the same as the pocket-sized booklet. All proceeds from the sale of the application will also go towards

printing, marketing and the urban architectural regeneration fund, in order to restore more buildings in the area (Tshuma 2013: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gk9pr2pqbznzddo/mIYVM6AB8J>).



Figure 7: A1 poster



Figure 8: A branded Tuk-tuk

The tour will be marketed using A1 black & white posters, which can also be re-sized to A5 flyers. The posters and flyers will be placed around Braamfontein, Westdene, Auckland Park and Melville to inform tourists on the Melville Architectural Tour (Tshuma 2013: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gk9pr2pqbznzddo/mIYVM6AB8J>).

Visitors will also be able to take the Melville Architectural Tour with the E-Tuk Tuk taxis, marketing both the tour and this unique, cheap, energy efficient taxi service, unique to the Melville area. Tours can be co-ordinated by a Melville resident, by a Tuk-tuk driver or by the tourists themselves. More buildings can be incorporated into the tour in the future if more home, restaurant and B&B owners volunteer to be on the tour (Tshuma 2013: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gk9pr2pqbznzddo/mIYVM6AB8J>).

Outcomes

The client was happy with the final designs. The project will be handed to the MCOB for potential implementation. The project's success depends on the stakeholders, who were not all interested in participating in the tour (Tshuma 2013: <http://melvilleat.blogspot.com/2013/03/meetings.html>). The project has also been entered in the 2013 Loerie awards for excellent design.

Case Study: 'Walk Melville', by Philile Sithole

Initial Design Challenge

Philile Sithole chose to tackle the serious issue of Melville residents' and tourists' perceptions of crime in the area (Sithole 2013: <http://stopbeingafraidmelville.blogspot.com/2013/04/stop-being-afraid-of-melville.html>). Philile wanted to inform residents especially of the big improvements regarding security made by the MRA, Melville Security Initiative and the Melville Sector Crime Forum in the suburb (Sithole 2013: <http://stopbeingafraidmelville.blogspot.com/2013/03/the-melville-security-initiative.html>). She also wanted to make residents feel safer without increasing the number of security guards, as well as to get the community actively involved in working against crime in the area by taking back their streets (Sithole 2013: 6).

Engagement Strategy

Philile based most of her work on research found on the Melville Security Initiative's website as well as on e-mail correspondence with its chairperson, Peter Rolfe (Sithole 2013: <http://stopbeingafraidmelville.blogspot.com/2013/04/stop-being-afraid-of-melville.html>).

Initial Design Strategy: 'Stop being afraid, Melville.'

Philile Sithole initially worked on an awareness campaign to inform members of Melville of the increased security in the area. She named her campaign 'Stop being afraid, Melville', based on graffiti she had observed on her first visit to the area (Sithole 2013: <http://stopbeingafraidmelville.blogspot.com/2013/04/stop-being-afraid-of-melville.html>).



Figure 9: 'Stop being afraid of Melville' sign



Figure 10: Promotional bag

Philile wanted to place posters and signs in various streets of Melville. Her main message with the signs would be to encourage people to not be afraid of walking around in Melville, as well as to make it clear to potential criminals that the community is working together against crime. Residents would be invited to wear promotional items to show their support of the security initiatives. Philile also wanted to hand out little promotional packs containing a map of crime hot spots in Melville and surrounds, a brochure on getting to know one's neighbours and on ways in which a neighbourhood watch could be facilitated, important security phone numbers and web addresses, as well as safety tips (Sithole 2013: <http://stopbeingafraidmelville.blogspot.com/2013/04/stop-being-afraid-of-melville.html>).

After Philile had completed her campaign she showed the designs to classmates as well as to Peter Rolfe on 4 April. Peter and her classmates agreed that the campaign had too many negative connotations. Philile chose to relook her campaign and change the message (Sithole 2013: Feedback form).

New Design challenge

In her initial research Philile had found various interesting articles on 'walkable' cities and on ways in which more residential foot traffic could increase the security of an area. She loved the idea of safe walking routes

with a pleasant atmosphere. According to Jeff Speck's book *A Walkable City*, walking routes have to be useful, safe, comfortable and interesting. This would also lessen traffic on Melville's roads. When people feel safe and secure in an area they spend more time there and spread the area's virtues through word-of-mouth. Making Melville a more 'walkable' suburb thus became her new design strategy (Sithole 2013: <http://stopbeingafraidmelville.blogspot.com/2013/03/security.html>).

Philile's design strategy was greatly influenced by a guerrilla way finding campaign by Matt Tomasulo, *WALK [YOUR CITY]*. Matt wanted to encourage his neighbours to walk instead of drive in the city of Raleigh. Matt posted signs with walking times and directions to various destinations. They were such a hit that, although the City took them down due to the lack of a permit, it immediately began a pilot program to use them officially. Tomasulo decided to encourage other cities to do the same (Tomasulo 2012: <http://walkyourcity.org>). Philile liked the simplicity of the campaign and wanted to combine this with *A Walkable City's* ideas of walking routes for Melville (Sithole 2013: <http://stopbeingafraidmelville.blogspot.com/2013/03/cool-city-campaigns.html>).

Final Design Strategy: 'Walk Melville'



Figure 11: 'Walk Melville' logo

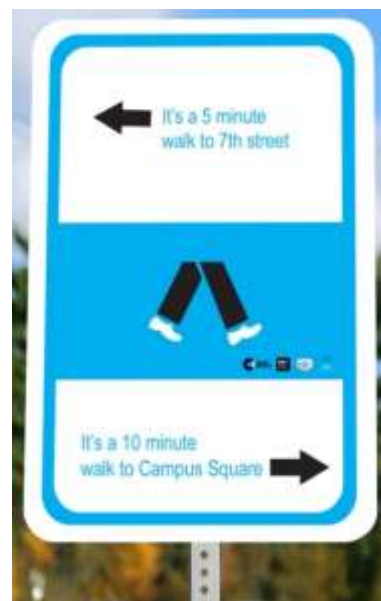


Figure 12: A2 Streetpole poster

The new campaign would inform residents of distances and time it would take to walk to relevant places in Melville through A2 Street pole adverts in various locations in Melville. The adverts also contain a Quick Response (QR) code which pedestrians can scan using their smart phone to obtain information on their current location as well as see where they are on a greater map of Melville. The goal of the campaign would be to encourage more residential pedestrians to explore Melville and all it has to offer, as well as inform passersby of interesting and useful sites in the area. Walking routes, health and safety tips and information on Melville security projects would be handed out to people in the form of a booklet (Sithole 2013: 8). Envelopes containing the brochures would also be handed out by real estate agents to new residents of Melville (Sithole 2013: 15). Philile hoped her new campaign would link up with the various security initiatives in Melville, and in the end extended to a Walkathon (Sithole 2013: 8).

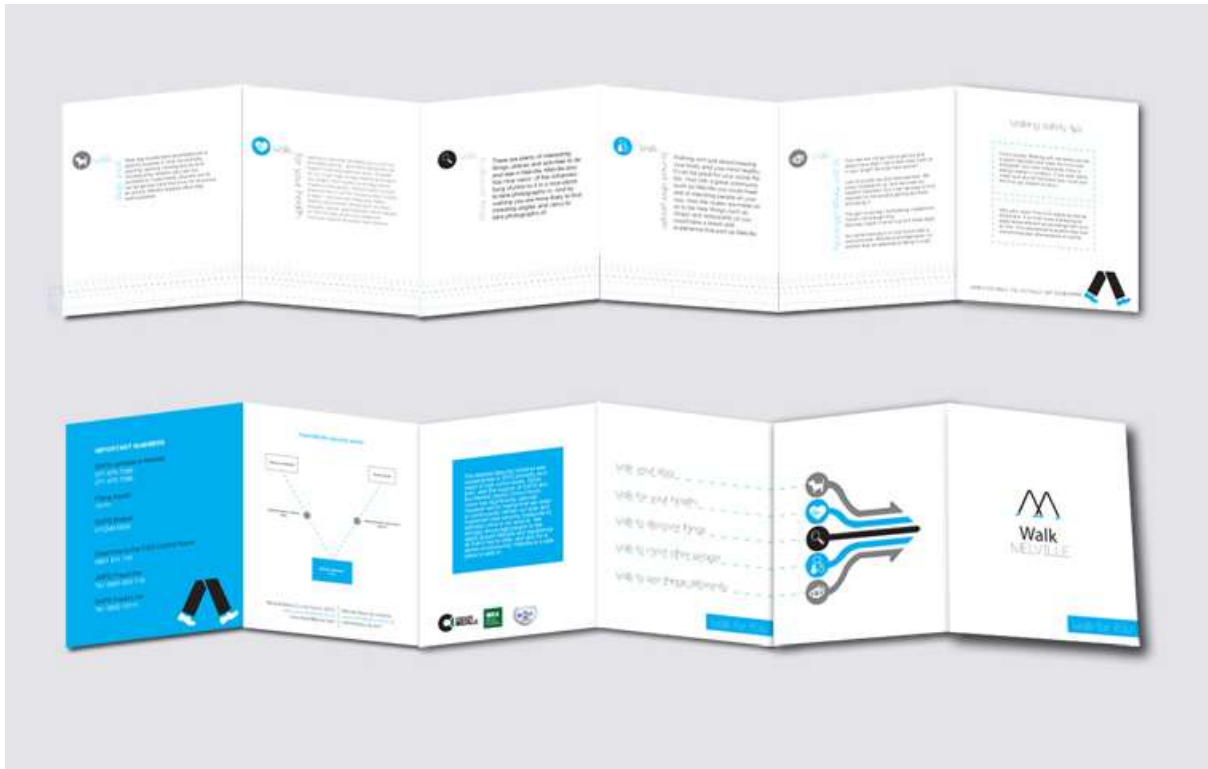


Figure 13: 'Walk Melville' booklet

Outcomes

Phile's new campaign was received favourably by her client. Within a very short time span, due to proper initial research, she managed to turn a negative campaign into a positive well-rounded campaign (Sithole 2013, <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3n62rsvroaf5jo5/-ReM3hvljw>).

Other projects

The three detailed case studies were not the only successful campaigns, as is demonstrated by a summary of a few other successful projects by the students:

David Mabotja wanted to design a project to promote Melville as a community, in order to encourage more community engagement and to celebrate the suburb's unique charm. His campaign strategy was to place more lights in the residential areas of Melville by means of solar light jars. Residents of Melville, specifically but not solely families, would be encouraged to purchase a kit consisting of a CONSOL Solar powered jar (to conserve energy), sheets of coloured paper for origami designs, instructions for folding the paper and a calendar. Residents would be encouraged to put the solar lights outside their front door or gate with a coloured piece of origami inside. Residents could change the origami piece each month to coincide with a current local event, such as the Melville Poetry festival in October, or with a public holiday or season, such as autumn or Valentine's Day. These added street lights would increase safety and security, evoke a sense of community and bring more colour to the residential parts of Melville. These lights could also promote ways to save energy, community engagement and communicate events within the community, as well as encourage tourism within the area by adding to the Melville magic (Mabotja 2013: 3-4).



Figure 14 & 15: 'Melville Lights' Campaign by David Mabotja

Ayanda Mbanjwa, as part of her research, went out in Melville's 7th Street for her birthday on the 9th of March and interviewed her friends on the experience afterwards (Mbanjwa 2013: <http://musicalmelville.blogspot.com>). She also interviewed restaurant and club owners in 7th Street. Through her research she concluded that 7th Street is the cultural hub of Melville, that the nightlife in this street is very active and that it had a unique charm due to a lot of live music (Mbanjwa 2013: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3n62rsvroaf5jo5/-ReM3hVLjw>). Ayanda thus decided to design a brand, 'Musical Melville', to market the different genres of live music played in Melville, specifically in 7th street. The brand aimed to market the variety of music offered at the different venues, encourage clubs to introduce more musical genres to widen the market, help up and coming artists interact with successful artists in the music industry and co-ordinate and market live music events (Mbanjwa 2013: <http://musicalmelville.blogspot.com>). Ayanda designed a map of 7th Street, with icons showing what musical genres visitors could expect from the different clubs and restaurants. To market the brand and the events she designed a flyer, posters, business cards, branded stationary and banners. The flyers would include the map as well as information about events and performances taking place. She also designed promotional items such as canvas tote bags, CD sleeves, t-shirts, stickers, coasters, a promotional CD, badges and headphones. For more detailed promotion Ayanda designed a website to market the brand, bands, performances and events. The website would also contain an interactive map and an up-to-date photo gallery where people can view photos of the different events. Visitors will also be able to upload images of their experiences at these events (Mbanjwa 2013: 3).



Figure 16: 'Musical Melville' website by Ayanda

Mbanjwa

Seres Oliver chose to promote the high number of artists operating in Melville. Seres was inspired by Sally Whines from the Melville Temporary Contemporary's presentation of the annual event where participating artists open up their homes and studios to the public in order to exhibit and sell their art. Seres liked the idea of helping local artists sell their work, but she wanted it to be a more permanent initiative (Oliver 2013: <http://seresbo.blogspot.com>). Seres's design strategy was to create a network for local artists, shop and restaurant owners within Melville named 'The Melville Art Connection' (TMAC). Artists and shop owners can register as members on the TMAC's website. Once shops and restaurants join they receive a sticker for their front window. Customers will thus be informed that they can purchase original artworks in the venue. Shops receive a small percentage of the profits made from the sale, as well as free advertising on TMAC's website. Artists who register on the website will be featured with a small biography and examples of their latest work. Exhibitions will also be marketed on the website (Oliver 2013: 4).

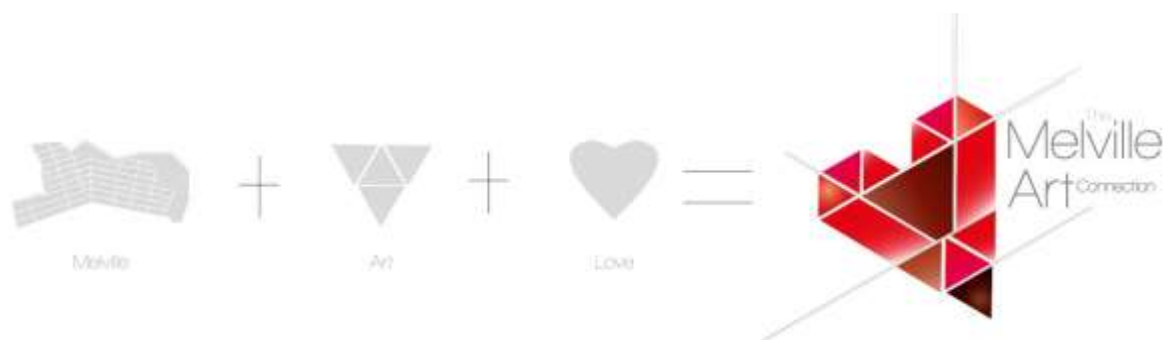


Figure 17: Logo conceptualisation for 'The Melville Art Connection' website by Seres Oliver

Student Feedback

Students were requested to complete feedback forms on their experiences and on the lessons learned during the project. They also had to describe how their clients influenced their work, as well as the biggest challenges in the brief. Most students stated that they had enjoyed working with an actual community, as well as doing research within a real space.

Osmond Thsuma firstly stated in his personal feedback form that he had loved the high level of engagement with the client and residents regarding the research. He says that he learned to "design for people, not for designers". Osmond also learned to work on a tight budget, which greatly influenced his designs as well as his chosen media. In the end he was highly satisfied with his final designs and found it to be a wonderful, challenging project (Thsuma 2013, <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3n62rsvroaf5jo5/-ReM3hvljw>).

From this project Philile Sithole learned to reflect on how people perceive specific developments in their area, for example: if residents observe more security guards in their area they could view it as unsafe. In the same way her 'Stop being afraid, Melville' campaign could in fact make residents feel less secure (Sithole 2013: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3n62rsvroaf5jo5/-ReM3hvljw>).

David Mabotja mentioned that he was initially concerned about coming up with a good concept because of the open brief (Mabotja 2013, <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3n62rsvroaf5jo5/-ReM3hvljw>).

Ayanda Mbanjwa learned the importance of being in constant communication with her clients. She observed that listening to the client was very important "... because at the end of the day you are working towards meeting their needs" (Mbanjwa 2013, <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3n62rsvroaf5jo5/-ReM3hvljw>).

Seres Oliver remarked that working with interested stakeholders and an actual client helped to highlight and solve potential technical difficulties, as well as to gain insight in their concerns. She found assisting her clients come up with solutions to real-world problems the most enjoyable part of the project (Oliver 2013, <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3n62rsvroaf5jo5/-ReM3hvLjw>).

Conclusion

This paper examines some of the problems and complications of community engagement, with a focus on urban regeneration and branding within a city. Three case studies were discussed in detail and three briefly, with a focus on the project's scope, students' engagement with the community, the design outcomes, the community's reception of the work as well as the insights students gained from the project. These projects prove that communication design as a discipline can aid urban renewal, if the correct stakeholders are identified and consulted during the research and design process. Most students confirmed in their feedback that, whilst it was challenging to make contact with community members, the feedback greatly improved and guided their designs. Communication Design as a discipline can aid social development and urban renewal within communities, but only if the relevant people are involved and receptive to the support. In the end, effective communication designers do not design "for" the community, but "with" the community.

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¹ As an example, within the Christian religion (and indeed in most religions) the notion of "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" can be rephrased as "allow others to do unto you and you would *want* to do unto them." Placing the indigenous community and the researcher in this situation encourages the researcher to consider whether what he or she is planning to do, he or she would allow to be done to him or her. In a crude example, if the design research 'takes' designs from a community, would he or she be comfortable with allowing the community to take something from him or her -- in research one might assume that the latter case could be considered a form of plagiarism! The question, therefore, in terms of ethics, is whether the design researcher isn't, in the former case, also committing "plagiarism." By addressing reciprocity in this manner,

we argue that the researcher is engaged in his or her research project from the point of view of the participants. Ironically, this is exactly the perspective that most Ethics committees should (and do) take. However, speculatively, many Ethics committees still bring a western paradigm to bear on their understanding of the rights of the 'indigenous community'

ⁱⁱ This should be seen against the plethora of bills and acts that govern the ethics of research in medical and environmental areas, for example.

ⁱⁱⁱ Two examples illustrate potential conundrums. Firstly in the African ethical realm of 'uBuntu' inclusion is encouraged and accepted, yet western research often does not 'include' the community in the research process, and the act of 'participation' is conceived only from the point of view of the researcher – the community 'participates' in his or her research, but the research does not 'participate' in the community. Secondly, in many African communities, strong lines of patriarchy and autocracy are practiced – seen by many western researchers as an anathema to the liberation of women, the rights of the individual and the democratic process. Seen from 'within' the community, however, these areas may not be problematic. Munro's personal experience in this area speaks to how Ethics committees do wrestle with this conundrum.

^{iv} It is interesting to note that increasingly men are being depicted in sexually objectified ways in consumer media (Rohlinger 2002; Schroeder and Zwick 2004).

^v The themes 'Feminine touch', 'Function ranking', 'The ritualisation of subordination', and 'Licensed withdrawal', are based on Goffman's (1979) early framework in *Gender advertisements* yet continue to be relevant in the work of contemporary scholars (see Borgerson & Schroeder 2002, 2005; Jhally 2009; Kang 1997; Morna & Ndlovu 2007; Stamps & Golombisky 2013).

^{vi} On a more positive note, some beauty brands such as Dove for example, are working towards more constructive portrayals of women by using more realistic standards for the body type and weight of the models in their advertising campaigns.

^{vii} The Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa (see www.asasa.org.za) regulates images of explicit sex and violence within South Africa media, however, as in any globalised media space, these and similar types of images are freely available on the Internet and in imported magazines.

^{viii} While one must heed against oversimplifying African hair styling practices, such as straightening or the use of weaves, necessarily as a negation of ethnicity and the valorisation of Western ideals, one must also acknowledge South Africa's destructive apartheid legacy and racist classification practices that ostracised physical features of black ethnicities (Erasmus 1997, p. 12).