

DEVELOPMENT OF A FIBRE-ARTS DESIGN PROJECT  
WITH THE ELDERLY IN THE WESTERN CAPE

by  
CHRISTEL STIPP  
2009

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**DEVELOPMENT OF A FIBRE-ARTS DESIGN PROJECT  
WITH THE ELDERLY IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

by

**CHRISTEL STIPP**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

**Magister Technologiae: Design**

**in the Faculty of Informatics and Design  
at the**

**CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**Supervisor: Alettia Chisin**

**Co-supervisor: Mel Hagen**

**Co-Supervisor: Erika Elk**

**Cape Town**

**July 2009**

## ABSTRACT

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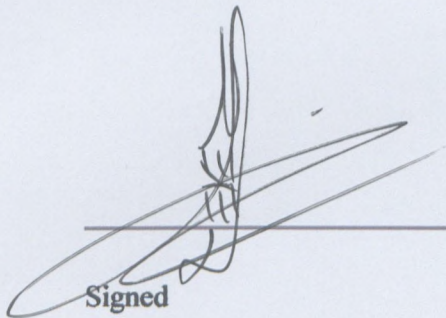
The focus of the Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP) was to address issues of ageism in South Africa, particularly focusing on addressing the elderly's socio-economic well-being in Cape Town. This was achieved through the creation and implementation of a socially designed programme that was specifically aimed at empowering the elderly through the implementation of craft skills-training, as well as through the development and fabrication of a marketable women's accessory range. The FADP, which is a socially driven, income-generating model, improved the elderly's craft skills and revived hands-on creativity, as well as preserved and restored some of the elderly's disused and forgotten traditional craft skills and techniques.

The success of the FADP is also attributed largely to its investment in people, whilst simultaneously and actively promoting strategies of knowledge and skills creation as a preferred and viable path to sustaining a community's creative and economic life. This is an important aspect when implementing social design programmes amongst similar particular disadvantaged communities and ensuring their sustainability.

## DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

---

I, Christel Stipp, hereby declare that the contents of this dissertation represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Cape Town.



Signed

15/02/2010.

Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I wish to offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks to the following persons and establishments who assisted me with the preparation and completion of my thesis. Without your involvement, support and encouragement, this thesis would not have been possible.

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

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### **EVENING HANDBAG**

A decorative and frivolous bag created for glamour, and is only large enough to house the essentials.

### **LUXURY HANDBAG**

A bag that aspires to be a work of art and is prized for its intrinsic value. They are renowned for their handcraftsmanship, the beauty of their designs and uniqueness of the materials from which they are manufactured

### **NOVELTY HANDBAG**

A bag designed to amuse and push the artistic language of the handbag into the realm of theatre. These provocative bags are modelled into any shape imaginable.

### **PRACTICAL HANDBAGS**

A bag designed to carry the necessities of everyday life. Construction and functionalism, rather than ornamentation are the dominant characteristics that differentiate the **practical bag** from other handbags.

**SOCIAL DESIGN**

The foremost intent of social design is to address the human needs of particular marginalized communities. This is accomplished through the utilization of various design-related practitioners and solutions which offer both sustainability and continuity between market design and social design development.

**STATUS ICONIC HANDBAG**

A bag that provides subtle luxury and minimalist chic, whilst simultaneously proclaiming both status and substance. This is attained through the use of its name or logo, in addition to the utilization of handcraftsmanship and luxurious materials.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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<b>AFH</b>	Architecture for Humanity
<b>BOLD</b>	Building Opportunities and Livelihoods
<b>CCDI</b>	Cape Craft and Design Institute
<b>CHF</b>	Co-operative Housing Foundation International
<b>DAA</b>	Designer Achiever Awards
<b>FADP</b>	Fibre-Arts Design Project
<b>GAPA</b>	Grandmothers Against Poverty and Aids
<b>Icograda</b>	International Council of Graphic Design Associations
<b>ICSID</b>	International Council of Societies of Industrial Design
<b>IFI</b>	International Federation of Interior Architect/Designers
<b>NAB</b>	Natural and Beautiful
<b>NOAH</b>	Neighbourhood Old Age Homes
<b>PDFGS</b>	Product Design Focus Group Session
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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# CHAPTER ONE

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## 1 Introduction

The focus of this study is a community project aimed at empowering the aged through the implementation and development of a Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP). This thesis addresses issues of ageism in South Africa through the means of design. The study investigates those factors that promote or militate against the successful development of a FADP, based on the participation of two selected groups of elderly in Cape Town. This is done with a view to addressing the emotional and economic dependence of the elderly, as represented by the two groups.

### 1.1 Background to the study

There is a growing percentage of elderly citizens worldwide and especially in Southern Africa. Increased life expectancy, a decline in the birth and fertility rates, improvements in nutrition, basic health care and the control of many infectious diseases, are all factors that have caused marked changes to the demographic structures worldwide (United Nations Department of Public Information, 1998: 9 & Gaminiratne, 2004: 1). As a result, population ageing is no longer confined to the developed countries. This situation is placing more pressure on the economically active population for support. It has been forecast that 67% of the world's older people (597 million people older than 65) will be residing in developing countries by 2015 (Helpage International, 2006), while Noumbissi (2004: 1) and Kalasa (2001: 4) acknowledge that Africa will experience the highest elderly population growth rate in the world. It has been estimated that South Africa's total aged population alone will increase from 7.5% of the population in 2002 to 16% by the year 2050 (Legido-Quigley,



2003: 16). Kalasa (2001: 3) however predicts that the old age dependency ratio<sup>1</sup> in Africa will experience an increase of 95% between 1995 and 2050, which would result in only one worker supporting every pensioner.

## 1.2 Ageism in context

Ageism is a systematic process of stereotyping and discriminating against someone on account of their chronological age, just as racism and sexism is prejudice on the basis of race and gender. Segregation and denigration also occur due to ageism, as well as regular denial of access to resources and opportunities from which others might benefit (Bytheway, 1995: 9, 14 & 30).

As early as the 1980's, Botwinick (1981: 57 & 58), as well as Kart and Metress (1984: 179) observed that the social security systems in the developed world were taking great strain and would in due course collapse. The developed world is still currently tackling this dilemma; however, analysts at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in recent years have observed similar and identical trends emerging within the developing world's social security systems as well (Beales & Gorman, 2002: 11). Partly responsible is the increase in numbers of the elderly population globally, and the increased cost of public social programmes. As a consequence the working population will be unable or unwilling to bear the additional financial burden to support the increasing number of older people (Bytheway, 1995: 54). This trend (strained social security systems) is still seen, even though fixed retirement ages for people in reasonable physical and mental health have been relaxed considerably to prevent the pensions burden on the working population from becoming untenable. Many of the economically active however, fear that there will not be an adequate amount of retirement funds available to go around when they themselves reach retirement age (Shaw, 2002: 2). By 2050 merely three

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<sup>1</sup> Ratio of retired persons to the working population

workers will support the income costs for one elderly member of society in the U.S.A., whilst only one economically active member of society will be able to support the pension costs for one pensioner throughout Africa, including South Africa (Kalasa, 2001: 3 and Chickowski, 2005: 11). Mandatory retirement, and employers' insistence for the aged to make way for the younger generation, have also presented negative social and economic implications for the elderly (Bytheway, 1995: 100 – 105 and Wehner & Jørgensen, 2001: 5). Many studies have shown that the aged want to return to work to maintain a purpose in life, as well as to transfer knowledge and skills to the younger generation (Wehner & Jørgensen, 2001: 5 and Legido-Quigley, 2003: 25).

### **1.3 Rationale for the study**

This study drew strength from recent studies conducted by Chickowski (2005: 11), Jørgensen (2005: 62) and Greller (2006: 547) who provide strong arguments for the elderly's retention in the workforce, regardless of their age, if they desire to do so, or, if they have no choice. Keeping the aged at work ensures a reduction in labour shortages, the development of human capital, sustained profitability and productivity in a business, in addition to economic growth. Literature acknowledging the loss of irreplaceable levels of experience (including accumulated skills, knowledge and wisdom) due to retirement, just when these varied skills and experiences<sup>2</sup> could be of great benefit to the labour market, also informed and directed the study. Furthermore, ethical practices and sustainability, specifically focusing on helping to preserve traditional craft skills and knowledge, in addition to validating and promoting the capabilities of the elderly groups<sup>3</sup>, are aspects which guided this research project right from the outset. Additionally, social studies detailing the effects of the marginalisation of the

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<sup>2</sup> Known more specifically as intellectual capital.

<sup>3</sup> Known more specifically as human resource sustainability.

elderly (because of institutionalisation, amongst others) also outlined issues of loss of dignity and self-fulfilment as areas that need urgent attention.

This study is therefore aimed at addressing the sociological problems with which the elderly (as represented by the focus groups) in South Africa have to live. This study in addition examines whether the re-integration of the elderly into some form of economic activity and societal participation through a practical, creative and economically productive intervention, such as a FADP, could improve their well-being, re-establish some of their dignity and contribute to their self-determination, in short, empowerment of the aged. To ensure the success of this intervention, which draws on *Design for the World*<sup>4</sup> and *Architecture for Humanity*<sup>5</sup> models, together with some aspects of the *Creative Industries*<sup>6</sup> model, a new design for development model, balancing social responsibility concerns with profitability, is explored in this study.

### **1.3.1 Rationale for the utilization of fibre-arts**

A reaction against industrialization, mass-market consumerism, massive technological innovations and the fast pace of modern living, has brought about, amongst others, a worldwide revival for crafts, fibre-arts hand craftsmanship (Johnson, 2002: 83; Cameron, 2003 and Green, 2006), and even slow cooked food (Malatesta, Mesmain, Weiner & Yang, 2005: 42 & 43). Additionally, the desire of many women to get in touch with hands-on creativity, as well as the luxury, romance, splendour and the little tactile and visual imperfections that can only be found in individual handcrafted products, have also brought

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<sup>4</sup> An aid organisation dedicated to facilitating sustainable design and appropriate technologies in local communities around the world.

<sup>5</sup> A design-orientated charitable organisation that supports innovative design and the movement towards socially conscious design.

<sup>6</sup> High value-added industries whose origin lies in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have the potential to create wealth and job creation through the generation and utilization of intellectual property.

about a revival of hand craftsmanship (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 149; Johnson, 2002: 83 & 172; Cameron, 2003 and Green, 2006). The justification for the use of fibre-arts in this specific research project is further underpinned by the fact that after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre, a renewed concern for family and home was formed globally. Consequently, a greater interest in restoring craft skills came about (Green, 2006). A strong desire amongst many women also materialized for the return of Haute Couture fashion and heirlooms that can be passed on from generation to generation, items which make creative use of materials and are able to explicitly express one's individuality (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 142 – 143). The reaction is furthermore propelled by the fact that human values seem to be changing once more, away from consumerism, commercialism and unsustainable practices, to include meaning and relevance as significant aspects in our daily lives (Lochner, 2005: 7).

On the culinary front, Slow Food International is one such organization that is dedicated and committed to slowing down the pace of modern living through the revival and celebration of tasting and eating pleasurable food, whilst simultaneously defending biodiversity in the local food supply (Malatesta, Mesmain, Weiner & Yang, 2005: 5, 42 & 43).

#### **1.4 Involvement of the elderly in sustainable projects**

Many creative programmes have been developed to address the issues that the elderly face on a daily basis. For instance, in recent years, the United Nations organisation has developed various projects that require minimal effort and ability, whilst guaranteeing that the aged receive an adequate income (United Nations Organization, 2005). They include *Utilizing the Useless* in South Africa, *An Elder Resource* in Egypt and *Activity, its Own Medicine* in

Southern Ecuador. The “Third World Country” case study, in Southern Ecuador, where social and economic conditions are similar to those in South Africa, gives an indication of how worthwhile a similar community project may be to the aged in South Africa. The case study of the elderly in Valley Vilcambambain in Southern Ecuador, also demonstrates how South African and Ecuadorian approaches to preserving indigenous and creative knowledge, (such as weaving techniques, bronze casting, the making of copper wash tubs, herbal remedies and the making of hats from palm fibres) are in some cases very similar (Stoother, 1998).

In this study, the focus is specifically on the traditional and cultural aspects of craft activity, methods and creative techniques. Differences and similarities between the sample groups of elderly (sited in Khayelitsha and Woodstock) regarding these aspects are compared and reflected upon in the range of products created. In this way, a reciprocal exchange of knowledge and creative ideas between the researcher and focus groups has resulted.

### **1.5 Initial research impetus**

The overall well-being of the elderly was investigated in a B. Tech research project that I conducted in 2005. That particular research project, however, focused on helping to find solutions to the detrimental impact that institutional settings have on the elderly’s mental and physical well-being and how this could be prevented or minimized through the creation of fibre-art “gardens”. That project investigated the therapeutic benefits of knitted “garden” screens when used for privacy in rooms, courtyards and wards, as well as to provide an aesthetically enhanced environment (Stipp, 2004: 2). During this investigation, it became apparent that further research needed to be conducted regarding this specific marginalized group’s sociological and economic needs, especially with regards to alleviating poverty amongst the aged. Furthermore, I wanted to extend the boundaries of fashionable fibre-art

products, by exploring old and traditional craft techniques, and interpreting these into a new range of unique and contemporary women's accessories.

### **1.6 Aims of the study**

The aims of the study were to ascertain firstly whether the two elderly sample groups are in favour of working past the age of 65, and what other challenges they are confronted with, and whether these can also inform the proposed FADP. Secondly to design and create a range of women's accessories, in conjunction and in co-operation with the aged, ultimately to be marketed at selected outlets nationally and thereafter internationally. Thirdly, through the response to the creation and production process, to develop a framework for establishing and implementing a creative enterprise, which will have the potential to:

- Help alleviate economic and emotional dependence amongst a certain sector of the aged in the Western Cape.
- Help the elderly regain their independence, dignity and well-being by empowering them to become economically active and feeling part of society again.
- Be generalizable as a model to inform similar creative programmes.

### **1.7 Research questions**

1.7.1 What are the current economic, emotional and social factors impacting on the two elderly sample groups in Cape Town in the Western Cape?

1.7.2 Which framework may be established for the development and implementation of a sustainable creative enterprise that would address the current economic, emotional and social factors impacting on the two elderly sample groups?

1.7.3 Can a range of accessories successfully be produced co-operatively by the researcher and the focus group(s)?

### **1.8 Focus of the study**

The focus of the study is the development and implementation of a Fibre-Arts Design Project. The study is also aimed at raising awareness of the elderly's struggle with emotional, economic and social dependence. This is done against the background of educating a wider audience about the importance of the preservation and restoration of old and traditional wisdom, craft skills and techniques through the marketing of the range of women's accessories.

### **1.9 Contribution of the study**

This study investigates the social and economic problems of the elderly (as represented by the focus groups) from a creative perspective, and how, through a practical intervention, these problems can be addressed. Secondly, by establishing a framework and a set of guidelines, explore how the elderly in the focus groups initially, (and other sites thereafter) can be reintegrated into some form of economic activity and societal participation. A generalized development model was developed which can be used as a creative framework in similar sites. Finally, the resultant product range of women's accessories was tested in the market and is a business opportunity that I will continue with into the future.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### 2 Literature review

Ageing has been acknowledged as one of the greatest achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as a triumph of human development (World Health Organisation, 1993: 1; Kalasa, 2001: 13 & HelpAge International, 2001: 2). This phenomenon is attributed to technological breakthroughs in the field of medicine, including the development of new and effective drugs and vaccines, as well as improvements in nutrition, hygiene and access to health care services (Kalasa, 2001: 2 & Legido-Quigley, 2003: 14). This, coupled with the combination of a progressive increase in life expectancy (expected to increase worldwide by 11 years from 65 to 76 between 1995 and 2050, despite the impact of HIV/Aids) and a reduction in fertility rates<sup>7</sup> have resulted in ageing becoming universal and no longer being confined to the advanced economies (Legido-Quigley, 2003: 14; Gaminiratne, 2004: 1–2 & HelpAge International, 2006).

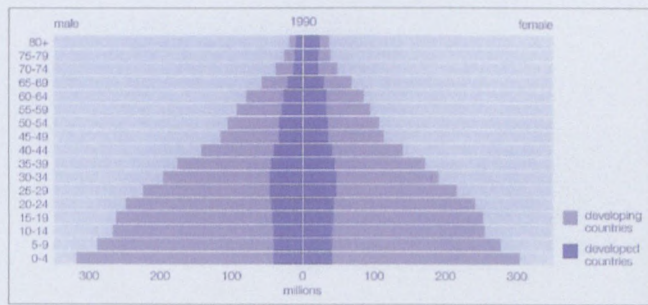
Consequently, by 2050 three-quarters of the world's ageing population will be living in developing countries (Beales & Gorman, 2003: 4), while Kalasa (2001: 2 & 3) and Gaminiratne (2004: 1) have established that in many developing countries, ageing in the total population is more prevalent (due to a rapid decline in fertility and mortality rates) than the gradual progression which occurred in the developed countries throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as a result of improved living standards and an early deterioration in fertility rates. The effect of this phenomenon is most visible in the age-sex population pyramid structures worldwide (see FIG 2.1). Forecasters are observing that the traditional Eiffel Tower

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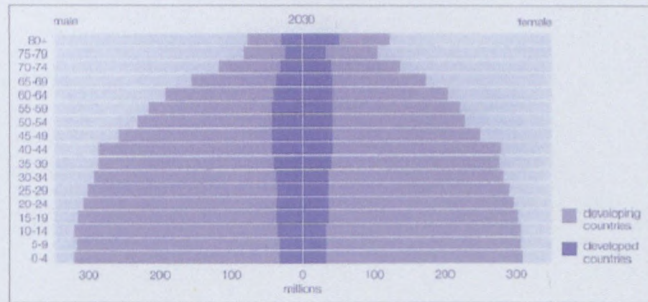
<sup>7</sup> Due in part to the greater availability of contraception, the education of women, the rising costs of childbearing and the participation of women in the workforce



shape is evolving to resemble a Cow Bell form by the year 2030 (see FIG 2.2), where the bottom part of the pyramid indicates the reduction in birth levels, whilst the upper section expands, reflecting the growing number of elderly (Legido-Quigley, 2003:14). Africa is one such continent that is currently experiencing this, whilst simultaneously contributing to the highest elderly population growth rate in the world (Kinsella, 1997: 1;



**Figure 2.1. Population by age and sex 1990. HelpAge International. 2002: 25.**



**Figure 2.2 Population by age and sex 2030. HelpAge International. 2002: 25.**

Kalasa, 2001:4 & Noubissi, 2004: 1–2). The Southern African region – comprising Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe – will contribute to the continent’s highest percentage of older inhabitants, whereas South Africa will have *the* highest proportion of elderly in Africa as well as in Southern Africa (Kinsella, 1997: 1 & Noubissi, 2004: 2). Gaminiratne (2004: 1) argues that with an increase in the ageing population in developing countries, a concomitant increase in economic development is not evident. Therefore many developing countries are inhibited in their response to the ageing populations’ needs, in that they are largely unable to provide for social security coverage to their ageing population.

## 2.1 Demographic time-bomb: repercussions of an ageing population

The worldwide age-sex population pyramid structure also indicates the danger that the world faces with the present demographic trends. The impact of this in the coming years includes the extensive increase in the dependency ratio<sup>8</sup>, while a significant decrease in the economically active proportion of the population will occur, since they will have reached retirement age (Samson, 2004: 4). Germany, the world's third-largest economy, is one such developed country that will experience this phenomenon. It has been forecast that the current 40 million economically active members of Germany's society will drop by a full quarter (10 million) by the year 2030 (Shaw, 2002: 5). Sri Lanka's dependency ratio will increase from 55% currently to 76% by 2040, whereas Africa will experience the highest upsurge in the dependency ratio (331% increase from 1995 to 2050) amongst all the world's regions (Kalasa, 2001: 4 & Gaminiratne, 2004: 4).

If the dependency rate of the ageing population continues to increase at its present pace, the socio-economic development of the world would suffer extensively (United Nations Department of Public Information, 1998: 11 and McManus, Anderberg & Lazarus, 2007: 486), not only in terms of technical efficiency and economic well-being, but intellectual capital, artistic achievement and irreplaceable levels of experience would diminish as well (Bytheway, 1995: 53 & Jorgensen, 2005: 62). However, the primary concern with many demographers, political and social commentators is the economic implication<sup>9</sup> that longevity and an ever-increasing elderly population place on public policy agendas and state funded pensions (United Nations Department of Public Information, 1998: 11; Shaw, 2002: 5; Gaminiratne, 2004: 7, 27 – 30 and McManus, Anderberg & Lazarus, 2007: 486).

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<sup>8</sup> Age groups of both children and aged who are dependent on the economically active population for financial support.

<sup>9</sup> Economic implications include increased tax rates, a decline in economic growth, productivity, capital and consumption.

### **2.1.1 The economic challenges faced by the elderly: collapse of pension systems**

With regards to the fiscal implications of state funded pension systems, McManus, Anderberg and Lazarus (2007: 486 & 488) have uncovered that even in an advanced economy such as America, systems may be at risk. The possibility of the collapse of its Social Security System, in addition to facing long-term solvency and sustainability challenges, will result in a cash flow deficit by 2017, as well as insurance reserves running out by 2041. The government will therefore be forced to take at least one of the following actions; increase taxes, reduce funding for other government funded programs, or borrow additional funds from the public so as to ensure the sustainability of the American pension system (Kart & Mestress, 1984: 179; Beales & Gorman, 2003: 10 and McManus, Anderberg & Lazarus, 2007: 486). Society, particularly the economically active population, will be faced with the dilemma of whether they will be able and willing to bear the additional financing burden of a growing elderly population (Bytheway, 1995: 54 & Shaw 2002: 4, 5, 6).

### **2.1.2 The emotional challenges faced by the elderly**

Unemployment, the accumulation of chronic medical disorders, changed marital status, a fast and steep increase in living costs, functional impairment, cognitive problems and, particularly, a drop in standard of living due to retirement and reduced income have negatively impacted on the elderly's dignity and self-esteem (Snyder, 1997: 1; Tudawe, 2002: 32 and Sirovatka & Mares, 2004: 5). The onset of depression amongst the elderly has increased dramatically too, primarily due to low social participation, social isolation, and especially the lack of an exercise of power – all characteristics of social exclusion (Shucksmith, 2003: 1 & 2). Life events, such as the HIV/Aids epidemic – which is increasingly responsible for the elderly in Africa and South Africa assuming the role of

guardians in raising grandchildren, is also responsible for depression amongst the elderly (Rodriguez, Brathwaite & Dorsey, 2002).

South Africa's means-tested old age pension scheme is among the most generous in the Southern African region that operates large-scale non-contributory social pension systems, as well as in the developing world (Legido-Quigley, 2003: 2 and Lam, Leibbrandt & Ranchhod, 2005: 1). The South African old age pension scheme as a result provides economic relief and a measure of independence for the aged and helps lift many of the aged out of the most extreme forms of poverty. The old age pension also places the elderly in a position to contribute to the support of their children and grandchildren, allowing them to become valuable members of their family and society (Legido-Quigley, 2003: 2 & 10 and Lam, Leibbrandt & Ranchhod, 2005: 1 & 7).

The impact of HIV/Aids, in addition to the high levels of unemployment in South Africa, has weakened the ability of working-age adults to support their families considerably. The social old-age pension grant, which was initially implemented as a poverty relief programme for the aged, has consequently become the primary and often sole source of income for many households living in abject poverty. The old-age pension grant has almost been transformed into a poverty alleviation programme within the elderly's extended household, targeting not only the aged but also benefiting the elderly's children and grandchildren (Legido-Quigley, 2003: 2 & 10 and Lam, Leibbrandt & Ranchhod, 2005: 1 & 7). Legido-Quigley (2003: 12 – 13) argues that the allocated amount of the social old-age pension grant is regarded as inadequate (R820 in 2006) by many of South Africa's elderly, since the grant cannot meet their own needs, let alone the needs of their family affected by HIV/Aids.

## **2.2 Design for social responsibility**

The design disciplines may emerge even more strongly than before to counteract the inadequate state pension schemes internationally and locally. It is argued that social design in particular has the potential to become a new paradigm in design (as is clearly illustrated in new design initiatives the world over) as a complement to market design (Margolin & Margolin, 2005: 1). It is also argued that social design is not independent of the market, (which is sales driven) but that addressing human needs drives social designers to solve problems of particular marginalized populations within a sustainable market (Margolin, 2002: 1 and Margolin & Margolin, 2005: 1). Sustainable markets and human resource sustainability take a more holistic and integrated approach to people management. It is primarily focused on “investing in people rather than divesting them and actively promoting strategies of knowledge and skills creation as the preferred viable path to sustaining societies’ corporate and economic life”, and to ensure positive human outcomes of equity, development and well-being (Wilkinson & Hill, 2001: 1497).

### **2.2.1 Creative Industries**

The Creative Industries is a worldwide industry sector that is present predominantly in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Germany, Singapore, Hong Kong and the United States of America. The Creative Industries sector has emerged since many “Western nations are moving away from the production of goods and services and are concentrating more on the production of ideas and knowledge” to address human needs which include climate change, massive population growth in developing countries (and a growth in population ageing), and habitat destruction (Matheson, 2006: 55 & 63).

Characteristically, the Creative Industries<sup>10</sup> offer a unique marketable product or service whose economic value lies in their intellectual property, leading to job and wealth creation, as well as the production of consumer goods and services for local and overseas markets (Hong Kong Arts Development Council, 2000: 3 and Queensland Government, Department of State Development: 2005). In recent years however, cultural theorists have noticed that the professions such as design, advertising, film, fashion, interactive technologies, popular music and many more, which drive the Creative Industries, are contributing to social and cultural development, rather than focusing only on generating profits (Matheson, 2006: 55 & 57). Consequently, the Creative Industries are at the heart of both civic and commercial life. This is important since “culture and the arts benefit communities by fostering active citizenship, a sense of engagement and identity, intellectual development and public debate”, whilst ensuring a strong cultural environment, a vibrant community and economy, and simultaneously maintaining a competitive edge in the industry sector (Queensland Government, Department of State Development: 2005 and Matheson, 2006: 55).

### **2.2.2 Design for the World**

Design for the World is another initiative, which has similar community and inclusive goals. Leading international design associations, such as the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (Icograda), the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and the International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers (IFI), are aware that “design is closely identified with consumer products and services, and is usually considered irrelevant to people in the third world, or in situations of social exclusion” (Scholtus, 2005). Design for the World, which is dedicated to facilitating sustainable design and appropriate

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<sup>10</sup> Creative Industries are high value-added industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have the potential to create wealth and jobs, through the generation and utilization of intellectual property. Creative Industries in addition provide creative intangible contributions that add more economic and social value than is made available through manufacturing.

technologies in local communities around the world, was established to “address the human needs of those in the marginalized populations” (Margolin, 2002: 1). Design for the World strives to link professional designers to social design projects around the world, so that they can use their experience and creativity to help people in need, beyond the confines of the consumer market (Scholtus, 2005). It is evident from the literature that the Design for the World model is focused strongly on social responsibility and not only on making a profit.

Ezio Manzini, who is a Professor of Design at the Politecnico di Milano, is also dedicated and committed to furthering design for sustainability, with a focus on designing capabilities and design knowledge “that is able to help individuals, communities, institutions and companies to design feasible sustainable solutions, in the social and operational framework of a network and knowledge society” (Manzini, 2008: 2 & 3). In order for this to take place, a complex social learning process, such as an original mix of design reflection and creativity, visionary and tangible thinking to solve problems, as well as the ability to suggest sustainable design solutions must be adopted to ensure a great social, cultural and economic transformation in the future.

### **2.2.3 Architecture for Humanity**

Architecture for Humanity (AFH) is a design-orientated, charitable organisation that supports innovative design and the movement towards socially conscious design. This fundraising organisation not only provides a unique conduit for architects, designers from diverse design disciplines and various community groups to access funding for community design projects, but also connects design professionals from around the world, with community-based projects in the field. This was initially achieved in 2001 when a request was put out to architects working in New York City, U.S.A who would be interested in

working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Africa on the OUTREACH project. This gesture proved to be very successful and since then numerous AFH subdivisions have been formed right around the world. These subdivisions provide the means and opportunities for designers to get involved and bring their services and skills to communities in times of need. These opportunities include combating HIV/Aids in Sub-Saharan Africa, relief for victims of the Tsunami disaster of December 2004, Hurricane Katrina and Rita disasters of August 2005 and the current civil war in Darfur, Sudan (Architecture for Humanity, 2006: 11, 13, 16, 22, 24, 26, 30, 31 & 72). The Deydinler Village, which is involved in the restoration of an old library and teahouse in a rural community in the district of Bursa, Turkey, is another initiative that is dedicated and committed to addressing social problems. In addition to supporting and promoting a sense of civic responsibility through design practice, the project also assists students in acquiring important occupational and life skills, as well as developing problem-solving techniques that rely on critical thinking (Hill, 2007: 162).

The “Architecture for Humanity” model and the “Design for the World” model have a lot in common. Both are focused on creating sustainable and socially conscious design relief, rather than being commercially and profit-driven, as is largely the case with the Creative Industries. In some community projects however, income generation, community building and even the preservation of ancient and traditional craft techniques and skills programmes have been implemented, as is the case with the Building Opportunities and Livelihoods in Dafur (BOLD) project (Architecture for Humanity, 2006: 72).

The BOLD project, a temporary housing initiative launched in 2004 by Co-operative Housing Foundation (CHF) International for families displaced by civil war in

Western Sudan, has combined the above three mentioned models' aims and ideas to successfully create a source of income generation of 250–500 Sudanese dinars (\$1–2) per day and employment for 3000 camp dwellers, 85% of whom are women. The camps surround the town of Nyala in South Darfur. The BOLD project strives to do two things; improve the makeshift housing in the refugee camps and preserve the traditional techniques of mat weaving (Architecture for Humanity, 2006: 72). The establishment of the mat-weaving project in Darfur has since paved the way for CHF International to implement the same income-generation programme to build community centres in other camps (Architecture for Humanity, 2006: 72).

### **2.3 Accessories: defining individuality and identity**

Insofar as accessories are concerned, various old and traditional hand craftsmanship skills and techniques are utilized currently in the construction and production of many luxury handbags. The Hermès Kelly bag (see FIG 2.1 page 10) is one such example that is still to date meticulously and painstakingly hand-stitched together with a double saddle stitch, for periods of up to eighteen hours by one artisan (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 142 and Johnson, 2002: 58 & 59). The preservation of handbag craftsmanship such as the Hermès Kelly bag also inspired the FADP to investigate which fibre-art techniques and skills may have been lost to mass manufacturing. The FADP also wanted to transfer traditional fibre-art skills and techniques to a variety of accessories and not only to the construction of handbags. Placing emphasis on hand craftsmanship as opposed to mass manufacturing underpinned the FADP model from the outset, since hand craftsmanship creates and provides job opportunities for knowledgeable and experienced artisans, in addition to revitalizing creativity and individuality.

Contemporary accessories, including exclusive and unique accessories, have taken on a greater importance in helping women define and express their individuality and identity. Many women delight in acquiring and wearing unusual accessories, since they frequently become an integral part in reflecting a woman's identity and may even function on a symbolic level as an extension of her body and being. Many women are also investing more in exclusive accessories, rather than in high-end fashion apparel, since fashion can date quickly and trends are cyclical, whereas accessories are seen to be more classical and durable. Many women therefore opt for versatile high-end accessories that need not be replaced seasonally (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 8; Johnson, 2002: 260 and INFOMAT, 2008).

#### **2.4 The desirability of accessories**

As opposed to trend-based women's apparel fashions, some apparel fashions have become progressively more minimal, and the desire for ornamentation has gravitated towards accessories such as handbags and shoes. Accessories occupy a prominent position and status in the fashion world, and are primarily developed for use by women and are acquired by most women. Furthermore, the fact that fashion apparel *and* accessories have transformed into a huge global market (there are frequent waiting lists for specific iconic status accessories) and that these accessories are looked upon and cherished as seasonless and life-time treasures, serve to make them much more desirable and sought after than run-of-the-mill fashion commodities (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 8 & 128; Johnson, 2002: xxiii & 260; Malcolm, 2003: 9 and Prateek, 2007).

##### **2.4.1 Exceptional accessory: scarf, shawl, poncho and wrap**

Knitted and crocheted women's fashion accessories – in the form of scarves, shawls, ponchos, wraps and capelets – have recently experienced a revival amongst women,

teenagers and celebrities worldwide. These once merely practical accessories currently make the ultimate fashion statement, while conveying elegance, sophistication and self-expression (Malcolm, 2003: 9; Smith, 2007 and Prateek, 2007). These fashion accessories may add a large amount of diversity, femininity, softness and finesse to an otherwise basic, ordinary, uninteresting or even masculine wardrobe. While complementing a woman's femininity, they frequently add a personal touch of whimsy to any garment (Malcolm, 2003: 9 and Buterez, 2006). Scarves, shawls, ponchos and wraps provide flexibility in how they are worn on different occasions and in changing seasons. Scarves, for instance, can be worn in the traditional method (around the neck); or they can also be worn as a shawl, headwear, sash or belt. Scarves can furthermore be worn as accent pieces, tied at the wrist (to emulate the appearance of jewellery) or around the strap of a handbag (Malcolm, 2003: 9; Buterez, 2006 and Smith, 2007).

#### **2.4.2 Different roles that handbags play in social life**

Handbags play an extensive, varied and significant role in the ever-changing social life that many women lead today. Handbags have become integral, portable fashion accessories that serve many practical purposes to a wide variety of different women. The handbag is also a psychologically and aesthetically significant piece of artwork that is unperturbed by the changes of the body and therefore allows many women to conceal and carry their neuroses, while simultaneously enabling many women to be transported to their dreams and desires, and even occasionally being delivered from their uninteresting lives (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 8 and Johnson, 2002: xviii).

Over the centuries the handbag has evolved considerably not only in terms of its shape, size and purpose, but the role that handbags play in the changing lives of women has

advanced as well (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 8). For instance, as modern women began working and new opportunities opened for them, their handbags became fuller and started satisfying a practical purpose – as an office away from the desk, a portable dressing table and a “survival kit” (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 8 & 35). Apart from fulfilling a functional task, handbags have also become for many women, investment pieces and expensive status symbols. Furthermore, handbags have assumed the function of intensely personal psychologically and aesthetically significant receptacles, which have become an intimate extension of a woman’s body, clothing and herself (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 8, 11 & 146 and Johnson, 2002: xii). Steele, Borrelli and Johnson argue that many women therefore tend to regard the handbag as an important accessory. This is the case since it is unconcerned by the changes of the body, while being able to “liberate” many women from uninteresting lives, by allowing them to be transported into the lives they long for because of some bags’ iconic status (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 24 and Johnson, 2002: xviii). Handbags have as a result become the symbol of dreams and desire, representing aspirations in social mobility, and are not *necessarily* concerned with practicality (ibid).

The following categories of handbags as researched by Steele and Borrelli (1999: 14 – 101 & 136 - 159) and Johnson (2002: 72 – 348 & 411 – 481) were used as a guide in the FADP product development, and are discussed in the next section. These categories were selected since they represent the iconic status associated with certain traditional and elite designer brands, as referred to above.

### 2.4.2.1 Practicality

Practical handbags are, to many women, crucial instruments in their daily lives, especially for career women and women who lead busy lives (see FIG 2.3).



Figure 2.3. *2001 Kelly Bag*. Johnson. 2002: 61.



Figure 2.4. *Bucket Bag*. Steele & Borrelli. 1999: 17.

Given that the majority of working women tend to be more focused on issues of

practicality, as well as at times the formality of appropriate dress, the handbag has to conform to various requirements in the corporate world. As a result the design of the practical handbag reflects two dominant characteristics: sturdy construction and a high degree of utilitarianism (see FIG 2.4). Therefore, rather than excessive ornamentation in the design of the handbag, career women require that the necessities of everyday life are portable and properly organized in an utilitarian fashion (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 28, 31 & 43 and Johnson, 2002: 356, 404 & 405).

### 2.4.2.2 Everyday luxury

There are different categories of handbags. It is no longer the tendency to be a slave only to the status iconic handbag, such as the Louis Vuitton or Gucci bags, but also to include a fresh perception of the love of the luxurious and opulent handbag. Luxury handbags are primarily distinguished by the quality and uniqueness of their



Figure 2.5. *Jamin Puech Organza and Silk Ribbon Handbag*. Johnson. 2002: 293.

materials<sup>11</sup> and meticulous craftsmanship, in addition to the beauty of their design. The exclusion of a status name or logo (which is usually positioned on the outside of status iconic bags), is instead placed inside luxury handbags. These bags, reflecting aspirations to be seen as Haute Couture accessories that emphasize individuality, creativity and quality of craftsmanship, are all part of the appeal and intrinsic value of the luxury handbag (see FIG 2.5). Many women combine everyday luxury bags with relaxed, informal clothing as an indication of individuality and personal style. Women also wear luxury handbags to portray a variety of moods, such as fantasy or irony (including ridiculing traditional conventions of appropriate dress) or to complement daytime garments, which have tended to become increasingly insipid and minimal (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 11, 84, 136, 139, 140, 142, 146 & 149).

#### 2.4.2.3 Cherished jewel

The evening bag is solely created for glamour and enjoyment, and is not meant to conform to the rules of propriety. Beautiful evening handbags provide elements of fantasy and luxury that have traditionally been absent from functional day bags (see FIG 2.6).



Figure 2.6. *Judith Leiber Wedding Bag.* Johnson. 2002: 301.



Figure 2.7. *Constellation.* Steele & Borrelli. 1999: 83.

Evening handbags are crafted from a wide choice of precious materials such as silk, taffeta, organza, satin, moiré, brocade, faille, muslin or velvet, and feature unique, whimsical and jewel-like embellishments (see FIG 2.7). Indeed, these bags are not different from jewels,

<sup>11</sup> Materials include the precious and high quality exotic leathers that consist of alligator, crocodile, iguana, lizard, ostrich, python and snakeskin. Additionally inexpensive materials such as straw, nylon, leather, PVC, industrial metal, industrial felt, carpet tape and horsehair are used as well.

since an evening handbag can assume the function of jewellery in complementing a garment. Consequently, the tiny evening bag has tended to become a valuable fashion item, having both visual and tactile appeal, but some have however been designed impractically (Wilcox, 1999: 119 and Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 60, 63, 65 & 84).

#### 2.4.2.4 Novelty creations

The 1930's saw the development of the novelty bag. Surrealism was the first movement to inspire the production and establishment of these whimsical bags (see FIG 2.8). Novelty handbags can be inspired by anything, and are playfully diverse in shape (such as a jellybean, a book, an accordion, or a loaf of bread) and form. Novelty bags are largely impractical; having primarily been designed to amuse and charm. The creation and revival of novelty handbags generally take place as soon as there is a reaction against the rules governing "appropriate" dress, and when fashion becomes excessively oppressive, minimal,



Figure 2.8. 1930's *Koret. Johnson. 2002: 209.*

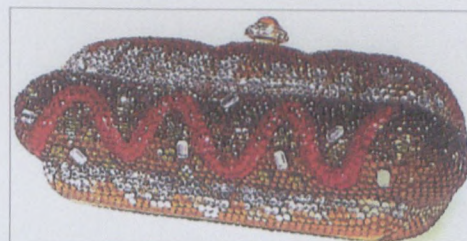


Figure 2.9. 1990's *Katherine Baumann. Johnson. 2002: 469.*

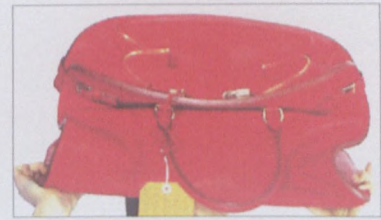
conservative or stagnant (Johnson, 2002: 417). Novelty bags develop considerably when the marketplace is more diverse and playful (see FIG 2.9), and when a wealth of new materials invites experimentation (Johnson, 2002: 174, 175, 354, 412, 415, 416 & 417).

#### 2.4.2.5 Travel and leisure

The development of trains revolutionized passenger transport during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and also ensured an increase in travelling for pleasure amongst women. Handbag



**Figure 2.10. 1860's Luggage.**  
Johnson, 2002: xxiv.



**Figure 2.11. Louis Vuitton.**  
Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 53.

manufacturers, as a result, had to design and develop sets of luggage, including small, practical, well-structured and sturdy leather handbags (see FIG 2.10), which included safety catches and locking systems so as to discourage pickpockets and thieves. The travel bag has evolved considerably since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Luggage was designed to suit an active woman's life, as well as for those women who travelled and wanted to do so in elegance and style (see FIG 2.11) (Wilcox, 1999: 71 & 72 and Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 18 & 53).

#### 2.5 Rationale for the development of accessories

Since accessories have assumed a more prominent position and status in the fashion world they have become more desirable and sought after as seasonless and cherished jewel-like pieces. In addition the demand rose since accessories are seen to define women's identity and individuality, whilst simultaneously adding a large amount of diversity, femininity, softness and finesse to a woman's wardrobe. The accessories market has been transformed into a huge and lucrative global market servicing retail outlets and high-end fashion design houses, which provide women with a great assortment of accessories.

## **2.6 Conquering social exclusion through income-generation**

Implementing a socially conscious income-generation programme through the development of a marketable women's accessory product range, focusing especially on handbags, scarves, shawls, ponchos, wraps and capelets, may benefit the South African accessories market, since it would provide South African women with a greater assortment of locally produced accessories. Implementing a socially conscious income-generation programme may also benefit the elderly's socio-economic well-being, since there is a huge demand for such accessories worldwide and locally. The implementation of such a programme has the potential to preserve traditional craft techniques and skills, whilst fostering a sense of engagement, intellectual development and identity. The development of marketable women's accessories may ensure a vibrant community and economy, as well as maintain a competitive edge in the industry sector. In the following section, the research methods to achieve these aims are described.

## CHAPTER THREE

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### 3 Research methodology

This specific research project has two sections, namely a theoretical and practical component. The theoretical component is primarily concerned with investigating whether it is possible for the aged to overcome social exclusion, and if this would empower them to some extent economically, socially and emotionally. The practical component explores the product development process. The process was a co-operative venture between the researcher and selected elderly focus groups, with a view to ultimately develop a marketable women's accessory product range. The theoretical section supports the practical section insofar as the methods and model that were developed dovetailed to ensure the success and sustainability of the research project.

#### 3.1 Rationale for utilizing qualitative research methodologies

Qualitative research methods were decided upon since a variety of data collection methods can be used in conjunction with each other. Observation, semi-structured interviews, journaling and fieldwork research can be used simultaneously to gather rich, descriptive and in-depth data and responses directly from the participants, in their social setting and over a sustained period of time (Lawrence Neuman, 1997: 328 and Miller & Brewer, 2003: 193 & 239). In addition, it was anticipated that these methods would yield valuable data that may be used to articulate and interpret the elderly's experiences, and personal thoughts and feelings. All of these data collection methods are important measures of their everyday life experiences



and helped to ascertain how social phenomena<sup>12</sup> affect them economically and emotionally (Lindlof, 1995: 21 and Miller & Brewer, 2003: 239). Qualitative research also allows the researcher to evaluate, verify and validate intrinsically meaningful data using various empirical data collection methods, whilst simultaneously permitting the researcher to investigate emotional changes in the elderly sample groups (Lindlof, 1995:168).

### 3.2 Research design

A research design is the structure of the research project which provides the adhesive that holds all of the elements in a research project together (Trochim, 2006: 1). A research design is therefore central to the research project, since it is the logic which links the data to be collected and the conclusions drawn to the research questions (Chisin, 2003: 64). The conceptual framework must be appropriate to answer the research questions, while the empirical methods that are used must also be suitable to answer the research questions. The findings and analysis are grounded in the data, which, when synthesized produce conclusions that culminate in recommendations.

The research design for the study was conceptualised in three phases, firstly the theoretical design (literature review) secondly the practical process and participatory component, and thirdly the product range (see FIG 3.1). Following this research design a grounded theory inquiry was adopted for the research study, since grounded theory is a general research method, used particularly within the social sciences, which focuses on the *process* of inquiring and developing inductive theory from a magnitude of data, as opposed to theory

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<sup>12</sup> Social Phenomena include the marginalization of the elderly by the population at large, inadequate income, unemployment, and a dynamic increase in living costs, the accumulation of chronic medical disorders, functional impairment and cognitive problems. Furthermore, low social participation, social isolation and the lack of an exercise of power (all characteristics of social exclusion) amongst the elderly have negatively impacted the elderly's well-being, dignity and self-fulfilment, as well as being responsible for the onset of depression amongst the elderly. Life events, such as the HIV/Aids epidemic, is also responsible for depression amongst the elderly.

verification (Patton, 2002: 125 & Mitrovic, 2008: 70, 75 & 76). This is achieved through a multi-faceted investigation that uses a variety of complementary data collecting methods, comparing different research sites, doing theoretical sampling and testing emergent concepts with additional fieldwork (Patton, 2002: 125 & Mitrovic, 2008: 81). The utilization of grounded theory for this specific study was important, since the guidelines for grounded theory allow one to be systematic, yet also flexible when collecting and analysing qualitative data, which was crucial for this study as it was addressing complex social and economic phenomena involving two elderly sample groups. Consequently, the grounded theory used in this study was the “eroded” model, which makes use of purposive sampling in order to establish links and patterns in the data, so as to derive a theory that is empirically valid (Mitrovic, 2008: 74). After reflecting on the research problem, the research design for this study was conceptualised and an applied research model was adopted.

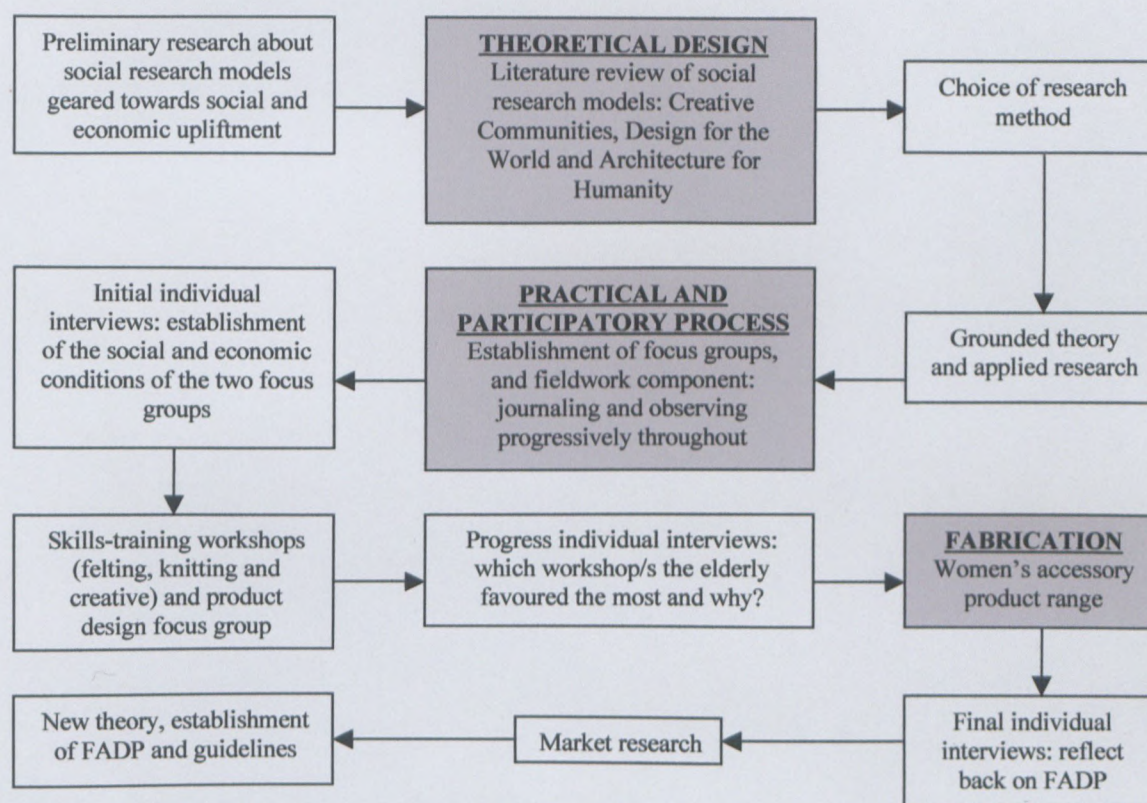


Figure 3.1. Overview of the research design. Stipp, 2009.

### **3.2.1 Duration of the research project**

Due to the complex nature of the research design and the fact that many components were conducted concurrently and separately, a period of just over four years was needed to conclude the study, which included:

- Practical and theoretical components
- Workshop attendance by the researcher
- Onsite training workshops
- Development and fabrication of components for the accessories range
- Manufacture of the accessories
- Market research completed of product range
- Writing up of the entire research project

### **3.3 Applied research**

Applied research is the investigation of real-world problems, including significant human and societal problems and experiences. Consequently, the objective of applied research is to illuminate a societal concern, whilst simultaneously understanding the nature and sources of the specific societal concern, in addition to contributing knowledge that will help society understand, intervene and resolve the nature of these problems (Patton, 2002: 213, 217 & 224). Applied research was utilized for this specific research project, since applied research allowed me as the researcher to conduct studies at both focus group sites, and at the 2008 Design Indaba Expo market, testing the importance and sustainability of the FADP's products. The results of the fieldwork and market research consequently created new knowledge; therefore allowing the findings of the research project to be applied practically to both focus groups sites by means of the marketing of the product range.

### **3.4 Establishing the sites and focus groups**

Great difficulty was experienced initially with establishing the sites, since there are only a minority of organizations that are aimed at assisting the elderly's socio-economic well-being in the Western Cape. Neighbourhood Old Age Homes (NOAH), a project that is aimed at addressing the urgent need of developing and providing affordable housing for pensioners across the Peninsula, was approached at first, since several different socio-economic areas are accommodated in this particular non-profit organization. NOAH was however unable to accommodate the Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP), due to a number of reasons, amongst them financial constraints. Three different socio-economic sites, each with a potential focus group, were subsequently selected. These three sites were chosen for the following reasons: initially through interviews with the elderly and staff, when it was established that these sites welcomed community initiatives, that they encourage social interaction and that they would benefit from such a research project. Three sites were chosen since a comparison between the differences and similarities in the potential participants' responses to their involvement in the FADP was sought. For instance, would a particular group have more skills and knowledge to bring to the project than another? How different are the needs of the respective groups? The introductory interview included an assessment of the three groups' existing and acquired knowledge and skills; so as to determine roughly which craft techniques and media they are familiar with and where the gaps in their creative techniques exist. This initial assessment was required to ensure a match between the aims of the research and the potential focus groups' needs and abilities.

#### **3.4.1 Pinelands, Woodstock and Khayelitsha**

At the higher socio-economic site (situated in Cape Town's wealthy neighbourhood of Pinelands) it became apparent after the initial introductory interview and assessment that their

socio-economic needs were indeed already being met. Furthermore, the elderly were kept too busy with their own projects and organised activities, to derive much benefit from the FADP. The only aspect which a few members of the seniors' club were interested in (approximately five individuals) was to attend the workshop component of the practical section of the research project, especially the knitting workshop. They were keen to acquire new craft skills and knowledge, but restricted time and a lack of commitment hampered them. The intention of the FADP from the start was, however, to provide some form of practical *and* economical solution to addressing poverty amongst specific marginalized groups who have a need for interventions and want to participate in this type of project. The withdrawal of the higher socio-economic site therefore did not necessarily mean jeopardising the overall outcome of the FADP. The two remaining focus groups sites, namely the existing Grandmothers Against Poverty and Aids (GAPA) project in Khayelitsha and some elderly from the old-age home Haven Homes, in Woodstock, were keen to get involved. Once the appropriate ethics procedures were followed and consent obtained from the elderly who wished to participate (see Appendices 2 and 3), the stage was set for the start of the workshops.

#### **3.4.2 Grandmothers Against Poverty and Aids (GAPA)**

This focus group was established at the existing GAPA site in the Multipurpose Centre in Khayelitsha with nine participants. This is a low socio-economic income area (per monthly capita income of roughly R144 to R900), approximately 20 kilometres outside Cape Town (Information Services CMC Administration, 2008: 12 & 13). Khayelitsha is a sprawling township that had been largely affected by the impact of the HIV/Aids epidemic in South Africa. GAPA is an established voluntary organization managed by an occupational therapist and a committee of grandmothers who represent different areas of Khayelitsha. However, Gugulethu, Langa and three co-operatives in the Eastern Cape also feature a GAPA

involvement (Kadalié, 2005: 20 & 21). An existing self-help model, implemented by GAPA to assist the grandmothers overcome the effects of the HIV/Aids epidemic, provided an income generation programme. This model contributed to the FADP's development, since GAPA's members were already knowledgeable and familiar with executing consignment orders of various products (such as knitted scarves and crocheted abstract shapes), for several large contracts, such as Medlemon and Woolworths. The GAPA model and the FADP therefore dovetail, since the FADP aimed to provide new skills to the grandmothers, to which they would otherwise not have been exposed.

Membership of GAPA is limited to grandmothers who are 50 years and older and who have been affected by HIV/Aids in some way. The Multipurpose Centre in Khayelitsha allows the elderly to participate in monthly three-day skills-training workshops, as well as monthly educational workshops that provide support and practical skills to grandmothers to overcome the effects of the HIV/Aids pandemic on households. The workshops cover topics such as dealing with HIV/Aids and related issues, tuberculosis, nursing skills, vegetable gardening, nutrition, healthy ageing, human rights, elder abuse, child care, household budgeting, drawing up a will, business skills and accessing social grants. The centre also provides a meeting place for the committee of grandmothers, in addition to allowing elderly work groups to come in on a daily basis to either make new items for sale in their own communities, or to produce crocheted, beaded and sewn items for a contract (GAPA, 2005). The Protea Hotel, located at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, is one such organisation that has contracted GAPA on a continual basis to produce teddy bears for their gift shop and rooms.

#### **3.4.2.1 FADP situated within the GAPA infrastructure**

The participants are retired, living on a fixed income, are not economically active (apart from the above mentioned commissions) and are largely financially dependent on government subsidies. Nine participants joined the FADP originally, however one participant returned to the Eastern Cape, whilst an additional participant left the FADP, since she lost interest in the project. Consequently, only seven participants remained at the end of the research project.

#### **3.4.3 Haven Homes**

The second elderly focus group was established in a middle socio-economic income area, at Haven Homes, an old-age home which is located in the Woodstock suburb of Cape Town (per monthly capita income of R1122) (Information Services CMC Administration, 2008: 20). Haven Homes is an old-age home owned and funded by the Western Cape Department of Social Development and is located in an average, modest neighbourhood, in the elderly's own community and in an environment which is familiar to them. Haven Homes is aimed at providing safe and affordable accommodation for destitute elderly who receive a social pension, whilst simultaneously attempting to alleviate poverty amongst the residents by offering a variety of skill-training workshops, which include candle-making and soap-making, as well as leather work (Cape Gateway, 2007). Originally nine elderly participants joined, but for the following reasons, only three remained: one participant passed away, another participant found paid employment and some of the participants found the workshops physically too strenuous, especially the felting workshop. Many of the participants also lost interest in the FADP, since they suffered from mental ailments, arthritis and poor eyesight. The FADP invited people to participate voluntarily, regardless of their mental and physical states, therefore no screening was involved whilst selecting the participants for the FADP.

### **3.5 Data collection methods**

A variety of compatible methods were selected to crosscheck data (Merriam, 1998). The five main data collection methods that were utilized to obtain data during the fieldwork research component were in the form of individual semi-structured interviews with the participants in both focus groups, observations during the workshops, a product design focus group session in both focus groups, market research and journaling. The main data collection methods are discussed in the sections that follow below.

#### **3.5.1 Fieldwork**

Fieldwork was conducted in the two different socio-economic income sites (Khayelitsha and Woodstock) over an eight-month period, starting on 21 July 2006 until 21 March 2008 (no fieldwork was conducted for the month of December, since the GAPA organization closed for the holidays). The objective of the fieldwork was to explore the differences and similarities in the social and economic conditions of the two elderly sample groups and the consequences thereof. Other objectives were to ascertain the different needs of the respective groups, and to establish the impact that retirement has had on the participant's well-being and whether the two sample groups would favour being economically active again and if so, the results thereof.

Selecting the participants was a key consideration in acquiring the type of data needed for the study. Consequently, eighteen elderly participants between the ages of 50 and 86<sup>13</sup>, in reasonably good physical health, in addition to receiving a monthly government subsidy, were decided upon. These elderly individuals suited the profile that the FADP wanted to focus on in terms of alleviating poverty and social exclusion. Nine elderly participants were selected

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<sup>13</sup> The accepted definition of an elderly person is for females aged 60 and up, and males aged 65 and up in South Africa.

from Woodstock, whilst the remaining nine participants were selected from Khayelitsha. Of the eighteen participants, only one male participated, from the Woodstock site. Each individual fieldwork session was conducted once a week from ten o'clock in the morning till three o'clock in the afternoon (approximately five hours) and took place in the elderly's own environment and familiar surroundings<sup>14</sup>.

Three semi-structured interview sessions were administered; the first right at the start of the fieldwork sessions (week one), the second during the fieldwork sessions, after the skills-training workshops (week seven) and the last one right at the end of the development of the FADP and completed production of the women's accessories range (week thirty-two). All the interviews were tape-recorded and were roughly thirty minutes to one hour long. The interviews were conducted either in English or Afrikaans at Haven Homes, while a translator, who accompanied me to all the interview sessions in Khayelitsha, translated the English interviews into isiXhosa. Two introductory skills-training workshops were presented to the elderly focus groups in the second and third weeks of the fieldwork sessions, whilst one creative workshop session was administered in the fourth week.

The participants were introduced to the new skill-training workshops by giving each group a brief explanation of what to expect from each individual workshop, by showcasing examples of completed work and expressing the goal to be achieved in the allocated time. The workshop sessions were approximately four hours long and were conducted in English and Afrikaans at Haven Homes, whilst a translator, who was present at all the GAPA skills-training workshops, translated the English workshop sessions into isiXhosa. Photography and journaling were utilized to document and record observations, as well as to track changes

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<sup>14</sup> Khayelitsha's focus group sessions was conducted at GAPA's Multipurpose Centre, whilst Woodstock's focus sessions took place at Haven Homes.

in the elderly participants' behaviour and feelings during the different skills-training workshops. A product design focus group session was conducted with the elderly sample groups after the creative workshop (week five). The focus group session was tape-recorded and was roughly four hours long. The focus group session at Haven Homes was conducted in English and Afrikaans, while GAPA's focus group was translated into isiXhosa.

The development and fabrication of the women's accessory range took place from week seven until week thirty. Regular fieldwork sessions were conducted throughout this time. Fieldwork sessions initially took place once a week with both elderly sample groups, however by week ten, two fieldwork sessions were being conducted on a weekly basis at the GAPA focus group site. This was carried out in order to interact creatively with them, record observations and to document the process. Market research was conducted at the end of the development and production of the women's accessory range (week thirty-one). Survey questionnaires were utilized to conduct market the research and consisted of twelve graded and open-ended questions.

### **3.5.2 Semi-structured individual interviews**

Using semi-structured interviews as a data collection method was specifically chosen, to ensure that broader, more in-depth data and responses in the interviewees own words would be elicited, since this method (interviewing) lends itself to the collection of rich and valid data obtained in a social context (Chisin, 2003: 68; Miller & Brewer, 2003: 166 and Gray, 2004: 213). Having a relaxed and informal interview also allows the interviewee to talk about sensitive issues, in addition to their own thoughts, values, attitudes and preferences, and to do so with greater spontaneity (Lindolf, 1995: 163 & 167 and Miller & Brewer, 2003: 166 & 167). This did in fact occur with both focus groups, since the Haven Homes and GAPA

participants felt relaxed enough to share their personal and socio-economic matters with me, while GAPA was able to reveal the great effect that HIV/Aids has had on their personal well-being. Three individual semi-structured interviews were administered at various times during the fieldwork research component, which was conducted with nine elderly participants at Haven Homes in Woodstock and nine participants at GAPA's Multipurpose Centre in Khayelitsha from July 2006 to March 2008. A translator was present at all the GAPA interview sessions, so as to translate the English interview into the participants' first language. This established trust and familiarity between the researcher and interviewee, since the latter was made to feel comfortable<sup>15</sup> and negative reactions were therefore avoided (Miller & Brewer, 2003: 166 and Polonsky & Waller, 2005: 131). Of the nine Haven Homes interviewees, one was male and eight were female, while all nine GAPA interviewees were female. Gender was not a selection criterion, but apart from a fixed income, retirement, and a willingness to participate, and cultural diversity was reflected in my choice of interviewees. Consequently, the two different socio-economic sites represented Black (12), Coloured (4) and White (2) cultural groups. All the interviews were tape-recorded and lasted approximately thirty minutes to one hour (see Appendices 9, 10 & 11).

### **3.5.3 Observation**

Observation permits the researcher to understand the participants' behaviour and their reactions towards living in challenging situations in their usual locations. The observational process also allows the researcher to register subtle attitude and behavioural actions of focus groups under investigation (Lindolf, 1995: 134 & 142 and Gray, 2004: 238). Observations were conducted at both socio-economic sites continually, from July 2006 to March 2007, throughout the development and production of the women's accessory product range, as well as during the three skills training workshops and product design focus group. Journaling and

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<sup>15</sup> An explanatory statement and consent form was presented to the interviewee.

photography were utilized to record the observations, as well as to track changes in the elderly participants' behaviour, feelings and well-being.

#### **3.5.4 Focus group interviews**

Focus group interviews may generate new ideas and provide valuable, rich and insightful data that would have been overlooked if participants were interviewed separately (Lawrence Neuman, 1997: 253 and Miller & Brewer, 2003: 120). A semi-structured product design focus group interview was conducted during August 2006, with both elderly focus groups' participants so as to determine which accessories would be manufactured by each individual elderly participant, as well as to encourage the elderly focus group to discuss, share their views and ultimately contribute to the development and production of the women's accessory product range. The product design focus group session was tape-recorded and lasted for approximately five hours each.

#### **3.5.5 Market research surveys**

Market research was conducted with survey questionnaires over a four day time period (approximately 36 hours), by means of the "Emerging Creatives" platform at the 2008 Design Indaba Expo and conference. The Design Indaba Expo was selected as the location to do market research, since this yearly design expo and conference is recognized internationally as providing a vital platform for international and local buyers, as well as for the public to interact with designers in one central arena. The questionnaires were presented to a sampling size of nineteen individuals who took an interest in the women's accessory product range, as well as wanting to know more about the FADP, after reading a poster that briefly explained to the expo public what the intention was with the FADP. Of the nineteen interviewees, three were male and sixteen were female. The questionnaires consisted of twelve graded and open-

ended questions (see Appendix 12), and the individuals had approximately five to ten minutes to complete the questionnaire at my exhibition stand. Market research was carried out so as to ascertain the marketability of the range of women's accessories, establish which accessories appealed more to the South African public and international visitors, and whether the costing of the products was market-related.

### **3.5.6 Journaling**

Journaling was chosen as a reflective aid and as a reliable and valuable tool to use in conjunction with other methods, such as interviews. I did reflective journaling, and the intention initially was for the elderly participants to do the same. Journaling provides an opportunity for important and sensitive information, which might have not been raised or was overlooked during the personal interview, to be recorded when the interviewee or researcher reflects on the interview or another daily experience. The journaling method also assists the interviewee or researcher to vent and freely express feelings about personal and interpersonal circumstances (Lindlof, 1995: 207 and Miller & Brewer, 2003: 69). The elderly participants however, in both focus groups did not take to journaling for various reasons, which included poor eyesight, arthritis, and illiteracy. Although journaling was not utilized by the elderly participants, this fact did not influence the final outcome of the research project since they shared their feelings and impressions with me in conversation, effectively using me as their journal. Since the establishment of trust had occurred quite early on, from the first individual semi-structured interviews during the interview phase of the research process, the participants from both focus groups felt more comfortable to confide in me regarding various issues, including how the project had impacted on their lives and well-being. Consequently I continued with journaling to ensure that what was shared between the participants and myself was documented.

### **3.6 Data analysis method**

Inductive data analysis techniques were used in the study, that is, a theory or model generated from analysing one's fieldwork data, which emerges from patterns found in the cases under study (Patton, 2002: 11, 56 & 453). The first step in analysing the data in this study was to group, categorise and code the responses obtained from the interviews, observations, focus groups interviews and market surveys. This technique is referred to as data reduction and helps to "provide some standardization and rigor to the analytical process" (Patton, 2002: 489). Secondly, trends were identified by displaying the data in an analytical format through graphic means, such as graphs, charts or tables. Conclusions were finally drawn from the emergent patterns and themes of the analysed data to establish and clarify the meaning of the data. Data analysis is a repetitive process that is not confined to a particular stage of the research, but rather commences at the beginning of the collection of data and continues until the completion of the research report (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006: 251). The consequence of analysis therefore allows the researcher to continually assess the data in order to generate and incorporate additional and frequently better quality data (Chisin, 2003: 74 & 75 and Sapsford & Jupp, 2006: 251). The processes of description, definition and specification of relationships among various portions of the data should be approached with rigor and discipline to avoid vague statements and poetic intuitions about society. Because of the accumulation of these relations, the researcher is able to develop a grounded theory, through the process of inductive analysis. Grounded theory therefore is rooted in the data (Strauss & Corbin cited in Chisin, 2003: 64).

### **3.7 Coding referencing of interviews and workshops**

Referencing codes were developed for each focus group site, three semi-structured interviews and the observational and journaling findings obtained through the three skills-

training workshops and product design focus group sessions. This was carried out so as to prevent confusion, since most of the fieldwork was conducted in the same year. The referencing system used for the three semi-structured interviews, skill-training workshops and product design focus group session included the use of the Harvard method of bibliographic citation, but incorporated coding as well. An interview reference, for example Mama 1, 2006a, indicates that “Mama” is the participant reference for the GAPA focus group site, “2006” represents the year that the particular participant was interviewed and “a” reflects the initial introductory interview. Table 3.1 explains the referencing structure used for both focus groups sites’ research findings.

**Table 3.1 Referencing coding structure for Haven Homes and GAPA**

	<b>HAVEN HOMES</b>	<b>GAPA</b>
<b>Initial Interviews</b>	Participant, 2006a	Mama, 2006a
<b>Midway Interviews</b>	Participant, 2006b	Mama, 2006b
<b>Concluding Interviews</b>	Participant, 2006c	Mama, 2006c
<b>Felting Workshop</b>	Participant, 2006 ws1	Mama, 2006 ws1
<b>Knitting Workshop</b>	Participant, 2006 ws2	Mama, 2006 ws2
<b>Creative Workshop</b>	Participant, 2006 ws3	Mama, 2006 ws3
<b>Product Design Focus Group Session</b>	Participant, 2006 pdfgs	Mama, 2006 pdfgs

### **3.8 Marketing plan**

The accessories range was originally conceptualised for the export market, particularly the Scandinavian Market, and the Design Indaba Expo provided a platform for the local high-end market to be tested. The target market for the FADP’s products are high-end fashion boutiques within a radius of 60km from Cape Town. This means that the market segment is

upper-middle class to upper class women who shop abroad and are able to afford Haute Couture fashion. These women are either successfully employed or are wealthy housewives in the age group 18 to 65. There are currently three established community employment projects that operate within a 60km radius from Cape Town, and which are the competitors of the FADP. The FADP is however the only social design project that produces interchangeable accessories with an assortment of fibre-art techniques, therefore ensuring a competitive edge in the market. A SWOT analysis was conducted to ascertain the FADP's product strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The results are displayed below.

**Table 3.2 SWOT Analysis table**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Products adaptable to changing trends. Unique and high quality. Proudly South African.	Expensive. Limited availability. Limited production capacity.
OPPURTUNITIES	THREATS
Unique products, therefore able to export. Start another initiative in the Eastern Cape.	Availability of yarns. Insufficient workforce due to illness and unexpected deaths.

The four marketing instruments (product, price, place and promotion) were made use of and developed into a marketing mix for the FADP. The marketing mix for the FADP is as follows:

- Product:** Fibre-art accessories range including handbags, scarves shawls, poncho's, wraps and capelets that have been handcrafted. The accessories are of high quality craftsmanship and unique in their designs, since various craft techniques (knitting, crocheting and felting) are utilized within each accessory construction. The scarves, shawls, wraps and capelets are also unique in their function, since they are interchangeable. Each product can also be custom-made if desired; however since every product is handmade, no two products will ever be identical. All yarns, wool fibres, materials and handbag components

that are utilized in the construction of the accessories are sourced locally and are of the highest quality.

- **Price:** The pricing for the FADP's products ranges from between R2000 to R8000. The pricing of the FADP's products compares favourably with imported high-end fashion accessories, being in most cases cheaper.
- **Place:** The FADP products will be produced at GAPA's Multipurpose Centre in Khayelitsha and will be distributed and sold from fashion boutiques that are positioned in high-end fashion shopping centres, as well as being exported.
- **Promotion:** The FADP's accessory range will be promoted by exhibiting at high-end design exhibitions, such as Design Indaba. The FADP will also approach high-end fashion magazines and lifestyle television programmes, such as Topbilling and Pasella to do a feature on the product range. In future an Internet website that will enable clients from overseas to view the range and order accessories, will be posted.

See the complete marketing plan in figure 3.2 on page 45.

# MARKETING PLAN

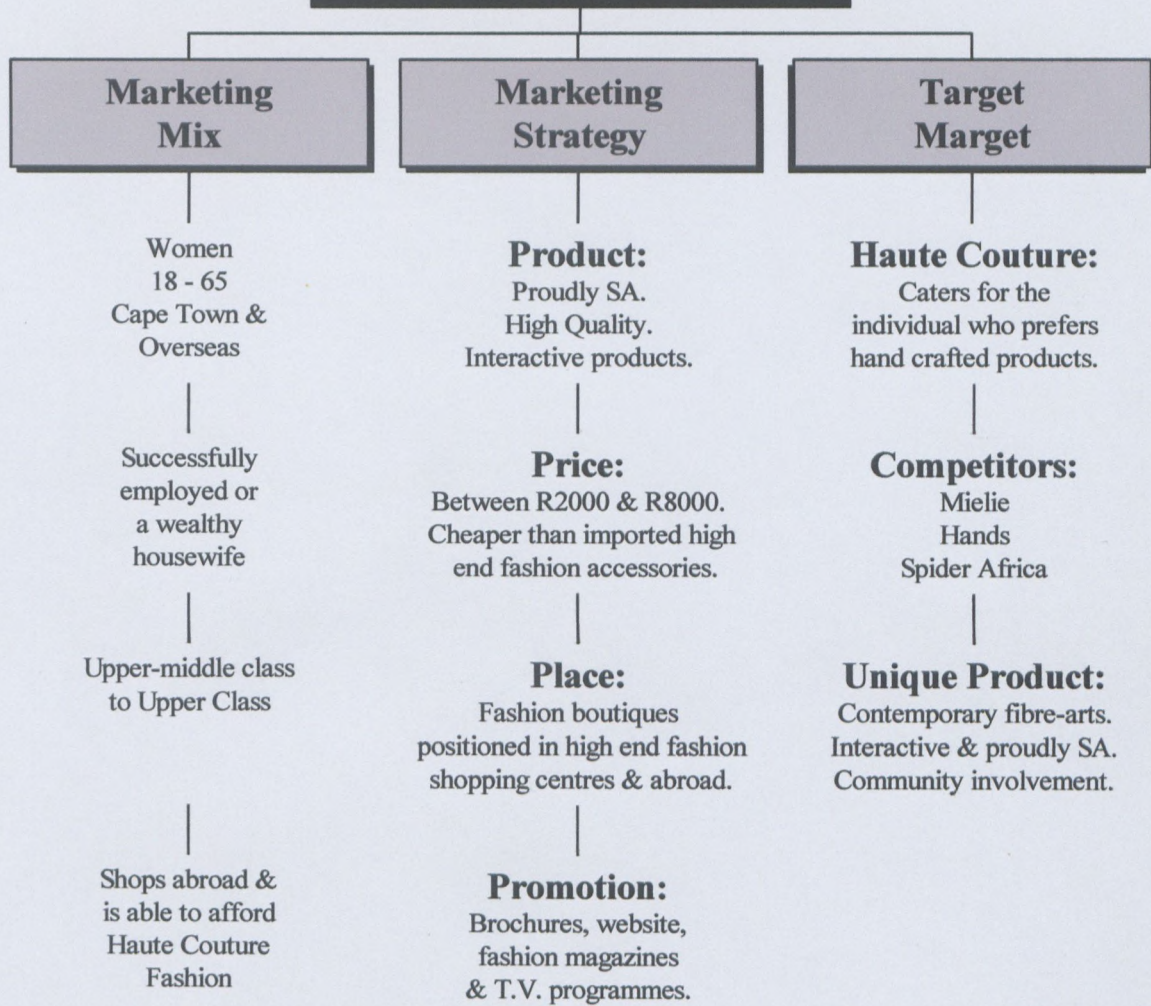


Figure 3.2. Overview of the marketing plan. Stipp, 2007.

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### **4 Techniques and materials used in the development of the accessory product range**

Experimentation with different fibre-art techniques and media was undertaken in order to establish which materials and craft techniques were suitable for the development of the accessory product range, and which techniques the elderly are familiar and comfortable working with. The different styles of past and current fashionable women's accessories including handbags, scarves and shawls, as well as the design summer trends for women's wear for 2006, 2007/2008 (Galliera, 2005: 6, 7, 22, 50 – 95, 156, 165, 168 - 189) were also researched so as to ensure that the development of the accessory product range would be contemporary, yet classical in design to optimise marketability.

#### **4.1 Experimentation: an exchange of knowledge and creative ideas**

Experimental methods included my participation in felting workshops such as wet felting, resist felting and Nuno felting workshops. An introductory workshop on felting and knitting techniques – to which the two sample groups had not been exposed before – was presented during the focus group sessions. I created inspiration boards (see Appendix 4) with overarching themes for the practical research component. The overarching themes related well with the trend categories predicted for the 2006/2007 season in women's wear fashion (Galliera, 2005: 50 – 95). The inspiration boards and overarching themes have more of an avant-garde character, therefore they also coincide well with the 2008 winter wear fashion, as well as with seasons to come. Consequently many different ideas and variations for the product range emerged from one overarching theme. The themes used are:



- Bushveld Cowgirl
- Graphic Kalahari
- Shakaland Peacock Queen
- Kaapse Klopse Carnival
- Highveld Charleston
- Skeleton Coast
- Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner
- Wild Durbs
- Opulent Fynbos Gypsy

The themes allowed for a variety of media to be used with one another, as well as employing different craft techniques in one product, thus making the products innovative and creative, aspects which the current lifestyle consumer market require. The project team (elderly participants and I) decided on the product development, including which techniques, media and colours should be used. The making up of the product components, however, was the responsibility of the elderly, while the final assembling of the accessories was my responsibility.

#### **4.2 Rationale for the utilization of felting, knitting and crocheting**

Felting, knitting and crocheting were decided upon as the handicrafts that would be used for the development of the accessory product range, since there is a worldwide revival and resurgence in the popularity of these specific crafts (Johnson, 2002: 83; Cameron, 2003; Stipp, 2005: 29 and Green, 2006). This trend is reflected significantly in the accessory product range. The rationalization for the use of felting, knitting and crocheting is further supported by the fact that this research project sought to determine which crafts the elderly participants

are already familiar with, in addition to introducing the elderly participants to new knitting techniques and new craft skills, such as felting, to which they have not been exposed before. In addition, the research project is aimed at reviving disused and possibly forgotten craft skills and knowledge, as well as simultaneously preserving old wisdom.

#### 4.2.1 The art of felting: inspirational textures, surfaces and techniques

The art of producing felted fabrics directly from animal fibres pre-dates spinning, weaving and all other textiles, and is still produced today in the same manner that it would have been created 2000 years ago (Corbman, 1983: 135; Brown, 1996: 8 & 9 and Galeskas, 2003: 2). Felting is a simple process of transforming a mass of natural loose, unspun wool fibres<sup>16</sup>, known more specifically as fleece, into a dense and matted fabric. This is achieved through the utilization of moisture and heat that is applied directly to the central core of each wool fibre, which is covered in tiny scales<sup>17</sup> (see FIG 4.1). Consequently, the heat

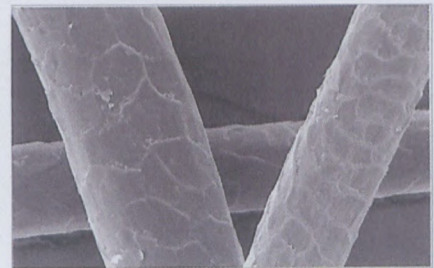


Figure 4.1. Image of magnified wool fibre. White. 2007: 9.



Figure 4.2. Image of magnified barbed wool fibre. White. 2007: 9.

and moisture cause these scales, which lie flat against one another to soften, rise slightly from the hair shaft and become barbed (see FIG 4.2). Soap dissolved in the water accelerates this process, by breaking down the outer cortex of the core, and as a result changes the pH balance and improves the elasticity of the fibres, as well as increasing the movement of the wool fibres past each other during agitation. Friction and pressure from the felting process furthermore causes the scales, whilst in their softened state, to catch, lock and become

<sup>16</sup> Felt can be produced from mohair, cashmere, llama, alpaca and karakul wool fibres.

<sup>17</sup> Under a powerful microscope the wool fibre looks a little like a fishing rod covered with thousands of fish scales.

entangled with one another to ultimately produce a felted fabric (Brown, 1996: 7, 20 & 21; Galeskas, 2003: 3 and Ascher & Bateman, 2006: 6 & 16).

#### **4.2.1.1 Utilizing the washing machine for felting**

Felt fabric can also be created by felting a hundred percent woollen knitted article, either by hand or through the utilization of a washing machine. Felting in the washing machine is done by placing the knitted article in a mesh bag or zippered pillowcase, before being placed in a top loader or in a newer front loader that allows one to open the door during the wash cycle. The washing machine is turned on to the regular hot wash cycle, water and a small amount of soap is added. The felting progress is frequently inspected, until the desired size and firmness has been created (Galeskas, 2003: 10 & 11; Malcolm, 2005: 12 and Wiechmann, 2006: 5 & 6). One of the most valuable characteristics of felted fabric is that it does not fray or unravel, and is exceptionally durable, hardwearing and warm. Felted fabrics also produce the most beautiful and unusual textures and surfaces, in addition to having no warp or weft, like woven fabrics, no selvage, no right or wrong side, no beginning and no end, which in turn simplifies its use in garment construction (Corbman, 1983: 136; Brown, 1996: 7, 20 & 21; Galeskas, 2003: 3; Malcolm, 2005: 10 and Ascher & Bateman, 2006: 6 & 16).

#### **4.2.1.2 Nuno and resist felting**

Nuno felting<sup>18</sup> is an innovative felting technique that was developed by Polly Blakney Stirling in 1994, and is produced by combining wet handmade felt with beautiful open woven natural fabrics such as silk chiffon, tissue silk, silk satin, cotton muslin and cotton gauze (Allen, 2008; Hartzell, 2008 and Hibberd, 2008). A visually and texturally unique ruched fabric is created when the base fabric starts to scrunch up, as the wool fibres begin to interlock with one another, penetrate and attach to the fabric and shrink. The resultant laminated felt

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<sup>18</sup> Nuno felting is also referred to as laminate felting.

fabric is more versatile than traditional felted fabrics, since it gives the laminated felt fabric extra strength, whilst simultaneously being lightweight, consequently providing better drape and flexibility than traditional felted fabrics (Allen, 2008; Grotepass, 2005: 15 & 16; Hartzell, 2008 and Hibberd, 2008).

Resist felting produces seamless felted articles such as bags, shoes, slippers, hats, coats, jackets and vessels. Any material and object (such as thick plastic, bubble wrap, tightly woven fabric, ceramic bowls and even utilizing ones own feet and head!) can be used as a resist as long as they do not disintegrate in water and felt onto the wool. The most suitable and trouble-free resists to utilize during resist felting are however flexible resists, such as bubble wrap, since flexible resists are easier to remove at the end of the felting process, while rigid resists need to be removed near the end of the felting process before the item starts to shrink (Grotepass, 2005: 3, 6 & 15). Resist felted articles are created by folding layers of wool fibres around a resist material template. This is achieved by laying individual layers of wool fibre at a time, 5cm beyond the template, wetting the fibres, carefully turning the template together with the wet wool fibres over and folding the wool fibres inwards on the other side of the template, remembering that each wool fibre layer must alternate ninety degrees in direction for every layer, otherwise the scales on the wool fibres will not catch, lock and become entangled with one another. Once sufficient layers of equal amounts of wool fibres (all depending on the article that is being produced) have been placed and folded around the resist template, the article being produced is felted using the standard hand felting technique. By sandwiching the resist material between the wool fibre layers ensures that the two sides of the article being produced do not felt together, whilst simultaneously producing no seams.

## 4.2.2 Knitting: experimental and creative stitches

Knitting is the art of constructing a flexible fabric from one continuous yarn and a series of juxtaposed horizontal looped stitches, which link together in a succession of yarn waves. This is achieved when the base of a new wave is interlocked with the apex of the previous wave (Stanley, 1993, 13; Tellier-Loumagne, 2003: 18, 20 & 287; Lochner, 2005: 17; Chapman, 2006: 22 and Webb, 2006: 6, 7 & 28).

### 4.2.2.1 Basic hand knitting technique

The garter stitch, also known as the plain stitch, is the most basic stitch of all the fundamental knitting stitches to create. However, it is also an essential stitch that is used in the production



Figure 4.3. *Knitting garter stitch 1.* Tellier-Loumagne. 2003: 296.



Figure 4.4. *Knitting garter stitch 2.* Tellier-Loumagne. 2003: 296.

of any knitting project. It is formed by inserting the right-needle into the front of the stitch on the left-needle, from front to back (see FIG 4.3), whilst holding the yarn behind the work in the right hand. The yarn in the right hand is then wrapped counter clockwise over the point of the right-hand needle to make a loop (see FIG 4.4). The wrapped yarn is then brought to the front of the work through the stitch on



Figure 4.5. *Knitting garter stitch 3.* Tellier-Loumagne. 2003: 296.

the left-needle (see FIG 4.5), which is in turn used to slide the old stitch off the left-needle and create a new stitch on the right-needle (Davis, 2005: 20; Lochner, 2005: 16 and Chapman, 2006: 22).

#### 4.2.2.2 Hand knitting stitches: basic purl

The purl stitch is the second fundamental knitting stitch and is created in approximately the same manner as the plain stitch. However, instead of holding



Figure 4.6. *Knitting purl stitch 1.* Tellier-Loumagne. 2003: 297.



Figure 4.7. *Knitting purl stitch 2.* Tellier-Loumagne. 2003: 297.

the yarn at the back of the work, it is held at the front and the right-needle is used to pull a loop of yarn away from the knitter through the stitch on the left-needle. This is accomplished by inserting the right-hand needle into the front of the stitch on the left-hand needle, from back to front (see FIG 4.6), followed by wrapping the yarn counter



Figure 4.8. *Knitting purl stitch 3.* Tellier-Loumagne. 2003: 297.

clockwise over the point of the right-hand needle to form a loop (see FIG 4.7). Afterwards, the wrapped yarn on the right-hand needle is pulled under and through the stitch on the left-needle (see FIG 4.8), which is used in turn to slide the old stitch off the left-needle and create a new stitch on the right-needle (Davis, 2005: 21; Lochner, 2005: 17; Chapman, 2006: 22 and Webb, 2006: 30).

The plain and purl knitting stitches were decided upon since most of the GAPA and Haven Homes participants were already familiar with them. Furthermore, various knitting techniques, such as moss stitch, loop stitch and elongated stitch were developed through the use of these two basic knitting stitches and therefore ensured that an assortment of textures, patterning and fabric constructions, such as ruching and pleating were used in the accessory product range.

### 4.2.2.3 The magic of shadow knitting

Shadow knitting is the art of creating an optical illusion with knitted patterns. The pattern on a shadow-knit garment is difficult to see directly from the front, however when the garment moves, the pattern is more noticeable and gives the impression of being magical (see FIG 4.9). The patterning of shadow knitting is subtler and more minimalist than that of intarsia knitting<sup>19</sup> and Jacquard<sup>20</sup>, however, the final outcome and illusory effect created through shadow knitting is far more unusual and exciting than that of multicoloured knitting. The formation of shadow-knit patterning is straightforward, since only one colour is knitted at a time and only the two basic knit stitches, plain and purl, are worked with in alternating two rows which are knitted in a dark coloured yarn, followed by two rows knitted in a light coloured yarn. Utilizing a dark coloured yarn to knit the first row in plain stitch, whilst the second row is purled attains this. Alternatively, rows three and four are knitted in plain stitch and in a light coloured yarn. This creates light-coloured ridges and smooth textures on the right side of the work. The effect can be reversed as well. Two rows worked in a light colour yarn followed by two rows worked in a dark coloured yarn, form dark-coloured ridges on the right side of the shadow-knit fabric (Høxbro, 2004: 6 & 7).

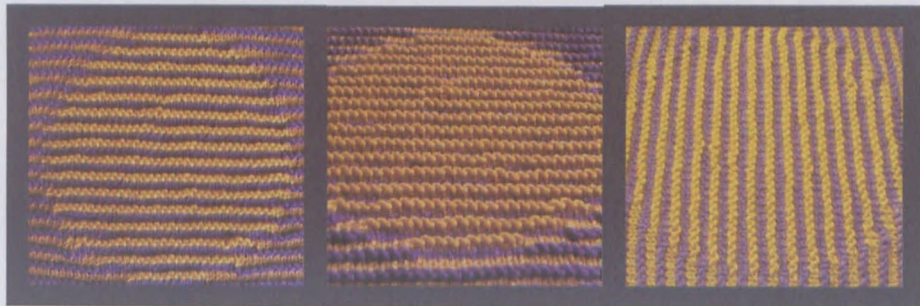


Figure 4.9. *Three views of a shadow-knitted circle pattern.* Høxbro. 2004: 6.

<sup>19</sup> Intarsia knitting, also known as geometric, tartan, collage or patchwork knitting, is the technique of picture knitting. Intarsia is accomplished by working independent blocks of colour into large geometric arrangements.

<sup>20</sup> Jacquard knitting is also referred to as Fair Isle, stranded, two-colour and double knitting. Unlike intarsia, jacquard has two-colour or multicolour motifs rather than blocks of solid colour.

Shadow knitting was specifically selected as one of the knitting techniques that would be used primarily for the Kaapse Klopse Carnival inspired theme, since this technique coincided well with the bright, colourful and magical carnival inspired theme, in addition to capturing the essence of a carnival atmosphere through the use of knitting. The shadow-knit technique furthermore creates magical optical illusionary effects, which were required for the carnival inspired theme.

#### **4.2.2.4 Free-form running stitch and odd yarn knitting**

The running stitch is the easiest embroidery stitch to do. Simply weaving a needle and a yarn or a mixture of different yarns in thickness, colour and/or texture in and out of the fabric, either in a systematic order or in a free-form manner (see FIG 4.10), forms the running stitch technique. This specific embroidery stitch can be used in knitting to duplicate knit-weave, to highlight the top of raised patterns such as narrow cables and can even be used in knitwear to fill in small geometric shapes as accent areas in clothing. This technique however causes shrinkage



**Figure 4.10. *Strands*. Stanley. 1993: 288.**

and loss of elasticity, therefore the main application for this technique is in fibre-arts (Stanley, 1993: 283 & 288).

The running stitch technique was decided upon, since this minimalist technique creates the most exquisite painterly effect with yarn. Furthermore, the running stitch technique also positively contributes to the cost considerations of the product, since the amount of yarn used for the product is significantly reduced.

Odd-yarn knitting is a knitting technique in which a mixture of yarns of different, thickness, lengths, textures and/or colour are knitted into the same knitted fabric or are combined together to form one continuous yarn which may also be used during the knitting process. This technique enables the knitter to get more variations of tone and texture into their knitted article, in addition to producing a variety of different knitted fabrics, from open and quite lacy to three-dimensional textured fabrics (Stanley, 1993: 154 and Fassett, 1999: 9).

Odd-yarn knitting (see FIG 4.11), which was used extensively throughout the product accessory range, was specifically selected to reduce the amount of high-priced wool used. Odd-yarn knitting was also decided upon to create a variety in visual and tactile interest, in addition to a variety of different knitted fabric constructions, such as delicate laces and densely knitted fabrics. Furthermore, odd-yarn knitting forms part of the South



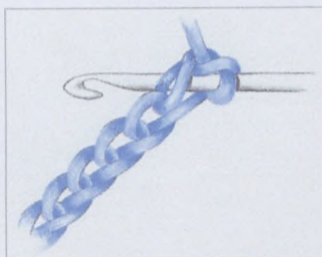
**Figure 4.11. Odd Yarn Knitting. Stipp. 2005.**

African craft identity, in the way that local South African materials, such as craft wire, ostrich leather, hand spun kid mohair and lambs wool were used in the accessory range.

#### **4.2.3 Crocheting: delicate and compact spider web laces**

The construction of crochet fabric is similar to that of knitted fabric, sine the structure of crochet fabric also utilizes one continuous yarn and a succession of juxtaposed loop stitches to create a flexible fabric. The equipment and techniques used for the production of crocheted fabric however differs from that of knitting. A single crochet hook needle and one hand pull loops through other looped stitches to create a crochet stitch, in addition to a simple foundation chain (see FIG 4.12) that is used in all crocheting patterns. The other advantage of crocheting is that the finished crocheted fabric lies away from the hook, as a result the

crocheter is able to concentrate on only the newest stitch that needs to be constructed. Crocheting also provides the freedom to effortlessly create circular



**Figure 4.12. Crocheted chain.**  
Fuchs & Natter. 1989: 9.

forms, which knitting doesn't easily permit. This is achieved using the basic crochet stitch technique, however instead of working back and forth in rows, the loops are worked around the work. Finished crocheted fabrics have a variety of unique characteristics and textures, which can dramatically alter a fabric's look. By altering the size of the crochet needle, the type of yarn and the stitch or stitches used, different fabrics, from open, delicate sheer laces (see FIG 4.13) to chunky and three-dimensional compact fabrics (see FIG 4.14) can be produced for everyday use (Malcolm, 2004: 10 & 11 and Meldrum, 2006: 8, 18, 21 & 25).



**Figure 4.13. Lace fan border.**  
Fuchs & Natter. 1989: 154.



**Figure 4.14. Bobbles worked with chains.**  
Fuchs & Natter. 1989: 94.

Crocheting was selected as the third craft technique that would be used for the development and production of the women's accessories product range, since this enabled the participants of Grandmothers Against Poverty and Aids (GAPA) to bring their existing craft skills to the project, thus fostering a sense of engagement. Furthermore, the introduction of crocheting also presented new craft techniques and textures to the project and product development process.

### 4.3 Utilization of materials

The diverse landscapes of South Africa and Namibia inspired the colour and textural palette for the accessory product range. Ninety percent of both the inexpensive and high-priced yarns<sup>21</sup> and materials<sup>22</sup> were sourced locally from South Africa and Namibia, whilst ten percent of the yarn was sourced from America and the United Kingdom. These yarns are not readily available in South Africa or Namibia and were required to fulfil the design specifications of the individualized themes. Eighty percent of the materials used was natural and twenty percent was synthetic, since particular textural effects that were required for individualized themes, could only be attained through the utilization of synthetic yarns or materials. The combination of inexpensive and costly yarns and materials in individual products additionally create visual interest, as well as provide complementary textural effects to every product.

### 4.4 Expressive bag charms

Individualized bag charms were created to accompany each handbag. All nine bag charms are unique and different from one another (see FIG 4.15 and FIG 4.16), either through the design, or materials used to create and construct them. These bag charms form part of the trademark and branding of the Fibre-Arts Design Project's handbag



Figure 4.15. *Kaapse Klopse Carnival bag charm*. Stipp. 2007.

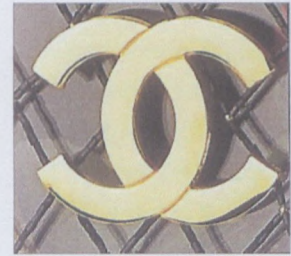


Figure 4.16. *Graphic Kalahari bag charm*. Suskin. 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Yarns include thickly hand spun karakul, hand spun lambs wool, mohair, cotton and mulberry silk. In addition to New Zealand wool, bamboo, organza ribbon, as well as polyester and nylon textured yarns.

<sup>22</sup> Materials comprised leather (ostrich, jackal, karakul, cowhide and resin leather), raffia, carded lambs wool, copper craft wire, glass and plastic beads. In addition to embroidery thread and a vast amount of different textile fabrics such as brocade, silk organza, silk satin, silk polyester and upholstery fabric.

accessory range, and were inspired by many internationally renowned handbag designers who also have a distinct method of branding their products. For example, the Louis Vuitton brand uses a monogram logo print, whereas Fendi brands their bags through the use of a bold interlocking logo buckle, whilst Judith Leiber encrusts whimsical shaped evening bags with rhinestones, and a monogram logo of interlocking “C”s placed strategically on the front of the handbag, provides the branding for Chanel (see FIG 4.17).



**Figure 4.17.** *Chanel's Gigantic interlocking C's in gold. Johnson. 2002: 259.*

#### **4.5 Establishing skills-training workshops and the accessory product range**

The fibre-art techniques discussed in this chapter were introduced in the FADP's fieldwork research design component, through the creation of two skills-training workshops (felting and knitting) and a creative workshop, which were administrated over a three-week duration with both focus group sites. The findings of each workshop are discussed thoroughly in the following chapter, in addition to an in-depth description of each individual product and the specific fibre-art techniques that were utilized to construct the products.

## CHAPTER FIVE

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### 5 Presentation of research findings

The research findings presented in this chapter have been obtained from three rounds of individual semi-structured interviews which were conducted at various times during the fieldwork research component, by means of three skills-training workshops and one product design focus group session, during the development and fabrication of the women's accessory range, and by means of market research questionnaires. First the data of the initial introductory interviews are presented and second, observational and journaling findings obtained through the three skill-training workshops and product design focus session are presented. Third, the data yielded through the midway interviews are presented and the findings obtained through the market research questionnaires are presented lastly. The definition and description of the data facilitated identification of patterns, themes and relationships, which were used in turn to develop the FADP theoretical and practical model. This model has the potential to be introduced to similar sites.

#### 5.1 Documenting the economic and social hardships of aging in Cape Town

Eighteen semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the elderly participants at the outset of the fieldwork research design component. The objective of the interviews was to firstly ascertain the different needs of the respective groups. Secondly, to explore the differences and similarities in the economic and social conditions of the two elderly sample groups who reside in the two different socio-economic income sites and the consequences thereof, and thirdly, to establish the impact that retirement has had on the participants' well-being, and whether the two sample groups would favour being



economically active. The initial interviews were conducted with nine participants at Haven Homes and nine participants at GAPA.

#### **5.1.1 Focus group one: economic status of Haven Homes participants**

Seventy seven percent of Haven Homes participants (one male and six females) received a monthly social grant of R820 during 2006, whilst the remaining 22% received nothing. The majority of the participants (55%) felt that the monthly fixed income that they received is adequate, whilst the residual participants (44 %) disagreed, and only 22% of the participants received a minor additional income from the sale of home produced articles.

The initial interviews established that 66% of the participants at Haven Homes were able to afford what are seen as luxuries. Chips, inexpensive sweets, biscuits and cake, fruit, cheese, bread, butter, sugar and tea, occasionally "Chicklets" chewing gum and cigarettes that are purchased from wholesalers, were seen as luxuries. The participants felt they were "entitled" to these luxuries (Participant 1, 2006a), since the pension is adequate (Participant 6, 2006a) and "it is their right" to buy what they want (Participant 5, 2006a). Furthermore, one's body requires certain foods to function at its optimum level (Participant 7, 2006a). Gifts are however not purchased, since they "are not necessary" (Participant 1, 2006a). It was furthermore established that one participant could only afford luxuries occasionally and two participants were financially incapable of doing so. The initial interviews indicated that the majority of the participants (55%) considered themselves poor and, if they had more money to spend, 33% of the participants would spend it on clothing and groceries, 22% would buy gifts and more luxury foods, while Participant 2 would fix a watch, purchase a nice handbag and a new hat, scarf or head wrap. Participant 5 would acquire medicine and open a savings account, while Participant 6 would purchase extra winter and summer bedding and Participant

7 would be able to place more money in her church's collection plate, as well as provide for the church's missionary work. Furthermore, Participant 8 would purchase more fruit and chocolates and Participant 9 would send money to her grandchildren.

#### **5.1.1.2 Focus group two: economic status of GAPA participants**

GAPA's participants all received some form of government subsidy, however only 66% of the participants received a monthly income of R820 (55% obtained a social grant, whilst 11% obtained a disability grant), the highest payable amount that the government allocated to the disabled and retired elderly members of society during 2006. The remaining participants (33%) either received a monthly foster care grant of R150, a new generation income support grant of R590 per month or a partial monthly disability grant of R680. All the participants considered their monthly fixed incomes as inadequate and as a result, 44% of GAPA's participants received additional financial assistance from other government subsidies and the GAPA organization for their assistance in the daily cooking of meals and the cleaning of the centre's multipurpose hall.

None of the participants are able to afford luxuries<sup>23</sup>, such as a fridge, microwave and stove, in addition to a television, ceilings, furniture, electrician, car, comfortable house and university fees. One participant states that the fixed government subsidies are not even sufficient to purchase food (Mama 6, 2006a). The majority of GAPA's participants (66%) therefore consider themselves poor. If the participants had more capital however, 44% of the participants would take the opportunity to purchase furniture, 33% would send their children and grandchildren to better schools and university, 22% would renovate their houses and 22% would build a house. Mama 3 would install running water in her house; Mama 9 would have

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<sup>23</sup> GAPA's participants and Haven Homes participants have a different concept of what luxuries are; consequently GAPA regards luxuries as expensive fixed assets, while Haven Homes regards luxuries as expensive consumable products.

ceilings and new decorative light fixtures installed in her house, as well as cupboards built into her kitchen and bedrooms. Mama 7 would purchase a new car, Mama 3 would buy clothes for herself and more food for her grandchildren, while Mama 2 would invest in a sewing machine and Mama 8 would want to return to the Eastern Cape, in order to be closer to her family.

**Table 5.1 Overview of Haven Homes and GAPA's 2006 government subsidies**

CATEGORY	HAVEN HOMES	GAPA	DIFFERENCE HH/GAPA
<b>Type of grant</b>			
Social	77%	55%	GAPA -22%
Disability		11%	GAPA +11%
Partial disability		11%	GAPA +11%
New generation income support		11%	GAPA +11%
Foster care		11%	GAPA +11%
<b>Monthly income</b>			
R820	77%	66%	GAPA -11%
R680		11%	GAPA +11%
R150		11%	GAPA +11%
R590		11%	GAPA +11%

**Table 5.2 GAPA and Haven Homes: inadequacies of government subsidies**

CATEGORY	HAVEN HOMES	GAPA	DIFFERENCE HH/GAPA
<b>Able to afford luxuries</b>			
No	22%	100%	GAPA +78%
Yes	66%		GAPA -66%
Sometimes	11%		GAPA -11%
<b>Adequate fixed income</b>			
No	44%	100%	GAPA +56%
Yes	55%		GAPA -55%
<b>Receive additional financial assistance</b>			
No	77%	55%	GAPA -22%
Yes	11%	44%	GAPA +33%
Sometimes	11%	55%	GAPA +44%
<b>Consider yourselves poor</b>			
No	44%	33%	GAPA -11%
Yes	55%	66%	GAPA +11%

### **5.1.2 Consequences of retirement and unemployment amongst the elderly participants**

Haven Homes participants are all retired and the majority of the participants (66%) had been negatively affected by retirement, while Participant 6 experienced both positive and negative effects. Three of the participants experienced feelings of uselessness, whilst four participants expressed feeling depressed as a direct result of retirement. The notion of depression occurring immediately after retirement is articulated strongly by Participant 1:

I felt depressed. I didn't know what to do with myself, because I was working all the time and suddenly it [work] was gone. I had nothing [activity] to do and felt stagnated (Participant 1, 2006a).

Retirement additionally impacted negatively on the identity of two Haven Homes participants and they consequently felt like outcasts of society, whereas one participant reported occasionally feeling like an outcast. Three participants tried to re-enter the workforce and only two were successful. Participant 4 experienced that his age prohibited him from re-entering paid employment:

... still physically and mentally capable of working, but no one will employ me. I am discriminated against because of my age ... no one understands me and my circumstances (Participant 4, 2006a).

The interviews furthermore established that the majority of the participants (88%) at Haven Homes would prefer being economically active again. Participant 1 and Participant 2 articulated why they would prefer being economically active again and expressed this sentiment:

I can do it still [work]. Age doesn't prevent me (Participant 1, 2006a).  
I need [financial] assistance therefore I must work. I don't want to be dependent on others (Participant 4, 2006a).

When asked what the financial rewards of being economically active would represent to the participants, the majority of the participants (55%) expressed that they would be able to afford luxuries and would be financially independent, while 33% of the participants expressed they would be financially independent. When asked what the social rewards would represent in being economically active, 88% of the participants expressed that activities would keep them occupied, 77% revealed that they would have an identity and purpose in life, in addition to feeling socially useful. Five participants expressed that the social rewards would imply independence, Participant 3 expressed the fact that she would have companionship, since she would have "someone to talk to and confide in" (Participant 3, 2006a), and Participant 5 would be able to visit family and friends in the Transkei on a regular basis. Participant 6 revealed that the social rewards would bring more fun to her life and Participant 7 would be far happier. The interviews established that more than half of the participants (55%) favour economic rewards over other benefits and 33% of the participants prefer the social rewards of employment.

The effects of retirement and unemployment upon the GAPA and Haven Homes participants' well-being are reflected in the table overleaf, on page 64.

**Table 5.3 Effects of retirement and unemployment upon the GAPA and Haven Homes participants' well-being**

CATEGORY	HAVEN HOMES	GAPA	DIFFERENCE HH/GAPA
<b>Impact of retirement</b>			
Negative	66%	55%	GAPA -11%
Positive	22%	33%	GAPA +11%
Uncommitted	11%	11%	
<b>Feelings of uselessness</b>			
No	66%	22%	GAPA -44%
Yes	33%	44%	GAPA +11%
Sometimes		33%	GAPA +33%
<b>Feelings of depression</b>			
No	55%	11%	GAPA -44%
Yes	44%	55%	GAPA +11%
Sometimes		33%	GAPA +33%
<b>Feel like an outcast of society</b>			
No	66%	66%	
Yes	22%	22%	
Sometimes	11%	11%	
<b>Attempted to re-enter workforce</b>			
No	66%	55%	GAPA -11%
Yes	33%	44%	GAPA +11%
<b>Successful in re-entering workforce</b>			
No	11%	44%	
Yes	22%		

All of the GAPA participants are retired and more than half (66%) of them had been affected negatively by this situation. Four of the participants as a result experienced feelings of uselessness, while 33% of the participants occasionally experienced this sentiment. Feelings of depression also existed after retirement amongst more than half (6) of the participants, with three participants occasionally feeling depressed. Two participants expressed that retirement impacted on their identity and they consequently felt like outcasts of society, whereas one participant revealed that she only felt this occasionally. The initial interview furthermore revealed that less than half of the participants had tried to re-enter the workforce and all were unsuccessful. Three of the participants thought that their age had

prohibited them from re-entering paid employment. Mama 9 articulated strongly why she thought she was denied the vacancy that she applied for:

...physically strong and experienced, but was denied the opportunity to work, because of my age and because I was [considered] out-dated and insignificant (Mama 9, 2006a).

The interview established that all the participants at GAPA favour being economically active again, if provided the opportunity, since the participants are physically strong and capable of working, as well as providing essential knowledge and expertise which was beneficial to society (Mama 9, 2006a). When asked what the economic rewards would represent to the elderly, 44% of GAPA's participants expressed that they would be able to afford luxuries, 33% revealed that they would retain financial independence and 22% of the participants expressed that they would experience both benefits. When asked what the social rewards of being economically would represent to the elderly, all the participants expressed they would be kept busy and occupied with activities, they would have their identity affirmed and have a purpose in life, they will all feel socially useful and all of the participants would be financially independent. Mama 2 however expressed that she would be able to pass on her skills, wisdom and knowledge to the younger generation. The interview established that 66% of the participants favour the social rewards connected to employment, 11% prefer the economic rewards and 22% decided on both.

**Table 5.4 Effects of being economically active again upon the Haven Homes and GAPA participants**

CATEGORY	HAVEN HOMES	GAPA	DIFFERENCE HH/GAPA
<b>Favour being economically active again</b>			
Yes	88%	100%	GAPA +12%
No	11%		GAPA -11%
<b>What would economic rewards represent</b>			
Financial independence and able to afford luxuries	55%	22%	GAPA -33%
Able to afford luxuries		44%	GAPA +44%
Financial independence	33%	33%	
<b>What would the social rewards represent</b>			
Activities to keep busy	88%	100%	GAPA +12%
Having a purpose in life	77%	100%	GAPA +23%
Feeling socially useful	77%	100%	GAPA +23%
Having more companionship	11%		GAPA -11%
Able to visit family and friends in the Transkei	11%		GAPA -11%
More happiness	11%		GAPA -11%
Able to pass on knowledge onto others		11%	GAPA +11%
More fun in life	11%		GAPA -11%
<b>Prefer the economic rewards or social rewards</b>			
Economic	55%	11%	GAPA -44%
Social	33%	66%	GAPA +33%
Social and economic		22%	GAPA +22%

### 5.1.3 Social adversities of ageing amongst Haven Homes participants

The majority of the participants (77%) at Haven Homes were satisfied with their current circumstances and 88% were content with their standard of living. The majority of the participants (66%) therefore did not feel isolated from society and did not experience loneliness (77%), since they were “living in a community home that cared about their well-being and loved them dearly, in addition to constantly having companionship” (Participant 1, 2006a). Participant 8 was the only participant to experience loneliness occasionally, since she wanted to visit and be near her children, the financial cost of transport fees however prevented her. It was furthermore established that 66% of the participants felt that their role and status in society were not negatively impacted upon by their age, however almost half the participants (44%) felt that their self-esteem and dignity were negatively affected, while 44% of the participants felt that their self-esteem and dignity were not negatively influenced in any way

by their age. The remaining 11% however experienced that their self-esteem and dignity were negatively affected occasionally, due to different cultural and belief systems. The interviews established that none of Haven Homes participants were affected by the HIV/Aids epidemic.

**Table 5.5 Social adversities of ageing amongst Haven Homes and GAPA participants**

CATEGORY	HAVEN HOMES	GAPA	DIFFERENCE HH/GAPA
<b>Current circumstances</b>			
Negative	22%	11%	GAPA -11%
Positive	77%	88%	GAPA +11%
<b>Feelings of loneliness</b>			
No	77%	44%	GAPA -33%
Yes	11%	33%	GAPA +22%
Sometimes	11%	11%	
<b>Feel isolated</b>			
No	66%	88%	GAPA +22%
Yes	33%	11%	GAPA -22%
<b>Feelings of negative self-esteem and dignity</b>			
No	44%	88%	GAPA +44%
Yes	44%		GAPA -44%
Sometimes	11%		GAPA -11%
<b>Feelings of negative status in society</b>			
No	66%	77%	GAPA +11%
Yes	33%	22%	GAPA -11%
<b>Satisfactory standard of living</b>			
No	11%	22%	GAPA +11%
Yes	88%	77%	GAPA -11%
<b>Affected by HIV/ Aids</b>			
No	100%	11%	GAPA -89%
Yes		88%	

### 5.1.3.1 Social adversities of ageing amongst GAPA participants

The initial interview furthermore established that the majority of GAPA's participants (88%) were content with their current circumstances and 77% of the participants were satisfied with their standard of living, since they have "accepted their situation" as it is (Mama 1, 2006a), and are "grateful" for what they do have (Mama 4, 2006a) since they are unable to change their circumstances (Mama 8, 2006a). Almost all the participants (88%) did not feel isolated from society and only one participant occasionally felt lonely, while four of the

participants expressed that they did not experience emotions of loneliness. This sentiment was articulated strongly by Mama 8:

The community loves and cares for me, because I am an active member of the society. The community also doesn't discriminate against my age, but sees me as someone who can contribute to the community and help [the community] where it is needed. I was therefore selected to be part of the street community (Mama 8, 2006a).

It was noted that 88% of the participants' self-esteem and dignity were not negatively affected by retirement and 77% of the participants indicated their role and status in their society were not negatively affected by retirement either. The interviews also ascertained that eight participants were affected negatively by the HIV/Aids epidemic and consequently, 88% of the participants suffered from emotional strain or trauma, in addition to the physical burden of taking care of their ill children. Seven participants lost the financial support from their children (middle-income group) due to Aids, while 55% revealed that they were stigmatised and 66% of the participants took on the economic burden of caring for their ill children, including the medical expenses and funeral costs, as well as looking after their orphaned grandchildren and their school expenses.

## **5.2 Observations of introductory workshops and product design focus group**

Observations and journaling were carried out progressively throughout the fieldwork component in order to document, explore and determine whether any changes had occurred amongst the two focus groups sites and the individual elderly participants. The skills-training workshop sessions and product design focus group sessions' observations and journaling findings are presented in this section, whilst the findings will be analysed in the next chapter.

The workshop sessions and Product Design Focus Group Session (PDFGS) were held to ascertain which focus group site had more skills, knowledge, and a stronger need to participate in the Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP). Strengths and weaknesses in the sample groups were identified and techniques, colour schemes, trends, skills training and other relevant information shared. The workshop sessions also established which handcraft activities the elderly participants and focus group sites were interested in, and who was the most skilful at colour combinations. Two introductory skills-training workshops (felting and knitting) and one creative workshop were carried out over a three-week period with all eighteen elderly participants (Haven Homes and GAPA). The felting workshop presented a new craft skill to the elderly participants and established which participants enjoyed felting, in addition to ascertaining which elderly participants were able to execute the felting technique innovatively or accurately. The knitting workshop in turn provided the participants with new knitting stitches and techniques, and established which participants were able to knit, which knitting stitches the individual elderly participants were already familiar with and which of the two sample groups and individual participants were able to interpret and read complicated shadow knitting patterns that required concentration and good eyesight.

**Table 5.6 Accumulation of skills and knowledge before intervention**

	<b>Haven Homes</b>	<b>GAPA</b>
<b>Craft</b>	Knitting and Crocheting	Knitting, Crocheting, Sewing, Bead Work & Construction of Teddy Bear Components.
<b>Knitting Stitches</b>	Plain and Purl	Plain and Purl
<b>Crochet Stitches</b>	Slip Stitch & Working in Rounds.	Slip Stitch, Double Crochet, Extended Double Crochet, Treble, Half Treble, Double Treble, Working in Rounds & Lace Work.
<b>Utility Objects</b>	Peg Bags & Bed Throws	Handbags, Purses, Berets & Scarves
<b>Skill</b>	Reading Knitting & Crochet Patterns	Able to create shaped items utilizing cardboard templates. Familiar with Consignment Orders & Deadlines.

A creative workshop was presented to each focus group site (Haven Homes and GAPA), in order to provide a platform for the elderly to bring and share their existing craft skills and knowledge with me and others in the group. This creative workshop focused primarily on crocheted samples that displayed the various stitches, patterns and possible forms and utility objects that can be created with this specific craft technique. Participants in both focus groups were apprehensive about creating experimental samples and as a result asked me what they should produce, even after explanations and showcasing experimental fibre-art techniques and examples from different craft books. I enquired who was able to crochet and advised these participants to crochet any item they wished, since I was not familiar with this craft skill and wanted to see how crocheted fabrics are formed, in order to incorporate this technique into the product range. The samples progressed well with a variety of shapes and forms resulting from different crocheting stitches, media and colour combinations. I encouraged a few participants to interpret a crocheted bullion-stitched circle pattern. The creative workshop consequently established which focus group site was more acquainted and

knowledgeable about the skill of bullion-stitched<sup>24</sup> crocheting and who would be able to contribute successfully to the production of high-quality accessories.

**Table 5.7 Accumulation of skills and knowledge after intervention (newly acquired skills in red)**

	Haven Homes	GAPA
<b>Craft</b>	Knitting, Crocheting & <b>Felting (wet and resist).</b>	Knitting, Crocheting, Sewing, Bead Work & <b>Felting (wet and resist).</b>
<b>Knitting Stitches</b>	Plain, Purl, <b>Elongated, Loop, Running Stitch, Openwork Patterning, Shadow Knitting &amp; Odd-yarn Knitting.</b>	Plain, Purl, <b>Elongated, Loop, Running</b> Stitch, Openwork Patterning, Shadow Knitting & Odd-yarn Knitting.
<b>Crochet Stitches</b>	Slip Stitch, Working in Rounds & <b>Bullion Circles.</b>	Slip Stitch, Double Crochet, Extended Double Crochet, Treble, Half Treble, Double Treble, Working in Rounds & Lace Work. No Bullion Circles, unable to read pattern.
<b>Skills Brought to the FADP (existing and new)</b>	Knitting (Openwork Patterning & Shadow Knitting) & Crocheting in Rounds. Reading more intricate knitting & crochet patterns.	Knitting (Elongated, Loop, Running, Openwork patterning & Shadow Knitting), Crocheting & Felting. Improved time management. Improved communication skills.

A product design focus group session (PDFGS) was conducted with each elderly sample group after the creative workshop. The PDFGS was conducted to allow the elderly participants to be involved in the design and development of the accessory product range. The PDFGS also determined how many, and which accessories would be produced for the product range. The PDFGS furthermore determined the amount of production that would occur at the GAPA and Haven Homes focus group sites and which participants would manufacture which accessories and accessory components. The PDFGS was important to the development of the product range, since this allowed the participants' own design ideas and concepts to be

<sup>24</sup> Crochet stitch that is also sometimes referred to as the rolled stitch. It is a relatively little-known stitch, since it is one of the most difficult crochet techniques to master. It is similar in appearance to the bullions made in embroidery. The bullion stitch can be worked into either a length of crochet chain, rounds or when used in various configurations, unusual crochet motifs and designs such as a shell shape can be produced.

considered and implemented into the final product designs, whilst simultaneously ascertaining how the participants perceived their own contribution to the project.

**Table 5.8 Planned production of accessories**

Theme	Haven Homes	GAPA	Researcher	Date (2006)
<b>Bushveld Cowgirl</b>	Scarf: knit scarf base & pockets.	Tote: knit outer façades & leather strap Scarf: running stitch on pockets.		31/08 - 8/09 7/09 - 15/09
<b>Graphic Kalahari</b>		Bag: crochet base & knit outer façade. Shawl: crochet four chevron-stripped scarf panels.		1/09 - 8/09 6/10 - 13/10
<b>Shakaland Peacock Queen</b>	Shawl: crochet circles	Bag: knit outer façade	Bag: knit loop handle	14/09 - 22/09
<b>Kaapse Klopse Carnival</b>	Knit tie scarf & circular poncho.	Boulster Handbag	Bag: Leather Lining	31/08 - 15/09
<b>Highveld Charleston</b>	Knit capelet & rectangular components for evening pochette.			7/09 - 15/09
<b>Skeleton Coast</b>		Crocheted circles for the wedding bag. Summer & winter wedding shawls.		31/08 - 8/09 31/08 - 15/09
<b>Garbo's Luxury caprice Capetown Castle Liner</b>	Poncho: knit two garter stitched panels & one feather openwork stitched panel.	Bag: crochet abstract components. Poncho: knit one elegant elongated stitched panel.	Bag: ruche outer façade & blanket stitch.	28/09 - 13/10
<b>Wild Durbs</b>		Knit poncho-wrap. Bag: crochet lace work		31/08 - 15/09 6/10 - 13/10
<b>Opulent Fynbos Gypsy</b>	Shawls: knit openwork & shadow knitted squares. Bag: knit square components.	Shawls: crocheted components. Bag: crocheted components.	Blanket stitch bag & shawls.	31/08 - 15/09 31/08 - 15/09 14/09 - 21/09

The GAPA and Haven Homes participants' response and reaction towards the design themes selected for the product range will be discussed in 5.2.4 on page 78.

**Table 5.9 Actual production of accessories**

Theme	Haven Homes	GAPA	Researcher	Date (2006/2007)
Bushveld Cowgirl	Scarf: knit scarf base & pockets	Tote: knit outer façades & leather strap Scarf: running stitch on pockets.		31/8/06 - 15/9/06 10/11/06 - 15/11/06
Graphic Kalahari		Bag: crochet base & knit outer façade.	Out-sourced shawl: crochet four chevron- striped scarf panels.	1/09/06 - 8/09/06 6/10/06 - 20/10/06
Shakaland Peacock Queen		Bag: knit outer façade Shawl: crochet circles	Bag: knit felted loop stitched handle	1/09/06 - 8/09/06 6/10/06 - 13/10/06
Kaapse Klopse Carnival		Boulster Handbag	Bag: Leather Lining. Completed tie scarf. Out-sourced Poncho.	1/09/06 - 15/09/06 7/09/06 - 14/09/06 22/09/06 - 6/10/06
Highveld Charleston		Knitted evening pochette components.	Out-sourced capelet.	2/3/07 - 9/3/07 6/10/06 - 20/10/06
Skeleton Coast		Crocheted circles for the wedding bag. Winter wedding shawl. Summer wedding shawl.	Out-sourced completed winter wedding shawl.	1/09/06 - 8/09/06 1/09/06 - 22/09/06 22/09/06 - 6/10/06 22/09/06
Garbo's Luxury caprice Capetown Castle Liner		Bag: crochet abstract components. Poncho: knit one elegant elongated stitched panel & two garter stitched panels.	Bag: ruched outer façade & blanket stitch. Poncho: one feather openwork stitched panel.	8/09/06 - 15/09/06 20/10/06 - 27/10/06
Wild Durbs		Knit poncho-wrap.	Completed poncho-wrap. Bag.	1/0/069 - 15/11/06 20/11/06 - 22/11/06 9/3/07 - 16/3/07
Opulent Fynbos Gypsy	Knitted one openwork & shadow knitted square.	Shawls: crocheted components. Bag: crocheted & knitted components.	Bag & shawls: blanket stitch. Shawls: openwork & shadow knitted squares.	8/09/06 - 6/10/06 6/10/06 - 27/10/06 2/3/07 - 9/3/07

The actual production of the accessories took much longer than anticipated, since the GAPA focus group site did the majority of the manufacturing. I was also more involved in the production process and four of the accessories (mainly the Graphic Kalahari interchangeable four-panel shawl, Kaapse Klopse Carnival circular poncho, Highveld Charleston's capelet and Skeleton Coast's winter shawl) were out-sourced for completion and fabrication, since the

patterns for these items needed a knitter and crotchetier who were knowledgeable about intricate knitting and crochet patterns.

### 5.2.1 Felting workshop: dejected and delighted participation

The Haven Homes felting workshop observations showed that all the participants disliked the felting workshop and many of the participants were not physically (44%) or mentally (33%) capable of executing the wet, resist and Nuno felt techniques thoroughly and accurately. It was also observed that the participants were apprehensive and cautious about incorporating colour into their felted handbag designs, and were not adequately skilled in their colour combinations, consequently, all the handbags produced during this workshop either disintegrated or were of poor quality and handcraftsmanship. The designs of the felted handbags furthermore lacked experimental and textural variety, therefore making the handbags appear insipid and unattractive (see FIG 5.1).



Figure 5.1. *Haven Homes resist felted handbags.* Stipp. 2007.

At the GAPA focus group site it was documented and observed that all the participants enjoyed the felting workshop and were enthusiastic to learn more about the different felting processes and techniques (see Appendix 5). GAPA's felting workshop furthermore revealed that all the participants were capable of performing the wet, resist and Nuno felt techniques thoroughly and accurately. The participants were not apprehensive about incorporating colour and a variety of textures into their handbag designs, in addition to being adequately skilled in colour combinations (see FIG 5.2). The designs of



Figure 5.2. *GAPA felting workshop.* Stipp. 2006.

GAPA's felted handbags were as a result visually and texturally interesting, aesthetically pleasing and of a high quality.

### **5.2.2 Knitting workshop: challenging techniques and exciting outcomes**

The observations conducted during the knitting workshop at Haven Homes revealed that 66% of the participants could already knit and were familiar with the two basic knitting stitches (plain and purl), while the remaining participants were inexperienced, but were eager to learn how to knit, this also included the only male participant. It was also established during the knitting workshop that Participant 1 was the only experienced knitting participant who was able to read and understand the intricate knitting patterns of shadow knit and open work pattern, in addition to being able to knit the loop stitch, elongated stitch and pick-up stitch. The remaining participants (88%) were unable to knit the new stitches, since all of them either suffered from poor eyesight, arthritis and mental ailments, and as a result were unable to comprehend the techniques which were used to create these stitches. It was furthermore observed that the running stitch technique was attainable for most of the participants (66%), while 22% of the participants, who suffered from poor eyesight and arthritis, asked the participants who were able to execute the running stitch technique to help them complete their samples. It was furthermore observed that all the participants needed guidance from me and were unable to employ the running stitch technique initially.

At GAPA's knitting workshop it was documented that the majority of the participants (88%) could knit and were familiar with the basic knitting stitches of plain and purl, while the remaining participants were keen to learn how to knit. It was also observed throughout the workshop that all the participants were unable to read and interpret complicated shadow knit patterns and openwork patterns (utilized to create a sheer lace wave effect), however the

majority of the participants (77%) were able to grasp and knit the pick-up stitch (utilized to create pleats and ruched effects) and the elongated stitch (see FIG 5. 3). It was also observed that all the participants disliked the loop stitch, even though 66% of the participants were able to knit the loop stitch technique. Mama 9 explained that the loop stitch technique was challenging to knit, since the larger third knitting needle, which was used to create the



**Figure 5.3. GAPA knitting workshop. Stipp. 2006.**

loops in the loop stitch, was too cumbersome to hold and problematic to manoeuvre, and was “very difficult to knit with” (Mama 9, 2006 ws2). All the participants, with some guidance from me, mastered the running stitch technique. It was also documented that Mama 7 was the only GAPA participant who took it upon herself to incorporate the running stitch technique with other fibre-art techniques, without guidance.

### **5.2.3 Creative workshop: inferior and superior experimental handcraft skills**

At the Haven Homes focus group site it was observed that the majority of the participants (77%) were unable to crochet, however one participant was good at leatherwork, whilst Participant 4 (the only male participant) was excellent at designing intricate, ornate and functional wooden articles. The creative workshop also documented that Participant 1, after some



**Figure 5.4. Participant 1's bullion-stitched circle. Stipp. 2007.**

encouragement and guidance from me, taught herself how to crochet a bullion-stitched circle (see FIG 5.4). It was also observed and documented that Participant 1 crocheted her sample pieces with a loose tension. The participants were not accustomed to handcraft experimentation and therefore needed a significant amount of encouragement, guidance and help to produce experimental fibre-art samples.

Throughout GAPA's creative workshop it was observed that all the participants were far more at ease and relaxed at creating crocheted samples, than they were during the knitting workshops. Mama 9 (2006 ws2) explained "crocheting is more comfortable for us", since this is the handcraft activity that is most frequently used to earn them



**Figure 5.5. Variety of crocheted samples. Stipp. 2007.**

an additional income and to create items for their own personal use. It was also observed that the participants were happy to share their crocheting skills and knowledge with others in the group and with me. They did, however, require some encouragement and guidance as to what they should crochet. The participants nonetheless created a variety of high quality samples that ranged from a diverse selection of handbags, various forms of flowers and butterflies (see FIG 5.5), and much more.

#### **5.2.4 Design focus group: co-operative exchange and sharing of design wisdom**

Haven Homes participants decided during the design focus group session that the "Bushveld cowgirl pocket scarf" (see FIG 6. 4, page 92) should be produced with only two detachable pockets and not eight pockets, as was originally intended. The "Shakaland peacock queen" storyboard received the most interest and the participants were eager to produce the components that would make up the accessories for this specific theme. All the participants were satisfied with the intended product range that was going to be produced for the women's accessory range, and gave their input in a variety of ways to develop the range.

At GAPA's product design focus group the participants also decided that the "Bushveld cowgirl pocket scarf" should be produced with only two detachable pockets, and they too took a great interest in wanting to produce the components for the "Shakaland

peacock queen” accessory range. It was noted that Mama 7 wanted to be more involved in the development of the accessory range. She consequently produced a crocheted peacock, using the “Shakaland peacock queen” storyboards (see Appendix 4) as her inspiration, from an assortment of discarded wool yarns (see FIG 5. 6). She



**Figure 5.6. Mama 7's crocheted peacock. Stipp. 2007.**

took it upon herself to design and create her own collection of knitted pocket scarves and shared the end products with me and the participants.

### **5.3 Effect of acquiring new craft skills on the well-being of the elderly participants**

Individual interviews were administered to the remaining eight GAPA participants and three Haven Home participants, after the completion of the three-week skills-training workshop and focus group session. One member passed away at Haven Homes, while the other Haven Homes members dropped out for the following reasons: one participant found paid employment, some of the participants found the workshops too strenuous physically, especially the felting workshop and many of the participants lost interest in the FADP, since they suffered from mental ailments. The second round of interviews were conducted so as to establish which workshop/s the elderly focus groups favoured the most, if they felt they had acquired any new knowledge from the workshops and if the elderly participants were already implementing some of the newly gained craft knowledge and techniques with their existing craft skills and production of own merchandise. The midway interviews were also conducted to explore the impact of the FADP on their handcraft skills and on their personal well-being, while examining the opportunities that the elderly foresaw in future collaboration with the FADP.

### 5.3.1 Newly acquired design knowledge, craft expertise and techniques

The interviews yielded evidence that the participants learnt a great deal about colour combinations and odd yarn knitting, and how it was now possible for them to knit and create products with a variety of media, from different wool yarns and discarded material off-cuts to natural and plastic raffia. The midway interviews also established that the remaining three participants at Haven Homes and almost half of GAPA's participants (44%) favoured the knitting workshop, since knitting did not affect their arthritic fingers, hands and arms to the degree that felting had done. Knitting was also experienced as "easier" (Participant 3, 2006b) to execute than felting, and the newly acquired knitting techniques could be integrated with their existing knitting skills to produce handmade articles which could be sold for an additional income. From these interviews it became clear that Participant 1, at the Haven Homes focus group site, enjoyed the creative workshop, since it allowed her to creatively express herself through knitting. Additionally, Participant 3 learnt that different fibre-art techniques and media could be combined with one another, whilst Participant 1 and Participant 2 enjoyed learning about the product development process.

Only one participant from the GAPA focus group site enjoyed all three workshops (felting, knitting and creative). GAPA's participants confirmed that the newly acquired knitting techniques easily integrated with their existing knitting skills and as a result, would be used in future production of their own merchandise, such as scarves and handbags. The acquisition of new knitting skills and techniques is clearly articulated by Mama 7:

I knew how to knit long ago, but just basic knitting [stitches]. I have now learnt advanced [knitting] skills and will therefore flourish as an excellent knitter (Mama 7, 2006b).

Two of GAPA's participants expressed however that they preferred the creative workshop, since that specific workshop gave them the platform to express themselves

creatively, through the development of their own products *and* utilization of their crocheting techniques. The creative workshop additionally allowed the participants to improve on their existing crocheting skills and designs. The remaining participant favoured the felting workshop, since the workshop exposed her to a unique fibre-art craft and she consequently “really liked the idea” of felting (Mama 5, 2006b). The felting workshop furthermore taught her about colour combinations and confirmed that she would be able to make use of the different felting techniques in the future.

Mama 9 (2006b) and Mama 6 (2006b) additionally expressed during the midway interview that the product design focus group session taught them that a single concept, “Shakaland peacock queen” storyboard in this instance, contains various colour combinations which could be utilized to design a variety of products. Mama 7 (2006b) explained that the product design focus group session taught her that she could “crochet any shape [form – peacock] with anything [medium – wire]”; while Mama 5 stated that the handbag designs were “extremely fantastic” (Mama 5, 2006b).

### **5.3.2 Empowerment and an improvement in emotional well-being amongst participants**

The three remaining Haven Homes participants (refer to 5.3, page 77) expressed that the FADP had a positive impact on all of them, since the skills-training workshops were something to look forward to, whilst keeping them busy and productive throughout the day. All three participants experienced an improvement in their emotional well-being, two participants felt happier and one participant felt empowered by the FADP. The interviews established that all three participants foresaw the FADP providing them with an additional income and improving their socio-economic positions, while participant 1 and participant 3

anticipated that they would become socially useful once more and be accepted by society. The participants additionally anticipated no threats towards the FADP's success and sustainability, since, while the FADP is targeted at alleviating poverty amongst the elderly, the FADP may also be generalized to other sites and focus groups as a model.

All of the remaining eight participants at GAPA expressed that the skills-training workshops had in some form impacted on them personally and as a result, 55% of the participants revealed that their emotional well-being had improved and 44 % experienced empowerment. One participant felt empowered to the degree that she started to communicate more with other people and her peers, one participant became interested in fibre-arts once again, whilst three participants felt happier and were more confident with themselves and their craft abilities. Mama 1 articulated this sentiment strongly in her response as to how the FADP impacted on her personally:

I feel empowered and confident to the extent that I can sell my [handcrafted] products around all the [surrounding Khayelitsha] neighbourhoods and even go to town [Cape Town] to sell to the white people [tourists] and other cultural groups (Mama 1, 2006b)

Mama 1 and Mama 6 also expressed during the midway interviews that they wanted to transfer the skills that they had learnt to neighbours and fellow GAPA peers, Mama 6 in addition anticipated that the FADP would provide her with an additional income. Mama 7 expressed that she was proud of herself for learning and mastering the new craft skills whilst Mama 5 revealed that she was passionate to create and produce her own product range, which would be sold so as to ensure a steady flow of income for herself. Mama 4 revealed that the FADP has encouraged her to dream again and she consequently sees herself managing and owning her factory.

The midway interviews had also established that 44% of GAPA's participants had, by the beginning of September 2006, integrated the knitting techniques into their own product development. An example of this was Mama 5 who created her own handbags. All the participants at GAPA anticipated no threats to the FADP and only wished success for the FADP. The majority of the participants (66%) forecast that the FADP would improve their socio-economic position and two participants foresaw the FADP providing them with some form of income-generation. Two participants also foresaw the FADP empowering more elderly and GAPA co-operatives, whilst 44% of the participants anticipated transferring the skills that they had acquired to other GAPA members and co-operatives. This was articulated by Mama 1 who described that she could:

... go back to the Transkei, with the new techniques that I have I learnt for myself, and teach the new techniques to the members of the GAPA group there (Mama 1, 2006b).

#### **5.4 Establishing the marketability of the women's accessory range**

Preliminary market research was conducted at the 2007 Designer Achiever Awards (DAA) in Johannesburg, where I was a finalist. The reason for this is that the DAA recognises design talent, and also seeks out, embraces and awards leadership in design and entrepreneurial potential in student designers studying in any design field at a South African or African tertiary institution. The DAA are therefore instrumental in promoting and stimulating South Africa's design and manufacturing industries (SABS Design Institute, 2009). The week long workshops at the DAA also helped me to learn more about the world of business and nurtured the sustainable development of the FADP model, since the DAA provided a creative environment to establish the guiding principles and ethos [Hands-on, Minds-on and Hearts-on (SABS Design Institute, 2009)] that will lead to the success of the FADP model, as well as a difference in the lives of the elderly in South Africa.

Market research was also conducted through survey questionnaires (19 respondents) at the 2008 Design Indaba expo and conference, so as to ascertain the marketability of the range of women's accessories. This included feedback regarding which accessories appealed more to the South African public and international clientele, and whether the costing of the products was competitive.

#### 5.4.1 A worthy and valuable investment

Through the nineteen market research survey questionnaires it was established that the product range appealed to both men and women, it was, however, later (during the four day Emerging Creatives at the Design Indaba expo, where the survey questionnaires were administered every day) determined that the product range appealed more to women (84%) than men (16%). The questionnaires also established that the majority of the respondents, who took an interest in the product accessory range, were aged between twenty and thirty-nine (47%), and forty and fifty-nine (32%), while 5% of the respondents were between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, and the

remaining 5% were aged between sixty and sixty-nine. The survey questionnaires furthermore documented that only one respondent liked all the products, while four respondents admired the handbags, since the designs were original and the texture and colour combinations were different and unique, therefore making them "beautiful and practical" (Respondent 14, 2008). The Graphic Kalahari bucket bag appealed to 11% of the respondents, the Highveld



Figure 5.7. *Emerging Creatives stand at the 2008 Design Indaba. Stipp, 2008.*



Figure 5.8. *Close up of product range, exhibited at the 2008 Design Indaba. Stipp, 2008.*

Charleston evening bag appealed to only 5% of the respondents and respondent 12 admired the Kaapse Klopse handbag. Respondent 12 explained that the three detachable and interchangeable Velcro strips were “ingenious”, especially the cerise and gold organza ribbon Velcro strips, and the cerise and gold beaded and dangling pom-pom Velcro strips which could also be utilized individually as a choker (Respondent 12, 2008). More than half of the respondents (55%) favoured the opulent fynbos Gypsy travel bag and Bushveld cowgirl tote, since both bags were interesting, unique, and special, and varied in their design and usage of materials. Respondent 9 articulated that as a graphic design student she carried too many things around and required one bag to house all her effects. She expressed this sentiment:

... like the working women bag [Bushveld cowgirl tote], because ... I can put my rolled up drawings where there is an umbrella [component]. I just love it (Respondent 9, 2008).

Respondent 1 however articulated that the tote appealed to him the most, since it was a “different take on boring laptop bags” (Respondent 1, 2008). Respondent 5 and Respondent 8 favoured the Skeleton Coast summer wedding shawl, since:

The variation of textures make for an interesting piece, it is striking and versatile and truly an original (Respondent 5, 2008).  
It was amazing to see how the use of silk and felt could be combined (Respondent 8).

One respondent admired the winter wedding shawl and one respondent liked both bridal shawls. Respondent 12 admired all the textured knitted handbags and scarves, while Respondent 6 favoured the Gypsy wrap, and Respondent 10 liked all the long scarves. The analysis of the market research questionnaires revealed that Respondent 12 was not fond of the crocheted accessories, but the knitted accessories appealed to her the most, the handbags did not appeal to Respondent 6, seeing as her high-end fashion clientele only purchase scarves and Respondent 3 did not like the Wild Drubs whimsical handbag, given that the bag’s button

“embellishment felt confused in its patterning” (Respondent 3, 2008). Respondent 3 also articulated that he looked for fasteners – be it in either the form of press-studs or magnetic clip fasteners – but he felt that the existing closing mechanism was not sufficient. The market research furthermore determined that the majority of the respondents (95%) expressed that they were fond of the combination and assortment of materials that were used in the fabrication of the product range, since they created “wonderful textured and unique” products (Respondent 18, 2008). Respondent 6 furthermore articulated that the assortment of materials:

Adds depth of texture that is engaging and will keep the user from getting bored with [the] product (Respondent 6, 2008).

Respondent 3 was the only respondent who did not like the assortment of materials that were utilized in the product range. He felt that the various combinations of materials distracted from the “purity” of the wool that was used primarily throughout the fabrication of the product range, and as a result would have preferred only wool being utilized in the product range, since this would remain “more true to the product” range (Respondent 3, 2008). Respondent 3 did not approve of the various colour combinations either, which were made use of in the accessory product range, and would have appreciated more “warm and natural tones” (Respondent 3, 2008). However, 90% of the respondents liked the various colour combinations. Respondent 16 and Respondent 17 explained that colour is a personal preference and Respondent 17 furthermore expressed that if there was not variety in the colour schemes, it would not have been possible for the product range to have wide appeal. Consequently, having a variety of colour combinations ensures that the product range appeals to most people “at first sight” (Respondent 17, 2008). Respondent 10 additionally expressed that the various colour combinations were “fashionable but not too funky” (Respondent 10, 2008). This sentiment was also strongly articulated by Respondent 5 who stated that:

They [colour combinations] are not horribly shocking and give a feeling of naturalism (Respondent 5, 2008).

Two of the respondents liked the various colour combinations that were utilized in the product range, but one respondent would have “preferred more green, khaki beige and paprika colours” (Respondent 1, 2008), while one respondent thought that there were not sufficient purple hues and tones. All the respondents liked the various craft techniques that were used. This sentiment was strongly articulated by Respondent 12 who expressed that she “loved the textured, tactile feel” of the various products, which was created with the “clever use of different stitches and yarns” (Respondent 12, 2008). Respondent 2 also expressed this sentiment by explaining that:

[The] varying techniques in a single product accentuate each other and show artistic attention (Respondent 2, 2008).

Similarly, Respondent 18 expressed her approval of the different craft techniques used and the effect that it had on the overall design of the products:

Stunning. Makes each product unique. Looks handmade, but with class. Made especially for the [international] buyer (Respondent 18, 2008).

One respondent articulated that the various crafts made “the wear” of the accessories interesting (Respondent 17, 2008), while Respondent 19 expressed that the various craft techniques utilized gave a “different perspective on crocheting and knitting”, consequently making it “appealing to the eye” (Respondent 19, 2008). The market research also showed that whilst the majority of the respondents (85%) liked the versatility of the products, it was most strongly articulated by one respondent who expressed that the products “will prevent boredom and the need to buy another shawl” (Respondent 6, 2008). Respondent 18 also expressed this sentiment by stating that the accessories could be “worn with anything” to

create a smart or casual look (Respondent 18, 2008), while one respondent expressed that the versatility of the products allowed one to “create your own identity” (Respondent 4, 2008).

The survey questionnaires also ascertained that 58% of the respondents would not want to alter or modify the designs of any products, whilst 16% of the respondents wanted to change the shape of the Wild Durbs whimsical handbag and wanted finer textured scarves and shawls. Two of the respondents also wanted to see more simplified and clean designs. Respondent 5 and Respondent 11 articulated that the product designs are unique and eye-catching, and should therefore not be altered, while Respondent 19 expressed that creativity should be celebrated. The majority of the respondents (79%) were consequently prepared to pay the asking price of the products, 16% of the respondents were not really eager to pay the asking price and 5% could not afford the asking price. Respondent 12, who was prepared to pay the asking price, expressed that paying for a designer object with multiple functions would be a pleasure for her, while Respondent 18 was prepared to pay for the “time and talent” that went in to creating the products (Respondent 18, 2008). Three respondents would pay the asking price, since the products are handmade, unique, and durable, and would as a result “turn heads” (Respondent 1, 2008). Respondent 13 however articulated that she would pay the asking price, since the purchasing of the products would prove to be “worthy and valuable investments” for the future (Respondent 13, 2008), while Respondent 5 would pay since the products are “environmentally friendly” and she would be supporting a good cause (Respondent 5, 2008). This response underpinned the purpose of the study, which is the creation of a locally designed product range that is based on design for development, but that also offers exclusive design solutions and desirability.

## **5.5 Practical study: development and fabrication of the fibre-art accessory range**

The skill-training workshops and product design focus group sessions formed the basis of the product development phase. The handcraft activities took the form of knitting, crocheting, felting (resist and Nuno) and leather work which ultimately found expression in a range of women's accessories, which included scarves, shawls, ponchos, wraps, capelets, handbags and handbag charms. Prototypes and patterns (see Appendix 7) were developed cooperatively with the focus groups, thus giving the elderly the opportunity to bring and share their creative skills at these workshops and product design focus group sessions, and thus attempting to preserve disused and forgotten craft skills and knowledge. This also ensured ownership of the project and products by all the participants. Prototypes remained with the focus groups so that they could constantly refer to the different techniques. I conducted regular fieldwork sessions with the elderly to interact creatively with them and to record observations, as well as to document the process. At the end of the determined period of time (from July 2006 to March 2007), a range of women's accessories was tested at different venues to obtain market input and economic viability. The economic outcome, (both from the elderly's perspective and the potential market success of the FADP) however, was not the only important aspect for the research project. A positive emotional outcome was also important in that another specific focus of the project was to empower them emotionally by renewing and restoring neglected craft skills and knowledge and to include the elderly in society once more, an argument also advanced by Stothert (1998). The next chapter describes the development and fabrication of the accessory range in detail.

## CHAPTER SIX

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### 6 Presentation of the fibre-art accessories range developed during the FADP

The findings of the development and fabrication of the women's accessory range are presented in this chapter.

#### 6.1 Bushveld cowgirl tote

Design elements from America's past and current cowgirl fashions, as well as horse riding apparatus, details, line dancing and traditional folk embroideries constituted the inspiration for the overall theme and colour combinations in the Bushveld cowgirl tote (Galliera, 2005: 57, 88 & 95). Cowboys and cowgirls formed part of America's pioneering history (roughly from the end of the



Figure 6.1. *Spacious Tote*. Stipp. 2007.

American Civil War [1861-1865] to the 1890's) and this aspect is shared in South African history (from the beginning of 1835 and lasting into the early 1840's). The design of the Bushveld cowgirl tote was inspired by the fact that many women lead an active lifestyle and as a result require one capacious handbag, which is capable of housing and concealing the vast diversity of everyday items<sup>25</sup> that are used nowadays to survive in the urban environment (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 21, 24, 36 & 43 and Johnson, 2002: 356 & 408). The size (50cm in length X 30cm in height X 10cm in width) and shape of the Bushveld cowgirl tote was

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<sup>25</sup> These items could include: a cell phone, purse, chequebook, an electronic organizer, cosmetics and cosmetic bag, hand lotion, perfume, brush, mirror, house and car keys, garage door remote, glasses, sunglasses, notepad, pens and pencils, tissues, breath fresheners, medication, moist towelettes, tampons, magazines, paperbacks, socks, shoes, scarf, pantyhose, stamps, sewing kit, tape measure, gloves, photographs, a music sound system like an ipod, digital camera and a bottle of water.

specifically designed to fulfil the practical needs of amongst others the modern career woman and female academic student. A classical elliptical and rectangular shape – inspired by the simple and functional forms of early 1900’s American postal satchels (see Appendix 6.1) and hunting bags – was decided upon as the shape that would be used for the Bushveld cowgirl tote. A horizontal design was specifically selected, since this would allow sizeable horizontal items such as A4 files, books and a laptop to be effortlessly accommodated and well organized, thus guaranteeing quick and easy access to them (See FIG 6.1).

Ensuring that the tote never becomes cluttered and disorganized, required three separate compartments. The middle compartment, which was created using a durable, reversible Damask woven upholstery fabric and antique brass zip, was specifically designed to store confidential and valuable possessions, such as a purse and chequebook. In contrast, the two hardwearing blue denim compartments, on either side of the middle compartment, are used to hold larger items. Provision for smaller everyday items such as keys, glasses, tissues, perfume, lipstick and a cell phone was also made. Four small supplementary chocolate brown suede pockets, in addition to a cosmetic holder and a cell phone pouch were placed along the length of the denim compartments, in order to organise the inside of the tote (see FIG 6.2). Loose coins can be stored in the penny photo pocket, which was strategically placed on the felted karakul flap that covers the crocheted tan-brown cotton façade. The penny photo pocket (inspired by Victorian opulent souvenir bags [see Appendix 6.2] featuring hand coloured lithographs to document wealthy Victorians year-long European



**Figure 6.2.** *Storage for confidential possessions and everyday items.* Stipp. 2007.



**Figure 6.3.** *Provision for an umbrella.* Stipp. 2007.

honeymoons) allows women to display their individuality through the use of photographs or business cards that can be updated on a regular basis. Furthermore, three detachable denim fasteners at the external base of the Bushveld cowgirl tote (see FIG 6.3), serve as an umbrella carrier for quick and easy access to the umbrella when required.

The tote's exterior features an assortment of fibre-art techniques and contrasting media to create visual interest and provide complementary textural effects. The façade of the Bushveld cowgirl tote was crocheted in tan brown cotton, whereas the reverse side of the tote was fabricated out of thick, hand spun, light brown karakul wool, which was knitted in garter stitch and felted in the washing machine. The adjustable handle of the tote was constructed from durable tan brown resin leather, which was knitted in garter stitch. The utilization of various fibre-art techniques and contrasting media enriches the overall design of the tote, while ensuring that the tote's structure is sufficiently rigid and stable to carry heavy items.

### 6.1.1 Bushveld pocket scarf

A pocket scarf (see FIG 6.4), with two detachable pockets, was created as the corresponding accessory that accompanies the Bushveld cowgirl tote. The pocket scarf (1.42m in length X 20cm in width) was constructed from hand spun merino wool, which was knitted in garter stitch and felted in the washing machine. The pockets were also knitted up in garter stitch, utilizing the hand spun merino wool, a running stitch technique was however applied



**Figure 6.4. Bushveld Cowgirl pocket scarf. Stipp. 2007.**

to each pocket thereafter, utilizing a variety of natural and synthetic textured yarns in chocolate brown, olive green, turquoise, tawny brown, rust red and lime green. The pockets were subsequently felted simultaneously with the base of the pocket scarf, and antique brass

press-studs were attached to the sides and bottom of each pocket once the scarf had dried. The scarf can as a result be worn with or without pockets, while new pockets, with the most recent season's colour palette, can be bought separately and studded to the existing pocket scarf. The expense of purchasing the latest fashion accessories is reduced considerably, whilst simultaneously providing the wearer the freedom to interchange the existing and new pockets according to the changing seasons or her mood.

## 6.2 Graphic Kalahari bucket bag

The overall design, patterning and colour combinations of the Graphic Kalahari bucket bag was inspired by:

- sixties graphic geometric lines
- op-art
- ethnic African motifs and craftwork
- a rustic African marketplace
- an assortment of spice colours and
- the changing dunes of the Kalahari

The size (30cm in diameter X 40cm in height) and utilitarian design of the Graphic Kalahari bucket bag drew inspiration from female academic students who lead busy lifestyles. Many students require one spacious handbag, which is capable of accommodating and concealing an assortment of student paraphernalia, as well as a variety of everyday items that are used everyday. A vertical cylindrical shape, using a leather drawstring as the closing mechanism (see FIG 6.5) was therefore decided upon, since this



Figure 6.5. *Graphic Kalahari bucket bag.* Stipp. 2008.

form allows A4 sized items such as files, books and writing pads to be easily stowed upright, whilst also ensuring quick and easy access when needed.

Rodo's daytime bucket bag (see FIG 2.4 in chapter two, page 221), military duffel bags<sup>26</sup> and large industrialized calico sacks which are utilized to store dried spices, inspired the vertical cylindrical shape and functional characteristics of the Graphic Kalahari bucket bag. A separate storage compartment (see FIG 6.6) was specifically designed to store smaller everyday items, as well as confidential and valuable belongings, in addition to delineating where larger and smaller items can be kept. This design guarantees that the bucket bag is always organized and uncluttered. The segregated storage compartment additionally gives women the freedom to utilize the bucket bag as a handbag, since the storage compartment permits the bag to be worn and accessed horizontally, similar to the function of a military duffel bag. The storage compartment, which was fashioned into a half-barrel form, was produced from a hardwearing rust-orange upholstery fabric, natural suede leather, yellow ochre and rust-orange ostrich leather, antique brass rivets and an antique brass zip. Within the storage compartment, two small supplementary pockets (see FIG 6.7), which were strategically placed along the length of the storage compartment, can house a cell phone and smaller everyday items such as lipstick or keys. A flap which covers and locks these two pockets was provided, since this ensures an



**Figure 6.6. Separate storage compartment. Stipp. 2008.**

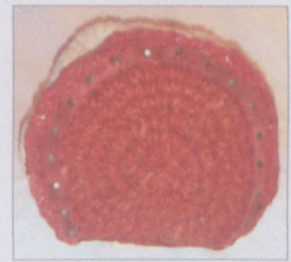


**Figure 6.7. Optical illusionary supplementary pockets. Stipp. 2008.**

<sup>26</sup> A duffel bag is a horizontal zippered bucket bag.

organised bag when the bag is in use and is repeatedly changed from a vertical to a horizontal position.

The bucket bag's exterior and internal design shows visual interest and complementary textural effects through a diversity of fibre-art techniques and contrasting media. A subtle optical illusion was created on the bucket bag's outer façade (see FIG 6.5) which was inspired by the popular 1960's op-art movement<sup>27</sup>, and a zigzag motif that appear in many African crafts and arts. To



**Figure 6.8. Base of Graphic Kalahari bucket bag. Stipp. 2008.**

create this effect through the use of fibre-arts, two different types of wool (finely hand spun lambs wool and thick, hand spun karakul), both in a natural ivory colour were knitted up in individual zigzags, using garter stitch, joined together and then felted in the washing machine. Since lambs wool and karakul wool felt to different degrees (the lambs wool felted more thickly, forming a bat, than the coarse karakul wool) a natural ruched effect was created, in addition to a subtle optical zigzag illusion. This combination effect was used inside the separate storage compartment as well (see FIG 6.7). This was achieved in ostrich leather by alternating the strong geometric zigzag colouring from rust-orange to yellow ochre. The base of the Graphic Kalahari bucket bag (see FIG 6.8) was crocheted in a dark rust-orange, thick hand-spun karakul wool, which was then attached to the outer façade of bucket bag with antique brass rivets and a dark rust-orange suede leather strip. This was done so as to lend a more ethnic colouration and design to the bag, whilst boldly stating and expressing modernity. The textured handle (see FIG 6.6) of the Graphic Kalahari bucket bag was fabricated from organic orange raffia, natural coloured bull denim, durable ivory coloured suede, rope knitted in loop stitch, two antique brass buckles and natural hand spun lambs wool that was felted in

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<sup>27</sup> Designers of the 1960's op-art movement created large-scale abstract and geometric patterns that explored and pushed visual perceptions to its limits, resulting in strong illusions of movement and three-dimensional form.

the washing machine. The utilization of these various fibre-art techniques, contrasting media and colour enrich the overall design of the Graphic Kalahari bucket bag, while ensuring that the bucket bag's handle will be sufficiently sturdy and load bearing.

### 6.2.1 Graphic Kalahari interchangeable four-panel shawl

An interchangeable four-panel shawl was designed to complement the Graphic Kalahari bucket bag. The interchangeable four-panel shawl was fabricated from dark rust-orange bamboo yarn, bright orange mohair yarn, rust-orange cotton yarn and a light peach-orange mohair yarn, which was crocheted into four identical chevron-striped scarf panels (9cm in width X 1.52m in length). Once all the scarf panels were completed they were linked, utilizing a loopplatch fastening method of complementary burnt orange buttons and dyed up orange elastic bands, which were applied to the length of three panels, so as to form a zigzag patterned shawl (see FIG 6.9). The loopplatch fastening method was also applied to the apex and base of all four panels, resulting in the apex and base of these panels interlocking with one another, hence forming a circular poncho that can be utilized as a hood scarf. Consequently, several applications emerge from this specific accessory, for instance, if one panel is detached it can be worn as a belt, headscarf, scarf or circular scarf (see FIG 6.10), or when two panels are coupled, it can be worn as a scarf and circular scarf. When three to four panels are linked, the resultant product is a circular poncho or shawl that can be worn as a skirt.



Figure 6.9. *Interchangeable four-panel shawl.* Stipp. 2008.



Figure 6.10. *Chevron-striped panel worn as a circular scarf.* Stipp. 2008.

### 6.3 Shakaland Peacock queen luxury handbag

The ethnic, exotic and majestic allure of royal African attire and accessories, the glamorous and luxury lives of monarchs around the world and the vibrant and distinctive coloured feather array of blue male peacocks provided the inspiration for the overall design, theme and colour combinations in the Shakaland Peacock queen luxury handbag. The design, form, size (32cm in length X 20cm in height X 12cm in width) and functional qualities of the handbag were however inspired by Valentino Garavani's 2001 beaded evening handbag, Valentino Garavani's 2000 Marabou feather, Swarovsky crystal and silk bracelet evening bag (see Appendix 6.3) and a 1900 French Belle Époque ostrich-trimmed opera bag (see Appendix 6.4).

Various fibre-art techniques and contrasting media have been utilized to create visual interest and provide complementary textural effects to the bag's exterior design. The front façade of the bag has consequently been fabricated from cobalt blue ostrich leather off-cut segments (see FIG 6.11), which were machine-



Figure 6.11. *Cobalt blue ostrich leather front façade.* Stipp. 2008.



Figure 6.12. *Textured novelty yarn back façade.* Stipp. 2008.

stitched together, whilst the back façade was knitted in a cobalt blue, jade green and ultramarine blue textured novelty yarn that resembles the appearance and colour array of peacock feathers (see FIG 6.12). A crocheted handbag flap was created from cobalt blue and jade green craft wire which were crocheted together into seven circles (each with a 7cm diameter). The three foremost circles, on the front façade of the bag, feature cobalt blue beads in their construction, in order to create more visual interest and to provide complementary

textural effects. The base and side gussets of the bag were fabricated from navy blue suede, and the handle of the handbag (see FIG 6.13), which was attached to the side gussets with brass rivets, was constructed from two small loopstitched felted panels (two measuring 9.5cm in width X 18cm in length), one long loopstitched felted panel (9.5cm in width X 42cm in length) and two cobalt blue ostrich leather segments (each measuring 7cm in width X 15cm in length). The loopstitched panels were created



**Figure 6.13.** *Felted loopstitched handle.* Stipp. 2008.

from a dove grey hand spun merino wool yarn and a transparent navy blue, gold, dove grey and sky blue novelty synthetic ribbon yarn, all of which were knitted together in loop stitch and felted in the washing machine. The cobalt blue ostrich leather segments were assembled above the two small felted panels and the long felted panel was subsequently attached to the leather segments. Navy blue fresh water pearls and yellow ochre beads were utilized to round neatly the linkage between the felted panels and the leather segments (see FIG 6.13).

A contrasting yellow ochre taffeta silk fabric was used to line the interior of the handbag. A cell phone pocket was strategically centred against the back panel and positioned below the brass magnetic clip closing mechanism. This guarantees quick and easy access to cell phones. A supplementary zippered pocket was created to store confidential and smaller everyday possessions and to ensure that the handbag is always tidy and uncluttered.

### **6.3.1 Shakaland Peacock queen interchangeable triangular shawl**

An interchangeable triangular shawl (see FIG 6.15) was designed to accessorise with the Shakaland Peacock queen luxury handbag. The shawl (1.66m in length X 1.2m in height) was produced from 55 crocheted circles (10cm in diameter), which were coupled together into

five chevrons (see FIG 6.14), utilizing 99 handmade mother of pearl jewellery clasps. This created a triangular shawl that gradates from predominately violet and plum to light blue-grey hues. The first chevron within the triangular shawl was fabricated from three

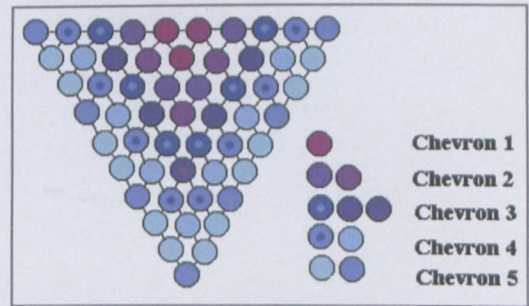


Figure 6.14. *Diagram of interchangeable triangular shawl.* Stipp. 2009.

circles that were crocheted in a textured plum and blue-grey synthetic yarn. The second chevron consists of seven circles, four of which were crocheted in a plum, violet, jade and blue-grey novelty railway track synthetic yarn. Crocheting the novelty synthetic yarn and blue-grey bouclé mohair yarn together produced the three remaining circles. The third chevron is made up of eleven circles. One circle was produced with the surplus of the novelty railway track synthetic yarn, which was firstly crocheted to a diameter of 5cm. A dark violet hand spun merino wool yarn was then used to crochet around the 5cm circle so as to complete the construction of the circle. Four circles were crocheted in the identical dark violet hand spun merino wool yarn,

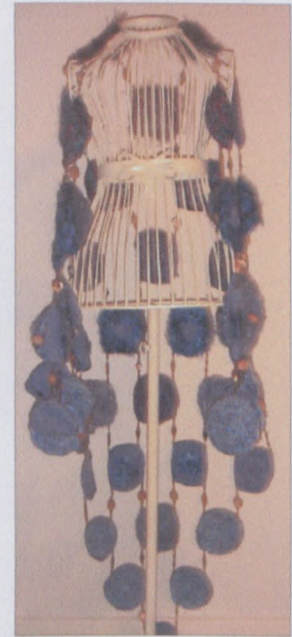
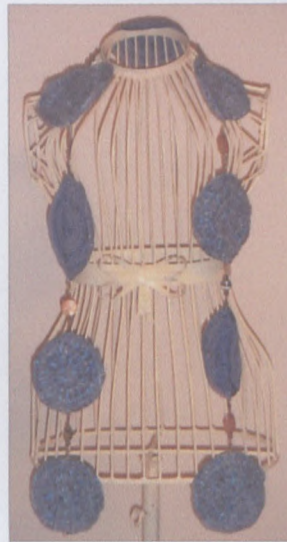


Figure 6.15. *Interchangeable triangular shawl.* Stipp. 2008.

and six circles were created from blue Duet, a two-tone blue-grey synthetic yarn and an ultramarine blue and jade bouclé synthetic yarn. The blue Duet was firstly crocheted to a 5cm diameter and was finished off with the ultramarine blue and jade bouclé synthetic yarn. The fourth chevron consists of fifteen circles, seven of which were made from a blue-grey synthetic yarn and light blue-grey bouclé mohair yarn that were crocheted together, while the remaining eight circles were produced from the ultramarine blue and jade bouclé synthetic yarn and blue Duet yarn. The ultramarine blue and jade bouclé synthetic yarn was firstly

crocheted to a 5cm diameter, whilst the blue Duet was utilized to complete the construction of the eight circles. The last chevron is made up of nineteen circles. Seven circles were constructed in blue Duet, whilst the remaining twelve were fabricated from blue-grey hand spun merino wool yarn and a turquoise, ultramarine blue, sky blue and grey synthetic



**Figure 6.16. Crocheted circle scarf. Stipp. 2008.**



**Figure 6.17. Crocheted circle belt. Stipp. 2008.**

ribbon yarn. Consequently, several applications emerge from this unique accessory, for instance the triangular shawl can be decreased in sized by detaching one to three chevrons. The circles can furthermore be coupled together to create a rectangular shawl, scarf (see FIG 6.16), belt (see FIG 6.17), headscarf or bracelet. The circles can also be joined together into different colour arrangements, so as to create visually appealing accessories.

#### **6.4 Kaapse Klopse Carnival bolster handbag**

The playful, cheerful, lively and imaginative world of acrobats, clowns and circuses, in addition to the colourful costumes and energetic music of Cape Town's Kaapse Klopse<sup>28</sup> constituted the inspiration for the overall design,



**Figure 6.18. Kaapse Klopse Carnival bolster handbag. Stipp. 2007.**

<sup>28</sup> Kaapse Klopse are participants who perform in the festival of street processions and rallies held in and around Cape Town on New Year's Day, more commonly known throughout the coloured community in Cape Town as the Coon Carnival. It is however now referred to as the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival. The origins of the carnival date back to the late 1880's when black North American minstrels visited Cape Town and local ethnic groups emulated their costumes, songs and dance. Thus began an annual street parade that grew rapidly in popularity and the first formal Minstrel Carnival was held at the Green Point track in 1906.

theme and colour combinations in the Kaapse Klopse Carnival boulder handbag. Circular motifs and objects, such as balloons and large round red noses that form part of clowns' attire and circus tents' interior and exterior décor, inspired the horizontal cylindrical shape and size (11cm in height X 45cm in length) of the boulder handbag (see FIG 6.18). A horizontal cylindrical shape was also decided upon, since this shape is far more versatile and functional than a spherical handbag, given that the ruched construction of a spherical handbag would not easily accommodate a cell phone pocket and cosmetic holder. The horizontal cylindrical shape also ensures that the boulder handbag can be utilized on a daily basis as well as on special occasions.

A variety of natural and synthetic yarns, fibre-art techniques and contrasting media have been used to create visual interest,



**Figure 6.19. Crocheted sequenced boulder ends.** Stipp. 2007.

used to create visual interest, provide complementary textural effects to the boulder handbag's



**Figure 6.20. Condensed pompom strip.** Stipp. 2007.

interior and exterior design, and enriches the overall design.

The ends of the boulder handbag were crocheted in pink, gold and turquoise sequenced thread and gold crochet yarn (see FIG 6.19), whilst the façade of the boulder handbag was knitted up in various horizontal stripes that evolve from predominantly pink to predominantly gold. Two Velcro strips, with three interchangeable options – one strip with condensed



**Figure 6.21. Beaded and dangling pompom strip.** Stipp. 2007.

pompoms (see FIG 6.20), one band with beaded and dangling pompoms (see FIG 6.21) and one with a corresponding organza ribbon (see FIG 6.18) – on opposing sides of the boulder

bag's outer casing have in turn been placed on the gold and pink apexes of the façade. These interchangeable Velcro strips have been specifically designed to allow women to express their identity and display their individuality and mood, in a light-hearted fashion. The handles of the boulder handbag were constructed from



**Figure 6.22. Cerise pink ostrich leather lining. Stipp. 2007.**

durable steel that was bent into a half moon shape, covered with inexpensive calico braid and then finally covered with a wide gold sequenced braid. The boulder handbag was lined with bright cerise pink ostrich leather off-cut segments, which were joined together using blanket stitch and durable dark cerise embroidery thread (see FIG 6.22). Utilizing ostrich leather in this manner ensures a rigid and stable structure, provides visual and tactile interest, whilst also ensuring that the bag's interior can be easily cleaned.

Necessity to stow and easily gain access to one's cell phone was provided for in the form of a golden yellow and cerise silk cell phone pouch, which was strategically placed near the handbag's closing and opening zip fastener, along the length of one side of the leather lining. A supplementary zippered golden yellow and cerise silk pocket was designed to hold smaller everyday items such as tissues, perfume and lipstick, in addition to ensuring an organised bag.

#### **6.4.1 Kaapse Klopse Carnival circular poncho, shadow knitted tie scarf and belt**

A circular poncho (see FIG 6.23) was designed to accessorise with the Kaapse Klopse Carnival boulder handbag (see Appendix 8 for pattern origination). The circular poncho (1m in length X 30cm in width) was fabricated from 100% Mulberry slub silk yarn, which was dyed up to a golden yellow, an assortment of fine synthetic grey yarns and silk ribbon, and a

subtle golden yellow textured synthetic thread. The shadow-knit technique was used to construct a tactile and visually appealing striped shawl. A loopplatch fastening method of complementary charcoal buttons and dyed up grey elastic bands were applied to the edges of the shawl, so as to create a



Figure 6.23. *Circular poncho*. Stipp. 2007.



Figure 6.24. *Hood scarf*. Stipp. 2007.

continuous circular poncho, which can also be worn as a hood scarf (see FIG 6.24) and circular shawl. A variety of golden yellow, grey and charcoal glass beads were attached to the strands of wool that would have otherwise been woven into the knitted garment. Utilizing the glass beads in this manner brought about a playfulness and richness to the poncho, which emulates the playfulness and richness of the Kaapse Klopse boulder handbag.

A second corresponding accessory, a shadow knitted tie scarf (see FIG 6.25) was created to accompany the Kaapse Klopse Carnival boulder handbag. The shadow knitted tie scarf (20cm in width X 1.25m in length) was constructed from an assortment of fine synthetic grey yarns and silk ribbon, as well as a variety of fine natural cerise and mulberry yarns. The shadow-knit technique was used to produce the tie scarf, in addition to creating Argyle<sup>29</sup> diamonds that appear on the tips of the tie scarf.



Figure 6.25. *Shadow knitted tie scarf*. Stipp. 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Argyle diamonds are a classic diamond motif whose shape is identical to the form of traditional kite structures.

The last accessory that was designed to complement the Kaapse Klopse Carnival handbag is a belt (see FIG 6.26). The belt was fabricated from gold craft wire and golden yellow organza ribbon, which were knitted up simultaneously in garter stitch. Twelve plastic gold bangles were woven systematically into the belt and a brass buckle was attached to one end.



**Figure 6.26. Knitted gold organza belt. Stipp. 2007.**

### **6.5 Highveld Charleston evening pochette**

Design elements from the Cubism and Art Deco movements' streamlined and geometrically bold forms, as well as the art of pleated gift-wrapping (see Appendix 6.5) inspired the overall colour palette, theme and design of the Highveld Charleston evening pochette (Galliera, 2005: 78, 79 & 90). The Chrysler Building, the long flat envelope shaped pochette bags<sup>30</sup> of the thirties (see Appendix 6.6) and tango purses<sup>31</sup> of the 1920's (see Appendix 6.7) all constituted the inspiration for the staggered cubist shape and size (15cm in height X 42.5cm in length) of the evening handbag (see FIG 6.27). The sleek qualities of the Highveld Charleston evening pochette were alternatively inspired by Elizabeth Arden's early 1930's antelope bag and J. E. Caldwell's 1930's gold, enamel and python pochette (see Appendix 6.6). A cell phone pouch, supplementary pocket, and lipstick – perfume – eyeliner and key ring holders were placed along the length of the pochette for easy access and organisation.

<sup>30</sup> Pochette bags are long, flat, minimal enveloped shaped pocket bags, which have been designed with a sturdy front clasp for discretion.

<sup>31</sup> Tango purses are minimal metal mesh bags that swing casually from the wrist and are often little more than a glorified compact, which is only able to retain powder, rouge and lipstick.

The pleating of the silver-grey silk fabric and the diversity of textured turquoise yarns that were utilized to construct this evening pochette create a dramatic focal point, provide complementary textural effects and symmetry (see FIG 6.27). The silver encrusted clasp on the façade, as well as the two small clasps which form part of the handle were used so as to emulate the 1930's obsession with unique fittings, clasps, frames, exotic materials, as well as gilded and jewelled evening handbags, while providing a touch of luxury to the Highveld Charleston pochette.



**Figure 6.27. Highveld Charleston pochette. Stipp. 2008.**

### 6.5.1 Highveld Charleston capelet

An interchangeable evening capelet (see FIG 6.28) was created as the corresponding accessory for the Highveld Charleston evening pochette. The capelet can also be used as a scarf and a shawl (see FIG 6.29) and can be worn or draped over both shoulders and/or one shoulder. The capelet (1.12m in length X 26cm in width) was



**Figure 6.28. Highveld Charleston interchangeable capelet. Stipp. 2008.**



**Figure 6.29. Highveld Charleston shawl. Stipp. 2008.**

produced from a fine light turquoise kid bouclé mohair yarn, a soft silver-grey bamboo yarn and a silver octagon crystal rhinestone hook and eye closure fastening system. The mohair yarn and bamboo yarn were knitted together in moss stitch (21cm of the capelet's width) and the remaining width of the capelet was knitted in garter stitch, utilizing only the soft silver-grey bamboo yarn. Permanent pleats were fashioned into the silver-grey bamboo garter

stitched section, so as to emulate the pleats that appear in the Highveld Charleston evening pochette, whilst also providing tactile and visual interest to the capelet's overall design.

### 6.6 Skeleton Coast wedding handbag

The beautiful, rugged and ever-changing coastlines of Namibia's Skeleton Coast and the West Coast of the Western Cape, as well as the varying surfaces of nature and food, especially mushrooms and shoreline pebbles, constituted the inspiration for the overall design (see Appendix 4). A soft, natural colour palette, including white, ivory, beige, light tan and highlights of gold were used. Most of the inspiration for the Skeleton Coast wedding handbag was however the modern wedding handbag (see FIG 2.6 in chapter 2, page 23), which is fast becoming a fashionable stand-in for the bridal bouquet (Johnson, 2002: 300).

A classical elliptical and rectangular shape (28cm in length X 14.5cm in height X 5cm in width) was decided upon, since the rectangular shape allows smaller everyday items to be neatly accommodated. The classical rectangular shape ensures that the wedding handbag has a dual purpose, and can be used as an evening bag as well (see FIG 6.30). This classical shape does not date and can be passed down through the generations as an heirloom piece. A light tan-brown ostrich leather cell phone pouch, cosmetic holder and key ring holder were positioned along the length of the wedding handbag. The handbag's flap features an asymmetrical, flowing shape, so as to emulate the coastlines of the West Coast and the Skeleton Coast. Circles were crocheted in various media and sizes and scattered randomly on the outer shell



Figure 6.30. *Skeleton Coast wedding handbag.* Stipp. 2008.



Figure 6.31. *Detail of Skeleton Coast wedding handbag.* Stipp. 2008.

(see FIG 6.31), to suggest pebbles that are found on those two coastlines. Creating visual interest and providing complementary textural effects, resulted in imparting glamour, pleasure, fantasy and luxury to the wedding handbag.

### 6.6.1 Skeleton Coast winter and summer wedding shawls

A winter wedding shawl and summer wedding shawl (see FIG 6.34) were designed to complement the Skeleton Coast wedding handbag. Both shawls are reversible in their applications. The winter shawl (see FIG 6.32) was designed to function as



**Figure 6.32. Skeleton Coast winter wedding shawl. Stipp. 2007.**



**Figure 6.33. Skeleton Coast bedspread. Stipp. 2007.**

a bedspread as well (see FIG 6.33). The summer shawl (1.5m in length X 30cm in width) was fabricated from cream, carded merino wool, ivory silk satin and a fine light tan brown, slub silk yarn that was knitted on the bulky knitter<sup>32</sup>, resulting in a wide gauge<sup>33</sup> and lacy fabric. Two layers of merino wool were placed on top of one another at ninety degrees and pre-felted. The silk satin was placed in the centre of the pre-felt, followed by the knitted fabric and finally two vertical strips of merino wool were



**Figure 6.34. Skeleton Coast summer wedding shawl. Stipp. 2007.**

placed on the edge of the shawl's length and one strip was placed in the centre of the shawl's length. The summer shawl was felted, utilizing the Nuno felting process, until the desired

<sup>32</sup> A bulky knitter is a household-knitting machine that has a slightly longer knitting bed than traditional household-knitting machines. The bulky knitter's needles are also slightly larger than the traditional needles and have also been spaced further apart. This allows much thicker wool to be knitted up, instead of the frequently used four ply wool.

<sup>33</sup> Gauge refers to the measurement of the actual size of knitted stitches within a knitted fabric. This is expressed as the number of stitches to a given width and the number of rows to a given length. A wider gauge is attained when larger needles are utilized, whilst smaller needles are made use of to obtain a narrower gauge.

effect was achieved. The winter wedding shawl (2m in length X 80cm in width) was constructed from hand-spun cream New Zealand woollen yarn, thick cream slub mohair yarn, cream cotton yarn, light tawny and gold bouclé cotton, a tan bouclé acrylic yarn, in addition to a tan and gold bouclé acrylic yarn, tan cotton ribbon combined with a tan brown slub silk yarn and a dark tan brown bouclé cotton yarn. The New Zealand wool was used as the base colour in the construction of the winter shawl, and the various creams, tans and tawny brown yarns were knitted up in equal gradating measurements, using the shadow knitting technique. The completed knitted winter shawl was subsequently felted in the washing machine, until a subtle gradation effect was achieved.

### **6.7 Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner handbag**

The glamorous and elegant fifties Hollywood star, Greta Garbo, as well as the giddy diversity of handbags during the 1950's, the stormy seas of Good Hope's cold Atlantic ocean and the beach fashions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided the inspiration for the overall theme and colour combinations in Carbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner handbag (Galliera, 2005: 51 & 59). The design of Garbo's handbag was however inspired by the 1930's novelty handbag (see FIG 2.8, page 24) and the luxury cruise liners, which was the preferred mode of travel and reaching a vacation destination during the 1950's. The curvaceous and full-figured 1950's Hollywood stars, in addition to Bonnie Cashin's functional feminine sportswear handbags (see Appendix 6.8), which combine very expensive materials with more informal ones, such as tweed and denim, inspired the form and functional qualities of the handbag.

The size (54.5cm in length x 34cm in height x 23cm in width) and whimsical boat shape (see FIG 6.35) was a result of the inspiration discussed in the previous section. In this bag, women can keep summer items such as a sarong, bikini, sunscreen, a party dress and a

shawl. From the office to café society or to the beach, and then to a night on the town, all with a twist of the handle! The movement of the ocean was simulated using two different fibre-art techniques on either side of



**Figure 6.35. Front façade of Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner handbag. Stipp. 2008.**



**Figure 6.36. Back façade of Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner handbag. Stipp. 2008.**

the bag. Black raw silk was ruched and tucked on one side (see FIG 6.36), so as to create a subtle watery effect. A variety of black and gold synthetic and natural yarns were knitted or crocheted into different asymmetrical shapes and joined together on the front façade, so as to simulate a vibrant watery effect (see FIG 6.37). The distinctly feminine circular handle, inspired by the curvaceous starlets of the 1950's, as well as Wilardy's Lucite<sup>34</sup> handbags (see Appendix 6.9) of the time, was designed to curve



**Figure 6.37. Detail of the front façade of Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner handbag. Stipp. 2008.**

into the crook of an arm and was also made from black raw silk. The circular handle is suggestive the full moon; and the three Swakara hide circles that progress from large to small and were placed below one another on the front façade of Garbo's handbag (see FIG 6.35), suggest the moon's reflection on water.

Visual and textural interest was also created through the use of a contrasting striped tan brown and dove-grey raw silk fabric that was used to line the interior of the bag (see FIG 6.39). The striped fabric which contrasts with the ruched exterior, emulates the wit of 1950's bags that combined bold geometric forms and "girlie" trimmings. A cell phone pouch and supplementary pocket were strategically placed along the length of Garbo's handbag, and a

<sup>34</sup> Lucite is a form of hard plastic that does not yellow like other plastics and has a clear surface, which keeps its colour indefinitely. Lucite is also durable and lightweight and was a very popular form of luxury material that was used extensively throughout the 1950's, until the invention of injection moulding came about.

zippered pocket was created to store confidential possessions. The base of the bag was fabricated from durable black leather cowhide off-cut segments that were joined together using blanket stitch in chocolate brown karakul yarn (see FIG 6.38). Utilizing the durable cowhide leather in this manner ensures that the bag is efficiently rigid, load-bearing and dirt-resistant. Black raw silk (which was used for the construction of the handle and façade of the bag) was also used to construct a drawstring closing mechanism for Garbo's handbag (see FIG 6.39). This closing mechanism was chosen to emulate the appearance of beach accessories, while ensuring possessions are concealed securely.



**Figure 6.38.** *Base of Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner handbag.* Stipp. 2008.



**Figure 6.39.** *Drawstring closing mechanism and contrasting striped lining.* Stipp. 2008.

### 6.7.1 Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner interchangeable poncho

An interchangeable poncho (see FIG 6.40) was designed as the corresponding accessory for Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner handbag. The interchangeable poncho was fabricated from fine, black bouclé kid mohair yarn, thick slub kid mohair yarn, black bamboo yarn, fine gold thread and a two tone black synthetic yarn known as Dune. These were knitted into four panels (each measuring 60cm in length X 35cm in



**Figure 6.40.** *Interchangeable four-panel poncho.* Stipp. 2008.



**Figure 6.41.** *Lightweight kid mohair shawl.* Stipp. 2008.

width). Two panels were knitted in garter stitch, utilizing the fine, black bouclé kid mohair yarn and thick slub kid mohair yarn, and one panel was knitted with the black bamboo yarn, fine gold thread and Dune yarn, in an elegant elongated stitch. The fourth panel was knitted in a feather openwork stitch produced from the Dune yarn. The four panels were linked together small black metallic press-studs, so as to create a poncho with a central square neckline opening. A two meter black organza ribbon was threaded around the neckline opening, thus creating an adjustable opening. Several applications emerged from this versatile garment. For instance, the two mohair panels can be attached to one another to form a shawl (see FIG 6.41). If the shawl needs to be elongated, the elegant gold elongated stitch panel can be inserted between the two kid mohair panels. If a more abstract look is sought, the feather openwork panel and gold elongated stitch panel can be linked to create a visually exciting accessory. Each panel can also be draped over a shoulder and worn individually.

#### **6.8 Wild Durbs whimsical handbag**

The design, shape and size (52cm in length X 31cm in height X 22cm in width) of the wild Durb's whimsical handbag was inspired by 17<sup>th</sup> century pirate hats, 18<sup>th</sup> century silk work bags (see Appendix 6.10), the exotic Belle Époque style dance bags of the early 1900's (see Appendix 6.11) and the witty crocheted evening bags of the Elizabethan era (see Appendix 6.12). The design of the wild Durb's whimsical handbag was furthermore inspired by baskets, Ferragamo's 1991 evening bag (see Appendix 6.13) and the provocative handbag designs of the 1930's (see FIG 2.8, page 24).

A variety of silk fabrics, lace, ribbon brocade, cowhide leather off-cuts, antique brass buttons and inexpensive Indian jewellery embellishments were used to create visual interest, provide complementary textural effects, and to emulate the design elements which appear in

Indian dancers' attire and accessories (see FIG 6.42). The base of the handbag (see FIG 6.43) was fabricated from oxblood red and scarlet red cowhide leather off-cuts, which were cut into eight triangles and hand-sewn together with blanket stitch and tan brown embroidery



**Figure 6.42.** *Emulating Indian dancers' attire and accessories through a variety of media.* Stipp. 2008.



**Figure 6.43.** *Base of Wild Durbs whimsical handbag.* Stipp. 2008.

thread, in order to create an octagonal shape. A beaded tassel, in scarlet red, was attached to the centre of the octagon so as to emulate the elaborate ornamentation of Indian dancers' accessories, in addition to creating visual interest and humour.

The outer shell of the handbag (see FIG 6.45) was fashioned from eight rhombus panels (each measuring 31cm in height X 9cm in base length X 26cm in apex length), which were produced from a two-tone maroon silk taffeta and crushed silk



**Figure 6.44.** *Side gusset of Wild Durbs whimsical handbag.* Stipp. 2008.

fabric that were fused together with spider webbing appliqué. Two rhombus panels, which were used to construct the side gussets of the handbag, were inlaid with narrow strips of the oxblood and scarlet red cowhide leather off-cuts in an asymmetrical arrangement. Two antique brass press-studs were attached to the side gusset panels, as well as two small maroon tassels that can be removed and reattached (see FIG 6.44). The press-studs enable the bag to be expanded and contracted when needed, resulting in a versatile bag that is large enough to fulfil the everyday practical needs of women, whilst the tassels supply fun and humour and in addition allow women to display their individuality and disposition.

Copper lace, large antique brass buttons and Indian style jewellery embellishments were configured into a parallel design on the central front rhombus panel (see FIG 6.45). An additional button was positioned adjacent to the uppermost button, as this facilitates the bag's closing mechanism. The copper lace and ten small antique brass buttons were fashioned into an asymmetrical design on the central back rhombus panel of the handbag (see FIG 6.46). Two rhombus panels were placed on either side of the central front panel and were both embellished with an eight centimetre wide scarlet cowhide strip that was covered with



**Figure 6.45.** *Front façade of Wild Durbs whimsical handbag.* Stipp. 2008.



**Figure 6.46.** *Back façade of Wild Durbs whimsical handbag.* Stipp. 2008.

bronze lace, and positioned in the centre length of the panels (see FIG 6.45). One panel was also adorned with large and small antique brass buttons that were systematically arranged into an Argyle diamond format, at the base of the lace and cowhide strip.

The handles were fabricated from two plastic rings (measuring 17 cm in diameter) which were wrapped in textured copper brown ribbon brocade (see FIG 6.42). The handles were attached to the handbag with two durable antique brass “O”rings that were passed through two antique brass eyelets at the top of the central front and back rhombus panels. Two eyelets were also positioned on the back central panel in order to create and provide an effective closing mechanism for the bag. The closing



**Figure 6.47.** *Storage for everyday items.* Stipp. 2008.

mechanism consisted of two maroon cords catching the cords around the two uppermost buttons on the front central panel, and pushing the ends of the cords through each eyelet and securing them together by tying the ends into one large knot, facilitated closing. The handbag was lined with two-tone maroon taffeta, and the ox blood and scarlet cowhide leather off-cuts created a cell phone pouch, cosmetic holder and key ring holder (see FIG 6.47). This ensures that the bag is organized and uncluttered.

### 6.8.1 Wild Durbs openwork poncho-wrap

An openwork poncho-wrap (see FIG 6.48) was designed to co-ordinate with the wild Durbs whimsical handbag. The openwork poncho-wrap (2m in length X 75cm in width) was fabricated from maroon hand spun merino wool and a fine synthetic burgundy yarn. An easy openwork pattern, with an alternating wave effect, was utilized to construct a delicate, sheer and lacy rectangular wrap. The openwork wrap was thereafter folded in half and a looplatch fastening method used. Indian inspired antique brass buttons and dyed up maroon elastic bands, applied to a portion of the wrap's adjoining seams, created an asymmetrical poncho with an adjustable neckline opening. The looplatch fastening method allows the poncho's neckline opening



Figure 6.48. *Openwork poncho-wrap*. Stipp. 2008.

to be adjusted to any desired width, whilst reflecting the opulent Indian ornamentation similar to that of the wild Durbs whimsical handbag.

## 6.9 Opulent fynbos Gypsy travel bag

The opulent fynbos Gypsy travel bag drew inspiration from the international traveller, nomads of Africa, the modern European gypsy, the frivolous luxury of folk and 1970's hippie fashions (Galliera, 2005: 53, 55, 73 & 173), as well as the delicate hues of the Western Cape's indigenous fynbos for its overall theme and colour



Figure 6.49. *Adjustable gusset.* Stipp. 2007.

combinations. The design and utilitarian qualities of the travel bag were however inspired by carpetbags<sup>35</sup> (see Appendix 6.14), steamer bags, the designer Unisa's 1981 travel bag (see Appendix 6.15), in addition to Lambertson Truex and Ferragamo's bags within bags. The travel bag caters for the modern woman who requires a triple duty handbag for travelling, the office, leisure and grocery shopping, and Louis Vuitton's philosophy that "elegance can and will be taken on the road" (Johnson, 2002: 15). The size (50cm in length X 30cm in height X 25cm in width) and classical simple horizontal rectangular shape of the travel bag ensures that sizeable work-related paraphernalia and leisure items are effortlessly accommodated in one bag, thus fulfilling the practical needs of the modern woman. Twenty silver turn buttons, the most distinctive design element of the bag, were strategically placed along the side gussets of the travel bag (see FIG 6.49). These mechanical components enable the bag to be contracted and expanded to various dimensions, resulting in a versatile bag that is large enough for the everyday practical needs of modern career women, in addition to being elegant and multifunctional for travel and leisure purposes.

A large upholstered pocket (see FIG 6.50) was placed along the length inside the travel bag, in order to store confidential and valuable possessions. Smaller everyday items

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<sup>35</sup> First travel bags designed to move from the stagecoach to the great railroad with both robust practicality and romance.

(such as glasses, tissues, perfume, hand cream, cosmetics and a cell phone) can be kept in the different sized dusty pink suede pockets (see FIG 6.51). Larger items



**Figure 6.50. Storage for confidential and valuable possessions. Stipp. 2007.**



**Figure 6.51. Storage for smaller everyday items. Stipp. 2007.**

such as shoes can be kept in two detachable supplementary dusty pink upholstered pockets (see FIG 6.52), which were placed on the ends of the opulent fynbos Gypsy travel bag. Safety concerns were taken into consideration when placing these pockets on the outer shell of the bag. Flaps in contrasting printed crocodile dusty pink leather (see FIG 6.54) that cover and lock these pockets with a silver magnetic clip, cover every individual pocket. This prevents pick-pocketing and keeps the contents of these pockets from spilling out. Several silver D-rings were placed on the outer shell of the opulent fynbos Gypsy travel bag, so as to allow the traveller the freedom to express their individuality through the use of travel nametags, key rings and photos that are easily hung and secured to the D-rings with trigger hooks (see FIG 6.53).



**Figure 6.52. Detachable supplementary upholstered pocket. Stipp. 2007.**



**Figure 6.53. D-rings utilized for individuality. Stipp. 2007.**

The façade of the travel bag was fabricated from different sized squares and rectangles of light lime green ostrich leather and cowhide, as well as knitted components of pink Monet<sup>36</sup> yarn and various light green natural yarns (see FIG 6.54). The top gusset of the bag was assembled from two leather panels and a hardwearing zip fastener (see FIG 6.55). Each panel (50cm in length X 12cm width) was constructed from a firm, durable dusty pink printed crocodile leather and upholstery fabric, which were glued together and finished off with a dusty pink blanket stitch around the edge. The handles of the travel bag were constructed in the same manner as the top gusset panels. The leather used for the handle construction was however replaced with soft suede leather. The interior of the travel bag was lined with a reversible lime green and beige Damask<sup>37</sup> upholstery fabric. The utilization of these various fibre-art techniques and contrasting media create textural and visual interest to the overall design of the bag, as well as ensuring that the bag is sufficiently rigid and stable to carry heavy items.



**Figure 6.54. *Opulent fynbos travel bag.* Stipp. 2007.**



**Figure 6.55. *Top gusset of opulent fynbos travel bag.* Stipp. 2007.**

### **6.9.1 Opulent fynbos Gypsy wraps**

A dusty pink wrap (see FIG 6.56) and lime green wrap (see FIG 6.57) were designed to complement the opulent fynbos Gypsy travel bag. Both wraps are reversible in their application and can also be used as home furnishings, such as bed throws. Both wraps (each

<sup>36</sup> Pink Monet yarn is a textured synthetic yarn that amalgamates a range of colours, such as green, blue, white and dusty pink into one yarn and as it is knitted up, it creates and simulates Monet's surrealist painterly effect of his lily pond paintings.

<sup>37</sup> Damask fabric is a firm, reversible compact fabric with an elaborate lustrous design woven on a Jacquard loom.

measuring 60cm in width X 1.8m in length) were fabricated from various sized squares and rectangles that were individually knitted or crocheted in a variety of natural and synthetic textured yarns. These squares and rectangles were positioned and attached to each another using mattress stitch<sup>38</sup> (see FIG 6.58). A dynamic yet elegant patchwork effect, which gradates from dark to light from



Figure 6.56. *Dusty pink wrap.* Stipp. 2007.



Figure 6.57. *Lime green wrap.* Stipp. 2007.

the left to the right of shawl, as well as from the top to the bottom of the shawl, was created. Garter stitch, moss stitch, loop stitch, elongated stitch, as well as openwork knitting and shadow knitting were the primary knitting techniques that were used to create a



Figure 6.58. *Mattress stitch.* Ashforth & Plummer, 2006:23.

diversity of textures and visual stimulus within the lime green wrap and some of these were utilized to construct the dusty pink shawl.

#### 6.10 Reflection interview on the Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP)

After the successful completion of the fibre-arts accessories range, concluding interviews were conducted with the participants. The objective of the final interviews was for the participants to reflect back on the FADP, explore which attributes of the FADP the participants benefited from the most and how they overcame adversities during the FADP, while investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the FADP model and its objectives. The

<sup>38</sup> Mattress stitch is required when two knitted squares are placed side by side horizontally. A needle and thread is then passed from the top edge on the lower knitted square, through the first stitch on the bottom edge of the upper knitted square and then through the bottom of the matching stitch on the lower knitted square.

findings of how the participants conquered these adversities, as well as ensuring the sustainability of the FADP will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

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### 7 Analysis of research findings

Coupled with a growing ageing population worldwide, life events such as mandatory retirement, high levels of unemployment and the HIV/Aids epidemic, are increasingly responsible for the elderly's declining socio-economic well-being. Social design programmes need to be developed and implemented to alleviate this situation. These programmes, where deployed in developing countries, have proven to be sustainable and successful.

In the research study, social responsibility concerns were balanced with economic ones, and a new design for development model, the Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP), was explored and outlined. The participants in the FADP were all, in some way or another, positively influenced by their participation in the project. The focus of the study was to empower the aged through the development and implementation of the FADP. The study was also aimed at raising awareness of the elderly's struggle with emotional, economic and social dependence issues. This was done against the background of educating a wider audience about the importance of the preservation, restoration and promotion of old and forgotten wisdom, craft skills and techniques, through the marketing of a range of women's accessories. Various platforms were used to achieve this end, namely the Design Indaba Expo (2008) which showcased the accessory range to wide acclaim, and the Design Achievers Awards (2007) where, as a finalist, I used this project as my official entry into the event. Both these events attracted a considerable amount of media coverage (see Appendix 14) and interest from a wide range of stakeholders.



## **7.1 Economic, emotional and social factors impacting on the elderly participants in Cape Town**

Analysis of the research findings indicates that varied responses, with regard to the above factors, were recorded. These responses were also sometimes in contrast to the literature which stated that retirees are usually negatively affected by retirement. Furthermore, an analysis of data in Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 sometimes indicated seemingly contradictory responses. These will be analysed in the following section.

### **7.1.1 Economic impact of retirement and HIV/Aids on the participants**

An analysis of data in Tables 5.3 (page 65) and 5.5 (page 68) indicates that retirement impacts more negatively on the Haven Homes participants (11% more) than on the GAPA participants. These statistics however, contradict another set of responses which were obtained from the data (Table 5.2, page 62) that instead point to GAPA's inadequate income. This is significant since Haven Homes participants are not affected by the HIV/Aids epidemic and do not bear the responsibility that the GAPA participants, who are overwhelmingly affected by HIV/Aids (89%), have to bear. These responsibilities included the loss of financial support from their working-age children, their personal financial assistance towards their children's medical treatment and care-giving costs to family members who are infected with HIV/Aids. Unforeseen funeral expenses for children who have passed away from the HIV/Aids epidemic, looking after grandchildren, including paying for their school fees and medical care, also negatively impacted on their economic situation.

It becomes clear that the two focus group sites are very differently influenced by the HIV/Aids epidemic. The Haven Homes participants reported no negative effects associated with the disease, whereas the GAPA participants were most severely affected, as mentioned

above. This is consistent with the literature that states that HIV/Aids is more predominant in lower socio-economic areas, because of a variety of reasons including inadequate nutrition, healthcare and facilities, apart from the obvious financial constraints. Legido-Quigley argues this point when she states that the social pension grant is inadequate ... "especially the case within households affected by HIV/Aids" (Legido-Quigley, 2003: 12 – 13). The data in Tables 5.1 (page 62) and 5.2 (in contrast to data in Tables 5.3 and 5.5) supports the literature, since it reveals that the fixed income grant which the participants receive on a monthly basis, is considerably more inadequate amongst the GAPA participants (56%) than those of Haven Homes.

Further analysis of Table 5.2 (page 62) also shows that 66% of GAPA participants and 55% of Haven Homes participants consider themselves poor, and the inability to afford luxuries amongst the GAPA participants is significantly higher (78%) than those of Haven Homes. The reasons for this can be attributed to Haven Homes participants receiving more (22%) social grants (old-age pension grant) than those of GAPA, because some of the GAPA participants are not yet of a pensionable age (sixty and above). Another reason is the rising cost of living and the GAPA participants' extreme sensitivity to their financial situation, due to the effect of the HIV/Aids epidemic and caring for extended families. The extreme sensitivity of the GAPA participants' financial situation was determined by analysing the participants' complete break-down of what their monthly old-age pension grant was spent on. Through the analysis of all nine participants monthly expenditure it was determined that the old-age pension grant is inadequate to sustain the participants' basic needs.

In response to a question asking both focus groups whether they have tried to re-enter paid employment, Table 5.3 (page 65) reveals that 33% of Haven Homes participants and

44% of GAPA participants have tried to re-enter the workforce. Further analysis of Table 5.3 reveals that the failure of re-entering the workforce by the GAPA participants was significantly higher (33%) than those of Haven Homes, because more GAPA participants than Haven Homes TRIED re-entering the workforce. The data indicated that age was a deciding factor which prohibited the participants from both focus groups from re-entering paid employment. The literature supports the findings recorded of the two focus groups, since Bytheway (1995: 100 – 105), and Wehner and Jørgensen (2001: 5) advance that employers' insistence for the aged to make way for the younger economically active members of society, has presented negative social and economic implications for the elderly. The analysis of the data is consistent with the literature with regard to the negative economic implications of being unable to re-enter the work force. Table 5.2 (page 62) shows that the Haven Homes participants are receiving 22% less additional finance, than those of GAPA. Despite this, more than half of the Haven Homes participants (55%) consider their social grant adequate, and the participants who attempted to re-enter the workforce, experienced that their age prohibited them from re-entering paid employment which would account for additional income. The South African old age pension grant, which is means-tested, also inhibits the participants from receiving additional finance from other non-governmental sources, since this would mean the loss of that grant.

The participants' standard of living, as reflected in Table 5.5 (page 68), shows that the Haven Homes participants experience a higher standard of living (11%) than those of GAPA. This difference can be attributed to Haven Homes providing their elderly residents with safe, secure and affordable housing, with full amenities including running water, flushing toilets and cupboards. The GAPA participants on the other hand do not live in an old-age home and due to their sensitive financial situation are limited in improving their standard of living. They

are nevertheless grateful for what they do have, even if it's a shack for shelter. The GAPA participants' satisfaction with their current circumstances, as reflected in Table 5.5, is therefore higher (11%) than those of Haven Homes. This seeming contradiction in the data can be accounted for as stated above, due to GAPA participants' gratitude for what they have, as well as the fact they have the support of the community and the GAPA organization which provides a self-help model to their members, by providing facilities and training workshops to the community.

### **7.1.2 The emotional and social factors impacting on the participants**

An analysis of the Tables 5.3 and 5.5 as to the impact of emotional and social factors on the participants' well-being reveal that the GAPA participants experienced, initially, high levels of emotional shock and stigmatisation upon learning about their children and grandchildren's HIV/Aids status, as well as the physical burden, such as picking up their sick children, whilst caring for and nursing them. The Haven Homes participants were however not affected by the epidemic in any form or manner and therefore experienced feelings of uselessness less (11%) than the GAPA participants, and in addition depression is also experienced less by 11%. The GAPA elderly participants felt useless and depressed when focusing on financial issues, since they have to bear the added cost of coping with extended families and the HIV/Aids epidemic. They do manage however, with the old-age pension grant, to support extended families, often as the only breadwinner. Legido-Quigley (2003: 2 & 10), Lam, Beibbrandt and Ranchhod (2005: 1 & 7) pointed this (breadwinning ability) out as part of the benefit attached to accessing the grant.

Even though the GAPA participants scored higher on the uselessness and depression questions, both groups indicated the same score on the question of them feeling like outcasts

of society (22%). This seeming discordance in the data can be accounted for as stated above, due to the GAPA participants' extreme sensitivity to their financial situation that made them more depressed, but not outcasts in society since they perform crucial tasks in the community. The literature supports the depression findings recorded of the two focus groups, since Shucksmith (2003: 1 & 2) advances that the onset of depression had increased dramatically at retirement amongst the elderly for various reasons. Shucksmith also states that depression often leads to increased social exclusion, a phenomenon that includes low social participation, social isolation and especially the lack of an exercise of power. Depression does not necessarily lead to social exclusion with the GAPA participants however, because of their high social participation, engagement and an exercise of power.

Table 5.5 (page 68) shows that 66% of Haven Homes participants and 88% of GAPA participants do not experience feelings of isolation. Feelings of loneliness however occurred 33% less amongst the Haven Homes participants than the GAPA participants. The latter experienced personal loneliness because of their daily duties and responsibilities *but* not group isolation since they are part of the community. In the initial introductory semi-structured interviews however, GAPA participants did *not* indicate feelings of loneliness, on the contrary, Mama 8 clearly states that the community loves and cares for her, since the community requires her skills and knowledge. Haven Homes participants similarly stated that they were part of a community, were safely housed and well-cared for, and even loved. Triangulation of data often indicates, as is the case here, inconsistent responses from the various participants.

The impact of retirement and the HIV/Aids epidemic has also not negatively impacted on participants' self-esteem, dignity and status in society. Table 5.5 reveals that the GAPA

participant's self-esteem and dignity is significantly higher (44%) than those of Haven Homes, in addition to their status in society which is 11% higher than Haven Homes. This is the case since GAPA participants receive support from the GAPA organization (including skills-training and educational workshops), the community and their children. They are highly valued by the homogeneous community (which mainly consists of people from the isiXhosa culture) for their knowledge, wisdom and contribution and subsequently do not feel "outdated" and unwanted. They also take personal pride in the care they provide to orphaned HIV/Aids grandchildren, even though they are stretched economically to do so. The Haven Homes participants' reduced self-esteem and dignity resulted from the fact that their old-age home's interracial environment has to accommodate too many cultural and religious belief systems that clash with one another, and that they are unable to deal with the differences. The participants felt that the Haven Homes environment offers little companionship and no support; there is no-one to talk to and confide in about their problems and woes (Participant 7, 2006a).

The equation between the economic rewards on the one hand and the emotions and social rewards on the other hand, was interwoven and frequently the boundaries demarcating these "areas" were collapsed. Therefore, although all the GAPA participants indicated that their income was inadequate, they were nevertheless happy with their standard of living, whereas Haven Homes participants were not.

### **7.1.3 The participants' response to being economically active again**

An analysis of Table 5.4 (page 67) indicates that those in favour of working past the age of 65 amongst the GAPA participants are higher (12%) than those of Haven Homes. The reasons behind this difference can be attributed to the GAPA participants' extreme sensitivity

to their financial situation, and their need to better that situation in order to cope with the effect of the HIV/Aids epidemic on their lives and on those of their extended families. This is consistent with the literature that states that the elderly want to return to paid employment, regardless of their age, if they desire to do so, or, if they have no choice because of a lack of finances. Wehner, Jørgensen and Legido-Quigley argue this point when they state that returning to work for the aged maintains the elderly's purpose in life and helps them to transfer their intellectual capital to the younger economically active members of society (Wehner & Jørgensen, 2001: 5 and Legido-Quigley, 2003: 25). The data in Table 5.4 supports the literature, since it reveals that 33% of the participants in both focus groups indicated that the economic rewards of being employed again may well represent financial independence. Table 5.4 also indicated that 44% of GAPA participants considered that the economic rewards may provide them the means to afford the luxuries they so yearned for, which would subsequently improve their standard of living, as well as that of their children and grandchildren. The Haven Homes participants indicated no real need to improve their standard of living, since they experience a higher standard of living than the GAPA participants, and are provided with safe, secure and affordable housing. Mama 9 stated that employment and its economic rewards would allow her to install ceilings and cupboards in her house, as well as send her son to the Cape Peninsula University of Technology to further his education. Table 5.4 also indicates that 55% of Haven Homes participants and 22% of GAPA participants considered that the economic rewards may well present them with both financial independence and the means to afford luxuries. GAPA participants do want to improve their standard of living, but do not want to become too rich, since this may result in them being victims of theft and crimes, as well as societal isolation.

The analysis of the data in Table 5.4 also indicates that the social rewards of being economically active again, such as keeping busy amongst the GAPA participants, is significantly higher (12%) than those of Haven Homes. This is the case, since the Haven Homes participants are satisfied with their fixed old-age pension grant and standard of living. The Haven Homes participants also do not have the financial responsibilities that the GAPA participants have to contend with on a daily basis. The skills (craft and business) that are taught at GAPA also help the participants to keep busy, since they are able to apply the skills in their daily lives. Table 5.4 also indicates that the social rewards, such as having a purpose in life and feeling socially useful amongst the GAPA participants is also significantly higher (23%) than amongst those of Haven Homes. This can be attributed to the fact that the GAPA participants are more involved with their own community than the Haven Homes participants and like to transfer their skills and knowledge on to others when needed. This phenomenon, as well as the participants' greater financial responsibilities compared to the Haven Homes participants, in part due to the HIV/Aids epidemic and high unemployment rates in South Africa, therefore gives the GAPA participants the incentive to pursue their goals and dreams to become financially independent. The transference of skills and knowledge amongst the GAPA participants and community may therefore increase with the GAPA participants re-entering paid employment, since the participant's skills and knowledge will accumulate significantly. This is evident in Table 5.4 that indicates that 11% of GAPA participants felt that part of the social rewards of paid employment may be passing their skills and knowledge to others.

Table 5.4 also reveals that 11% of Haven Homes participants felt that the *social rewards* of being economically active again, may provide them with companionship, more fun and happiness, as well as the opportunity to visit their family and friends in the Transkei

on a regular basis (bearing in mind that Haven Homes is a multi-cultural old-age home). The GAPA participants however indicated none of these aspects. The reasons behind this difference is in view of the fact that the GAPA elderly participants are a homogenous group (all are isiXhosa women), who have agency over their own lives, since they reside in their own individual homes, and have access to the GAPA multipurpose centre on a daily basis as their central workplace and meeting site, where they receive training, meet socially and build skills. The Haven Homes participants on the other hand are a multi-cultural group and reside in a long-term institutional facility, which has proven to be problematic with inter-cultural communication, as well as having (to a degree) a detrimental impact on the residents' mental, emotional and physical well-being as explained by one participant. Participant 7 states that she finds that the diverse cultures at Haven Homes environment clash with one another, because of the residents' different work ethics, moral values (where she mentioned cursing, drinking and smoking regularly as areas of conflict) and belief systems. All of these aspects have caused her emotional well-being to deteriorate, since she felt stigmatised because of her own strong religious belief system and morality, which consequently resulted in her having no friends or companionship at Haven Homes.

The GAPA participants receive educational workshops on a monthly basis and at least once a year a committee of grandmothers from the Khayelitsha co-operative is selected to go to the Eastern Cape, so as to transfer their skills and knowledge to the other three GAPA co-operatives, that are situated in that region of South Africa. This is carried out so as to update the Eastern Cape co-operatives' elderly members with skills and knowledge, whilst also maintaining and enhancing GAPA's income generation program. The Haven Homes participants however, only receive the occasional skill-training workshops; therefore the GAPA participants' are fitter, more physically active, able-bodied and competent to do

multifaceted and sometimes labour intensive work that is executed at the centre. GAPA participants are consequently more equipped to work from a skills and physical perspective, as opposed to the Haven Homes elderly participants who suffered from a number of ailments and received little training.

Even though the Haven Homes participants scored higher on the social rewards question, Table 5.4 shows that 55% of Haven Homes participants would prefer the economic rewards to the social rewards of employment, while 66% of GAPA participants would prefer the social rewards. This difference in the data can be accounted for as stated above, due to GAPA participants homogenous and close-knit community structure and the fact they have agency over their own lives. Some of the GAPA participants stated that the economic rewards may result in complications for themselves, such as being victims of theft and crimes, and societal isolation. Mamas 8 and 9 stated that the economic rewards would only sustain them for a short period. They would have more problems than rewards and would have to isolate themselves from society so as to prevent crime and stigmatisation attached to being seen as wealthy. They did not want that at all, since it would lead to loneliness and stress. The GAPA participants also value their involvement and support from their surrounding community, churches and especially the GAPA organization. Mama 6 stated that GAPA's income generation programme improved her well-being, while Mama 1 stated that GAPA helps her to pass her knowledge of craft skills onto others.

## **7.2 Instituting the sustainable Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP) and triumphing over socio-economic hardships**

Similar to social studies detailing the negative affects of marginalization on the elderly's well-being (Bytheway, 1995; Sidell, 1995; Rodrigues, Brathwaite & Dorsey, 2002;

Tudawe, 2002; Legido-Quigley, 2003; Noubissi, 2004; and Gaminiratne, 2004), the responses recorded in the initial interviews emphasised that mandatory retirement negatively impacts on the two elderly groups' socio-economic well-being to a degree. The socio-economic importance of implementing the FADP income-generation programme was strongly acknowledged by the participants during the midway and concluding interviews, in addition to the workshops, design focus group sessions and during the development and fabrication of the product range. Fostering a sense of engagement, intellectual development and identity amongst the elderly participants resulted from the implementation of the FADP and had various benefits. Amongst these are the improvement of their existing skills, acquiring new skills, techniques and knowledge about product design development, learning about colour combinations and the procedures and techniques involved in the manufacturing of the product range. Another benefit was helping to preserve neglected traditional craft skills and techniques, through the development of the product range.

### **7.2.1 Description of the Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP)**

The theoretical design of the FADP model examined three design for development models, namely the Creative Industries, Design for the World and Architecture for Humanity. The FADP model drew on attributes from each design initiative, such as creating sustainable and socially conscious design relief, as well as offering a unique marketable product for the local and overseas market, which could ultimately lead to job and wealth creation, which in turn informed how the fieldwork research component of the practical and participatory process of the FADP model would be designed, operated and managed. The practical and participatory processes of the FADP model in turn informed which guidelines should be implemented to counteract the inadequate state pension scheme in South Africa, that many

elderly have become increasingly dependent on. This resulted in the development of the FADP model and a product range of women's accessories.

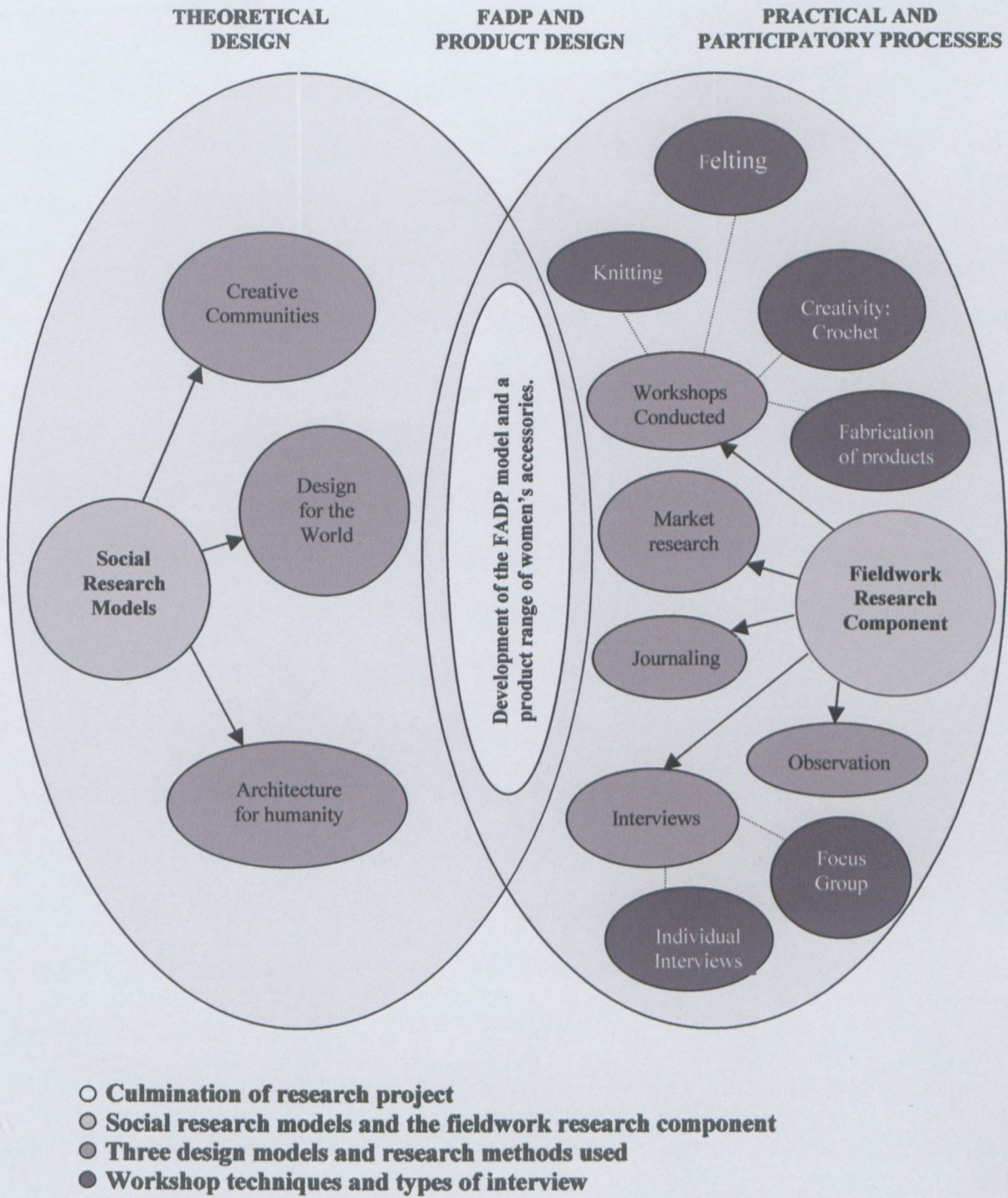


Figure 7.1. *The Fibre-Arts Design Project model*. Stipp, 2008.

## **7.22 Structure and operational guidelines of the FADP**

To ensure the sustainability of the FADP amongst similar elderly groups sites, it is of the utmost importance that the FADP facilitator who is implementing the FADP with a similar elderly site must be well-informed and skilled in product development and designing, must retain entrepreneurial leadership and skills, as well as be passionate about fibre-arts and helping to empower the elderly.

If the FADP facilitator is not skilled in product development and designing, but does retain entrepreneurial leaderships and skills, s/he can appoint a designer/product developer who is passionate about fibre-arts, who would assist with the skill-training workshops and fabrication of the product range. This was the case with Natural and Beautiful (NAB) Design who took over the entrepreneurial operations of the FADP and the GAPA focus group in the beginning of July 2008, while I was appointed as the designer/product developer for NAB Design. Bankruptcy however hit NAB Design at the end of October 2008, but in the short period that I was designing for NAB Design, in addition to utilizing the GAPA focus group for the manufacturing of the majority of NAB Design's craft articles, NAB Design and the FADP were being recognised by the Cape Craft and Design Institute (CCDI), as well as other businesses as a high-end fashion accessories, hand craftsmanship and community upliftment business to invest in.

The role of the designer/product developer in the FADP is also central to its sustainability, since the designer/product developer shares responsibility for the creation of new, unique, exciting and high-end fashion products with the elderly. The designer/product developer additionally provides market access, market research, and market testing, as well as pricing and costing to the FADP. By providing access to the market the designer/product

developer ensures that a niche market is created for the FADP, while the testing of the market provides the FADP with beneficial feedback, such as expanding the FADP's product range with more inexpensive products, as was the case with what the market research of this specific study uncovered. Integrating such feedback into the FADP may result in a larger target market for the FADP and it would as a result also maintain its sustainability.

The structure and operational guidelines for the FADP were however not as rigid as the overall context of the FADP, but were flexible enough to adapt to the needs and circumstances of the GAPA and Haven Homes focus group sites. Consequently, the FADP may be adapted to the needs of similar elderly group sites that also require the development of neglected and new craft skills. The structure and operational guidelines of the FADP therefore merely serve as guiding principles for future FADP facilitators in ensuring that similar focus group sites may also experience empowerment and improved income generation.

When selecting the elderly group site key considerations must be taken into account, so as to ensure the success and sustainability of the FADP amongst additional elderly group sites. They include that the elderly participants should be selected from a low-income socio-economic areas, since this specific socio-economic site (as proven by the GAPA focus group in the study) would benefit significantly more socially and economically from the FADP than any other socio-economic sites. The elderly participants must also be retired, must be receiving an old-age pension grant, must be between the ages of 50 and 80, must display feelings of self-worth, dignity and receive support from their surrounding community. Due to the participants' age and physical capabilities, it must also be taken into account that new participants need to be introduced to the FADP on an ongoing basis so as to ensure that the FADP is never without producers, which is essential to the FADP's successes and

sustainability. The participants of the elderly group must also be craft producers of some form (such as beading, quilting or leather work) and not necessarily skilled in knitting or crocheting as was the case with the FADP. Remember that the overall aim of the FADP is to develop the skills of the elderly, so as to produce commercially viable products for the local and international market, while concurrently improving their socio-economic well-being. Having a variety of different skill sets amongst different elderly group sites is beneficial to the overall success of the FADP, since a variety and diversity of product ranges will ensure that no single FADP will be a threat to any other FADP. The elderly participants must furthermore be familiar with craft production, must be fit and healthy, must be physically active, able-bodied and competent to do complex and sometimes labour-intensive work. They must also have a desire to learn and obtain new skills and knowledge, and must be familiar with time management and planning.

Another important consideration to bear in mind is the elderly group's home language and the language that the facilitator is wishing to present the FADP model to the elderly participants in. If there is a verbal communication barrier between the FADP facilitator and the elderly group, a translator will have to be integrated into the FADP model, as was the case of the GAPA focus group site under investigation in this study. Otherwise an instructor, who is familiar with fibre-arts, and speaks and understands the groups' mother tongue must be appointed to communicate with the elderly participants and the FADP facilitator.

The skills-training workshop sessions need to be conducted in the focus groups' own environment and surroundings. In this study the GAPA Multipurpose Centre in Khayelitsha and a converted garage at Haven Homes, provided the premises and central workplace where the workshop sessions were conducted with the two focus groups. The venue allocated for the

implementation of the FADP must therefore be located and positioned centrally for the elderly, so that they can easily reach the central workplace on foot or by taxi. The FADP venue also needs to be equipped with electricity and running water for the workshop sessions, which is essential for the execution of particularly the felting workshop. The FADP venue should also provide enough tables (plastic and metal foldaway tables were made available at GAPA and wooden tables at Haven Homes) and chairs. However, if there are no tables and chairs available at the venue, provision must be made by the facilitator to provide the FADP venue with this indispensable equipment. This is essential for the elderly's physical well-being and comfort.

The frequency and duration of the workshop sessions need to be taken into consideration as well, and is dependent on the elderly's physical capabilities, regular engagements which they might attend to on a daily, weekly and monthly basis (such as weekly clinic visits), the aim of what needs to be accomplished in each individual workshop and the preparation required for organising, sourcing materials and tools, and dealing with logistics. In this study each individual workshop session took place once a week from ten o'clock in the morning till three o'clock in the afternoon (Haven Homes every Thursday and GAPA every Friday). Sufficient refreshments and rest periods also need to be structured into the design of the skills-training workshop sessions, as well as between each workshop session. This ensures that the elderly participants will not become too tired and will be alert and capable to complete their participation in the individual workshop sessions, while acquiring and learning new skills and craft techniques. The rest periods between each workshop session would also allow the elderly to recuperate for the next workshop session, especially if the workshops are labour intensive. In this study two fifteen minute tea breaks at approximately half past eleven and half past two, and a forty-five minute lunch break at approximately one

o' clock, all provided some form of refreshment during the long workshop hours. Weekly rest periods between each workshop session was also incorporated into the design of the skills-training workshop sessions. This was beneficial for the FADP and the elderly, since the workshop sessions proved to be long and tiring for some of the elderly participants. This was especially the case with the first introductory felting workshop, since the participants from both focus groups found that their arthritic fingers, hands and arms were affected significantly by the felting process. The lengthy rest periods between each workshop session also gave the participants the opportunity to complete their felted products or knitted and crocheted samples that they were unable to complete in the allocated time frame.

All the equipment and materials needed for the individual workshop sessions, as well as for the fabrication of the product range need to be provided by the FADP facilitator as well. For the felting workshop in this specific study, the tools and materials included spray bottles, organic liquid soap, different carded and dyed wools, bubble wrap, scissors, lengths of plastic, gardening mesh which provides friction for the felting process, permanent markers, plastic bags, plastic sheeting to protect the tables from water damage, tulle netting, a kettle and a large plastic tub for shocking<sup>39</sup> the felted products. The knitting and creative workshop needed equipment such as different sized knitting needles and crochet hooks, different types of yarns, and materials, such as natural and plastic raffia, as well as material off-cuts, all of which I provided.

The content and schedule of the skills-training workshop sessions must also be taken into consideration and structured in such manner so as to expose the elderly group site to a new craft skill and improve upon and update their existing skills, but to also allow the elderly

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<sup>39</sup> To stop the felting process and to rinse the felted article, boiling water is poured over the felted article and left to lie submerged in the boiling water for a few seconds, the article is then rinsed under cold water. The process is repeated three times.

to share their own creative ideas with the FADP facilitator, designer and product developer, as was the case with this specific study. Feedback and sharing sessions are also vital to the FADP's sustainability and therefore should also be structured into the schedule of the skill-training workshops. This may take place during the workshop sessions, at the end of the workshop session, as was the case with this specific study, or even monthly. The feedback and sharing sessions allow for the elderly to air any grievances which they may have with the managing of the FADP, while also allowing the participants to be involved in the design and development of the skill-training workshops and product range. This is essential to the socio-economic well-being of the elderly participants, as well as to the success of the FADP, since this structure will foster active engagement, intellectual development and identity amongst the elderly participants, which is necessary when implementing social design models. The integration of different skill-training workshops (felted, knitting and creative) in this specific study proved that both the development and fabrication of the accessory range, as well as the participants' personal well-being benefited significantly from the structure of the FADP's skill-training workshops.

Supervision and guidance must also be provided to the participants, and structured into the workshop phase of the FADP, as well as the production of the product range. This is essential to the participants' emotional well-being and reaction towards being involved in the FADP, since this demonstrates to the participants that you care about them, their needs and about improving their craft skills. Supervision and guidance also help identify which participants are the most skilled at a specific craft, therefore ensuring that a high standard of quality is maintained from the start of the FADP and at all times. Allowing for different learning rates need to be structured into the workshop sessions and production of the product range as well. One of the ways that this specific study overcame learning rates was to seat the

participants around a large table, this ensured that the participants were not separated from one another, but part of a group of like-minded participants that could learn from one another, either through observation or asking each other for help and guidance. This was the case with Mama 5 at the GAPA focus group who persevered in learning to knit, a skill that she was unfamiliar with. A facilitator should also never force any of the elderly in the FADP to acquire new skills, instead assistance and guidance must be provided when it is required and the participants should always be praised when they do succeed at acquiring a new skill, even if it is only one of the basic knitting stitches.

#### **7.2.2.1 Fabrication of the FADP accessories range**

The schedule for the development and fabrication of the product range needs to be structured according to what and how many products need to be produced in a day or week, how much time needs to be allocated for each product and how fast the elderly are able to complete the work in. In this specific study the development and fabrication of the accessories took place once a week initially with both focus groups. The GAPA participants' fieldwork sessions however increased to twice a week (Wednesday and Friday), since they were producing at a much faster pace than the Haven Homes participants and were contributing significantly more to the FADP than the Haven Homes participants. This contribution was measured against their construction ability, skills and their desire to learn as much as possible about product development and design. At one stage of the components' production, it was observed that the GAPA participants were working at such a fast rate that production was ahead of schedule, since the components were being completed in the five-hour workshop sessions, instead of the estimated two-day and weekly production phases. Observations and creative interactions with both focus groups showed that the GAPA participants were far more familiar with time management than the Haven Homes participants.

Supervision and quality control also need to be structured into the production phase of the product range, since this is essential in ensuring that no production mistakes occur, which could ultimately put the planned production timetable behind schedule. This can take place either daily or weekly, and is dependent on who is doing the production. In this specific study the GAPA participants' weekly fabrication workshops were increased, since the Haven Homes participants were frequently making construction mistakes that needed to be rectified and therefore required constant supervision. I decided that if the development and fabrication of the accessory range were to comply with the planned production timetable, the GAPA participants had to do the majority of the manufacturing. I also had to be more involved in the production process, especially when it came to the intricate constructions of the felted loop stitched handle for the Shakaland Peacock queen luxury handbag, the Kaapse Klopse Carnival shadow knitted tie scarf, Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner interchangeable poncho, Wild Durbs openwork poncho-wrap and the fabrication of various sized squares and rectangles for the two Opulent fynbos Gypsy wraps.

The felted loop stitched handle for the Shakaland Peacock queen luxury handbag requires a large knitting needle in the construction to create the loops for the loop stitch. During the knitting workshop it was expressed by all the participants that they disliked the loop stitch technique, since the larger third knitting needle was too cumbersome to hold and problematic to manoeuvre, and was a result difficult to knit with. I was however more familiar with the knitting technique, since I had mastered it earlier than the GAPA participants, and to ensure consistent quality throughout the accessory range I would therefore be responsible for the construction of this component. I also constructed the intricate and complicated Kaapse Klopse Carnival shadow knitted tie scarf, the feather openwork stitch panel and elegant elongated stitch panel for Garbo's luxury caprice Capetown Castle liner interchangeable

poncho, Wild Durbs openwork poncho-wrap and the various sized squares and rectangles for the two Opulent fynbos Gypsy wraps. I observed during the knitting workshop that the GAPA participants were unable to read and interpret complicated shadow knit patterns and openwork patterns. Furthermore, during the fabrication of the accessory range it was observed that Participant 1 at Haven Homes was unable to detect when and where she had made a construction mistake in the Kaapse Klopse shadow knit tie scarf, as well as in one of the shadow knit and openwork patterning squares for the Opulent fynbos Gypsy wrap. The GAPA participants were far more comfortable producing components through the use of basic knitting stitches. Once again, to ensure consistent quality throughout the accessory range I would take on the responsibility for constructing all of the above-mentioned components.

Having a schedule for the development and fabrication of the product range is important for the FADP, however it is also important to make the schedule flexible so as to accommodate the competing demands that may arise from the elderly's personal lives without putting a complete halt to the production schedule. In this specific study it was experienced that two months into the production of the accessories range, the GAPA participants' manufacturing output started to decrease significantly, even though they were producing at a much faster rate than the Haven Homes participants. This occurred since the GAPA participants had obtained a large contract order from a private company that needed to be completed immediately. The production of the FADP accessory range was consequently set to one side by the GAPA participants, since they felt that as the FADP was not remunerating them for their expertise and labour and the contract order was, the latter would take precedence over the production of the accessory range. Mama 8 expressed this sentiment clearly at the last interview, by stating that in future she wants to be remunerated for her expertise and labour, although the consent form was signed and explanatory statements issued

in isiXhosa. The statements indicated that the intention of the FADP was firstly a skills-training one, and that refreshments and lunches would be provided, but no wages paid at the development and training phase.

Mama 8's sentiment was understandable; since the GAPA participants' extreme sensitivity to their financial situation meant that they had to grab every income-generating opportunity that came their way. Consequently, I decided that the tight production timetable would be adjusted and be made flexible so as to accommodate the large contract order. A disadvantage of adjusting the initial production timetable to be more flexible was that the production of the accessories took much longer than anticipated. However, an advantage was that I was responsive to the changing needs and circumstances of the participants' changing situation during the development and implementation phase of the FADP model.

Remuneration is important in the development and fabrication of the product range and it is essential that the elderly participants in the FADP be remunerated according to their craft expertise and labour. Out-sourcing is also beneficial to the FADP and the production of the product range, since it ensures that more intricate craft products are introduced to the product range, while also maintaining a consistent quality throughout the product range. Out-sourcing should however be kept minimal, since the object of the FADP is for the elderly to produce the product range and benefit socially and economically from the sale of the product range and not for the FADP to become an outlet for craft products. In this specific study out-sourcing was used only for the more intricate knitted and crocheted accessories, which required a knowledgeable and literate knitter and crotchetier for their fabrication and completion. Illiteracy was not a problem at the GAPA focus group, since the participants overcame this hurdle by teaching themselves to knit and crochet fashioned items using a

paper template. It is therefore important for future FADP facilitators to try similar methods to also overcome illiteracy amongst additional elderly groups, and to use out-sourcing as a last resort.

### **7.2.3 Satisfactory management of the FADP**

The participants stated that the three workshops had had in some way or another, a positive impact on them all. The concluding semi-structured interviews support the data gathered from the three workshop observations and midway interviews, since all the participants (except Mama 3 who returned to the Transkei and couldn't be interviewed) were satisfied with how the FADP was conducted. The main reasons for their satisfaction were that they acquired new skills and techniques that could be passed on to others; they improved their existing skills and acquired knowledge about product design development, and the procedures and techniques involved in the manufacturing of the product range proved to be the most enjoyable and useful experiences that the participants took with them from the FADP workshop sessions. Mama 5 articulates this sentiment strongly by expressing that at the start of the FADP she felt pressurised (by me) to learn new knitting techniques, which she was unfamiliar with. She however overcame this by persevering to learn to knit and consequently discovered that she was "good at knitting", and enjoyed the craft skill (Mama 5, 2008c). She also enjoyed producing the knitted resin leather handle for the Bushveld cowgirl tote, since she had "created the handle perfectly" (Mama 5, 2008c). Several other participants, who wanted to learn the manufacturing procedure for the establishment of their own fashionable products, also expressed this sentiment, in addition to one participant who discovered that she could "create products with any material" (Mama 7, 2008c). The participants were thoroughly pleased with the integration of different workshops into the design of the FADP model, and

they also expressed at the concluding interview that they wanted the FADP to provide them with additional craft skills and techniques (such as fabric painting) in the near future.

The participants expressed the sentiment in the concluding interviews that the FADP helped to provide the participants with an identity and purpose in life, in addition to making them feel more socially useful. The FADP model was also expected to be successful when the products are marketed, and this success may help alleviate poverty amongst the participants by providing them with a degree of economic freedom and financial independence. This sentiment was strongly articulated by one participant who expressed that she was “going to be a wealthy woman” and so too would the other participants (Mama 5, 2008c). Three of the participants however articulated that the FADP would allow them to pass on their skills, knowledge and wisdom to their children and grandchildren. This sentiment was strongly expressed by Mama 7 who explained that:

... passing on skills and knowledge [on] to younger generations will reduce poverty and crime (Mama 7, 2008c).

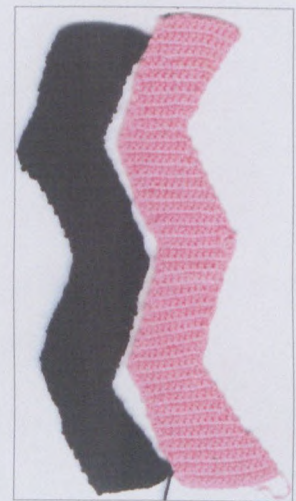
### **7.3 Mastering product development challenges**

Analysis of my observational journaling findings obtained during the three skill-training workshops and product design focus group sessions, as well as during the development and fabrication of the fibre-art accessory range, indicates that a range of women’s accessories can successfully be produced co-operatively with the elderly. However, not just any elderly group can be utilized for the implementation of a FADP model. Key considerations must be taken into account before implementing the FADP model amongst other elderly focus group sites. They include that the elderly group must be fit and healthy, must be physically active, able-bodied and competent as to do multifaceted and sometimes labour intensive work. The elderly groups must also have a desire to learn and obtain new

skills and knowledge, must have access to a central workplace and must be familiar with time management and planning. The data shows that the GAPA focus group site had all these attributes, even though most of the GAPA participants were illiterate, as opposed to the Haven Homes participants who were all literate.

Particularly with regard to technical execution and accuracy of components, it was apparent that the GAPA participants were manufacturing at a much faster rate than the Haven Homes participants, and produced flawless components with very little supervision. The three Haven Homes participants however required constant supervision, particularly Participant 1, who chose to knit all the complicated shadow knit and openwork product design patterns. She was unable to detect when and where she had made a construction mistake in the “Kaapse Klopse” shadow knit tie scarf and rectify it at that point, in addition to making configuration errors in one of the shadow knit and openwork patterning squares, in the “Opulent fynbos Gypsy wrap”.

Interacting creatively with the GAPA participants also established that the participants could knit or crochet any symmetrical and asymmetrical shape effortlessly if provided with a template, in addition to quickly mastering new craft techniques and readily accepting new media and fibre-art challenges, such as crocheting around a segment of fabric or leather that has had its edges blanket stitched. In addition, one participant, Mama 2, was asked to crochet circles of different diameters in gold craft wire for the “Skeleton Coast wedding bag”. The participant accepted the request and mastered the technique immediately, and to date is the only GAPA participant



**Figure 7.2. Mama 8's zigzag crochet samples. Stipp, 2007.**

who is enthusiastic to crochet with craft wire. Mama 8 is a prime example of a craft producer who has overcome and mastered challenges readily. She was presented with the challenge of crocheting zigzags for the “Graphic Kalahari bucket bag”, and was able to master the knitting zigzag technique immediately. She taught herself to crochet zigzags and when I saw her next she had achieved what she had set out to do; crocheting three zigzag samples for the product development of the “Graphic Kalahari bucket bag” (see FIG 7.2).

Mama 9, a left-hand knitter who mastered the openwork pattern in the knitting workshop, was not able to understand and remember the configuration sequence for the “Wild Durbs openwork poncho-wrap” without guidance and supervision. She consequently asked Mama 6, a right-hand knitter, to take it over from her, since it seemed that Mama 6 had grasped the openwork pattern better than she did in the knitting workshop. Mama 6 continued to knit on the poncho-wrap for several weeks, but told me that she would not be able to complete it in the allocated production time, since she had too many other responsibilities. The poncho-wrap was consequently passed back to me to complete and if examined closely, the construction of the poncho-wrap reveals where Mama 9 started off, and where Mama 6 took over from Mama 9, ending with my contribution. Rather than being seen as a flaw, the different construction styles resulted in a wrap that is unique and filled with character.

### **7.3.1 Analysis and Promotion of the Range**

The Department of Arts and Culture in South Africa provides a platform, known as the Emerging Creatives, for young designers and crafters from all over South Africa the opportunity to exhibit their design work at the yearly Design Indaba expo, as well as to network with local and internationally buyers. Up and coming designers and design students are however not excluded, since the Emerging Creatives also helps these young creatives,

from a wide variety of different design disciplines, to be part of the internationally renowned Design Indaba expo and conference.

An analysis of the market research survey questionnaires indicates that the women's accessory range has market appeal both in South Africa and to an international audience. The reasons for this can be found in the data that states that the aesthetic design elements, such as the assortment of materials, the usage of different fibre-art techniques and colours in one product, and the versatility of the products are exceptional, since they create unique and interesting items. Respondent 18 states that the product range has been designed and made especially for the international buyer in mind. The literature supports the findings recorded by the market research, since Steele and Borrelli (1999: 8), Johnson (2002: 260) and INFOMAT (2008) indicate that many women delight in acquiring and wearing unusual accessories, since they become an integral part in reflecting a woman's identity and may even function as an extension of her body and being.

The market research also reveals that the product range appeals to both men and women between the ages of twenty and fifty-nine and that the handbags, especially the practical Bushveld cowgirl tote and Opulent fynbos Gypsy travel bag, are the accessories that attract the most attention and appreciation. The reasons for this can be found in the data which indicates that the respondents preferred the bags over the scarves, shawls, ponchos, capelets and wraps, since the designs were sturdy and functional. This is consistent with the literature that states that many women tend to regard the handbag as an important iconic accessory and furthermore, the practical handbag is a crucial instrument to many women in their daily lives. Steele, Borrelli and Johnson argue this point when they state that working women tend to be more focused on issues of practicality ... "career women require that the necessities of

everyday life are portable and properly organized” (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 28, 31 & 43 and Johnson, 2002: 356, 404 & 405). Respondent 9 states that the functional design of the Bushveld cowgirl tote would allow her to house all her personal effects as a graphic design student, even her drawings which could be stored in the umbrella compartment. The analysis of the product range also reveals that the FADP needs to develop more handbag products that have both masculine and feminine appeal, since this would allow men to also purchase the FADP designer products, as well as widen the target market in the marketing plan.

The analysis of the costing of the products in the accessory range indicates that the majority (79%) of the South African and international market will pay the asking price of the individual products, since the products are unique, durable and eye-catching. This is consistent with the literature that states that many women are investing in exclusive accessories, rather than in high-end fashion apparel, since fashion can date quickly and trends are cyclical, whereas accessories are seen to be more classical and durable. Steele, Borrelli, Johnson and INFOMAT argue this point when they state many women rather “opt for versatile high-end accessories that need not to be replaced seasonally” (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 8; Johnson, 2002: 260 and INFOMAT, 2008). The literature also advances that many women are purchasing handbags, since they have become investment pieces and expensive status symbols (Steele & Borrelli, 1999: 8, 11 & 146 and Johnson, 2002: xii). The data supports the literature, since Respondent 12 reveals that she would pay the asking price, since she would be purchasing a versatile designer item and Respondent 13 states that she would pay the asking price since the purchasing of the products would prove to be a worthy and valuable investments for the future. The costing analysis also reveals that the South African market would prefer inexpensive products to be designed along the current accessories range as well, since this would allow a much wider market (such as teenagers, students, young

working-age adults and lower-middle class consumers) to also purchase designer products, as well as to widen the target market and profitability outlook in the marketing plan (see page 42 in Chapter three).

The market research has provided me with a platform to develop appropriate marketing strategies for the women's accessory product range and the opportunity to approach different retailers, shops, boutiques, as well as different community outreach programmes, such as the Pick and Pay "Community Producers" incentive, to promote and sell the products. This will ensure a competitive edge is maintained in the market, as well as promoting a vibrant community and economy. This may seem quite ambitious, but I am considering together with the GAPA focus group, selecting a small committee of the elderly producers who will be able and willing to take on some of the organizational responsibilities and to continue with the FADP on an ongoing basis. This would be done with a view to make the FADP sustainable in the long term on an economic, resource and recruitment basis.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

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### 8 Conclusion

This study investigated the social and economic problems of the elderly (as represented by the focus groups) from a creative perspective, and how, through a practical intervention, these problems could be addressed. Through inductive analysis of the fieldwork data findings, a framework and a set of guidelines were consequently established to address how the elderly in the focus group sites initially, (and other sites thereafter) could be reintegrated into some form of economic activity and societal participation, and as a developmental model be generalized as a creative framework to be used in similar sites. The resultant product range of women's accessories produced in collaboration with the elderly, was tested in the market and in future will be marketed on an ongoing basis as a small business venture.

The deductive analysis of the literature revealed that population ageing is no longer confined to the developed world and has become a worldwide phenomenon, as a result of an increase in life expectancy, a decline in the birth rates, improvements in nutrition, basic health care and the control of many infectious diseases. The largest elderly population growth rate will occur in Africa, while South Africa will contribute to the highest proportion of elderly in Africa, as well as in Southern Africa. The prevailing growing percentage of elderly citizens worldwide and in South Africa is, however, placing pressure on the economically active for additional financial support. The elderly's dignity, self-esteem and independence have consequently been negatively affected by these fiscal implications, as well as due to a lack of secure and adequate income, because of retirement, a fast and steep increase in living costs



and the high price of health care. The current demographic trends have also brought about many negative social, emotional and economic implications for the aged.

Throughout the investigation, the establishment and operation of the Fibre Arts Design Project (FADP), as well as through critical analysis and reflection of the research findings, it emerged that the elderly who reside in low income socio-economic areas in the Western Cape, such as the GAPA focus group in Khayelitsha, are the elderly who are most negatively affected by life events such as early retirement with no adequate pension provision, and the HIV/Aids epidemic. This specific socio-economic focus group site has the potential to benefit significantly more socially and economically from the FADP than the other two focus group sites also investigated, namely Haven Homes and Pinelands. The reasons for this is that apart from the inadequate social old-age pension grant, the elderly households support others affected by the HIV/Aids epidemic, since they frequently have to bear the added cost of coping with extended families, and increasingly as the only breadwinner.

Implementing the socially driven, income-generation FADP model, showed that the elderly's social and economic problems in South Africa can be addressed and improved through a well-conceived and practical intervention. Investing time, energy and finance in such an intervention whilst simultaneously and actively promoting strategies of knowledge and skills creation as the preferred path to maintain the elderly's socio-economic well-being, accomplished this. A renewed sense of engagement, intellectual development and identity amongst the elderly participants also resulted from the implementation of the FADP, as well as other benefits. Amongst these are the improvement of the participants' existing skills, and the acquisition of new skills, techniques and knowledge about product design development. Learning about colour combinations, in addition to the procedures and techniques involved in

the manufacturing of the product range, were also amongst the benefits that the elderly took with them from the FADP. Another benefit was helping to revive hands-on creativity, preserving and restoring the sometimes disused and forgotten traditional craft skills such as knitting and crochet techniques, whilst empowering the elderly through the development of the product range.

The development and fabrication of the women's accessory range amongst the GAPA elderly participants were also far more successful than that of Haven Homes, since the GAPA participants were familiar with time management, had more skills and knowledge to bring to the FADP, and had more desire to learn and obtain as many skills and knowledge as possible from the FADP, compared to the Haven Homes participants. The GAPA participants were also fit, healthy, physically active, able-bodied and competent to do multifaceted and sometimes labour intensive work.

The responses to the market research survey questionnaires determined that the women's accessory range is marketable in South Africa and overseas, since the interchangeable products, as well as the craft techniques and materials used in the development of the accessory range were unique, original and appealed very much to these target markets, whilst still being able to maintain a competitive edge in the handcraft industry sector. However, more handbag products with both masculine and feminine appeal need to be developed, so as to allow men to also purchase the FADP designer products, as well as to widen the target market. In addition, inexpensive products also need to be designed and introduced into the current accessories range, as this will also widen the target market, as well as the sustainability and profitability of the FADP.

## 8.1 Recommendations

The results of this study indicated that the FADP model may be generalized to other similar low-income socio-economic sites, due to the design and developmental nature of the FADP model. Implementing the FADP amongst other elderly group sites is possible since the structure of the FADP can be adapted and altered to meet the needs and circumstances of those specific elderly group sites. This can either be done through the introduction of different and/or less strenuous skill-training workshops, such as beading and quilting, which might also be more familiar to the elderly group sites, and not necessarily focusing on the skills that the FADP workshops focused on. The skill-training workshops can also be decreased or increased, depending on the needs of the elderly group sites and the objectives of the model in those sites. The workshops may also be conducted every second day or once a month, depending once again entirely on how the elderly group sites want to work within the FADP model, their own commitments in their daily lives and availability of venues and materials which will effect the implementation and structure for each specific elderly focus group site. The other positive feature about the FADP model is that it can also be implemented amongst entirely different focus group sites, such as young working-age adults who might be affected by high levels of unemployment and poverty, and who require a means to uplift them from negative circumstances, and not merely focusing on the elderly, as was the case in this specific study.

Key considerations must be taken into account, so as to ensure the success and sustainability of the FADP amongst additional elderly group sites. They include that FADP venues must be located and positioned centrally for the elderly, so that they can easily reach the central workplace on foot or by taxi. The premises must be equipped with electricity and running water, as well as comfortable seating and tables for operational purposes. The

participants must in turn be fit and healthy, must be physically active, able-bodied and competent to do complex and sometimes labour-intensive work. The elderly groups must also have a desire to learn and obtain new skills and knowledge, and must be familiar with time management and planning.

Once all of these considerations are in place, a successful FADP is possible even in remote sites, and in future a network may be established to service and manage the development, promotion and marketing of these initiatives and their resultant products. Such a future prospect may indeed positively address some of the very real challenges that our elderly face in South Africa.

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**Consent To Conduct Research At The Establishments Of Pinelands Place, Haven Homes  
And Grandmothers Against Poverty And Aids**

To Whom It May Concern:

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR ESTABLISHMENT**

In my B. Tech research project, I investigated the overall well-being of the elderly. That particular research project however focused on helping find solutions to the detrimental impact that the institutional settings of nursing home environments have on the elderly's mental and physical well-being and how these could be prevented or minimized through the creation of knitted fiber-art gardens. The previous project investigated the therapeutic benefits of knitted "garden" screens when used for privacy and to provide an aesthetically enhanced environment.

This particular research project however acknowledges that the growing percentage of elderly citizens worldwide and in South Africa is increasingly placing more pressure on the economically active population for support. This study, with a view to addressing the economic and emotional dependence of the elderly (including issues of independence, dignity and self-fulfillment), investigates those factors which promote or mitigate against the development of a sustainable community-based craft development programme, based on the participation of the elderly in a fiber-arts design project. I feel your organization will benefit significantly from this specific research project, because not only will the intended research project transform the lives of the "Haven Homes" participants and finding value in preserving their individual traditions and craft skills, but more importantly, an interest in life will be created for the elderly through their participation.

I hereby request permission to conduct research at your establishment. I would at all times take their feelings and needs into consideration and abide by any rules and policies of your establishment. In addition, all data generated in the course of this research will be locked in a

secure location at the author's residence. The identities of the subjects will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons. Any references to the identities of the subjects that would compromise their anonymity will be removed prior to the preparation of research reports and publications.

If any additional information is required from my side, such as a copy of my Research Proposal for perusal, you are welcome to contact me on the contact details mentioned below.

Awaiting your favourable reply

Yours sincerely

Miss Christel Stipp

23 A The Pavilion Place

281 Beach Road

Sea Point

8005

Telephone Number: 021- 434 3205

Cell: 0729050885

E-mail: 201000911@cput.ac.za

**Explanatory Statement For Haven Homes And GAPA's Participants' Involvement In  
The Investigation Of The Fibre-Arts Design Project**

**Research Problem:** Development of a fibre-arts design project in the Western Cape with two elderly sample groups.

**Background to the Research Problem:** The elderly are a social problem for many developed and developing countries worldwide (Kart & Metress, 1984: 164). Changing demographics – a decline in the birth rates and an unprecedented increase in the ageing population – illustrate the impact which the elderly place on modern societies. The WHO Expert Committee on Health of the Elderly is for example predicting, “*the total population of the developing world is expected to increase by 95% between 1980 and 2020, whereas the aged population will probably rise by almost 240%*” (World Health Organization, 1993: 5). In South Africa alone, it has been estimated that the total aged population will increase from 1340 350 in 1970 to almost six million by the year 2020 (Centre of Extra Mural Studies, 1982). There are many negative social and economic implications for the elderly. Programs are therefore needed to address the economic and emotional dependence of the elderly, and creative initiatives have proven to be successful in other parts of the world, in addressing this.

**Contributions of the Research:**

1. A Masters dissertation which addresses the social and economic problems which the elderly in South Africa have to live with, and how, through a practical intervention, these problems can be addressed;
2. Establish a model and a set of guidelines that will address how the elderly in the focus groups initially, (and other sites thereafter) can be reintegrated into some form of economic activity and societal participation;
3. Add value to similar research which has already been conducted in this field, and finally
4. A product range which will be produced in conjunction with the elderly.

**For Detailed Information Contact:**

**Supervisor:** *Ms Alettia Voster Chisin*, Tel: 021 – 460 3456,  
E-mail: [chisina@CPUT.ac.za](mailto:chisina@CPUT.ac.za)

**Co-Supervisor:** Erika Elk, Tel: 021 – 460 3743,  
E-mail: [elke@CPUT.ac.za](mailto:elke@CPUT.ac.za)

**Co-Supervisor:** Mel Hagen, Tel: 021 – 460 3739,  
E-mail: [hagenm@CPUT.ac.za](mailto:hagenm@CPUT.ac.za)

**Student Researcher:** *Miss Christel Stipp*, Tel: 021 – 434 3205, Cell: 072 9050 885,  
E-mail: [201000911@CPUT.ac.za](mailto:201000911@CPUT.ac.za)

**Consent Form For Haven Homes And GAPA's Participants' Involvement In The  
Investigation Of The Fibre-Arts Design Project**

**Study Title:** Development of a fibre-arts design project in the Western Cape with two elderly sample groups.

I, Miss Christel Stipp, consent to participate in the research study under the direction of Alettia Chisin (Assistant Professor of Surface Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology), Mel Hagen (Dean of the Built Environment and Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology), and Erika Elk (Cape Craft Design Institute).

**Purpose Of The Research:** To ascertain whether the elderly in the Western Cape are in favour of working past the age of 65, and if so, what type of employment will this be? Secondly to establish guidelines for the development and implementation of a creative enterprise which will have the potential to, (1) help alleviate poverty amongst a certain sector of the aged in the Western Cape, (2) help the elderly regain their independence, dignity and well-being by empowering them to become economically active and feel part of society again and finally to (3) design and create a range of accessories, in conjunction and in co-operation with the aged, to be marketed at selected outlets nationally.

**Expected Duration Of Subjects' Participation:** July 2005 through to October 2006. With subjects' permission, their participation may extend through November 2006.

**Research Procedures:** The primary procedures will be interviews with subjects, questionnaires, user diaries, and observation in subjects' natural surroundings. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

**Risks And Discomforts To Participants:** Participants will not be at physical or psychological risk and should experience no discomfort resulting from the research procedures.

**Expected Benefits Of The Research:** The expected outcomes for this research project is firstly to complete a Masters dissertation which addresses the social and economic problems which the elderly (as represented by the focus groups) in South Africa have to live with, and how, through a practical intervention, these problems can be addressed. Secondly, a model and a set of guidelines will be drawn up as the foundation as to how the elderly in the focus groups initially, (and other sites thereafter) can be reintegrated into the some form of economic activity and societal participation. However, the model can possibly also be used and adapted for the elderly nationally. The research project will thirdly add value to similar research which has already been conducted in this field, and show that the elderly are valuable economic resources, and that they are able to contribute to South Africa's growth and traditions. The last expected outcome for this specific research project is a product range which will be produced in conjunction with the elderly, and which will be marketed.

**Confidentiality Procedures:** All data generated in the course of this research will be locked in a secure location at the author's residence. The identities of the subjects will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons. Any references to the identities of the subjects that would compromise their anonymity will be removed prior to the preparation of research reports and publications.

**Compensation For Participation In The Research:** The participants will receive no compensation for their participation.

**Whom To Contact For Answers To Pertinent Questions About The Research And The Research Subjects' Rights:**

**Supervisor:** Ms Alettia Voster Chisin, Tel: 021 – 460 3456,  
E-mail: chisina@CPUT.ac.za

**Co-Supervisor:** Erika Elk, Tel: 021 – 460 3743,  
E-mail: elke@CPUT.ac.za

**Co-Supervisor:** Mel Hagen, Tel: 021 – 460 3739,  
E-mail: hagenm@CPUT.ac.za

**Student Researcher:** Miss Christel Stipp, Tel: 021 – 434 3205, Cell: 072 9050 885,  
E-mail: 201000911@CPUT.ac.za

The participants will receive a copy of this consent form.

**Participants:** Participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARTICIPANTS SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Investigator:** I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate.

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INVESTIGATOR:** \_\_\_\_\_







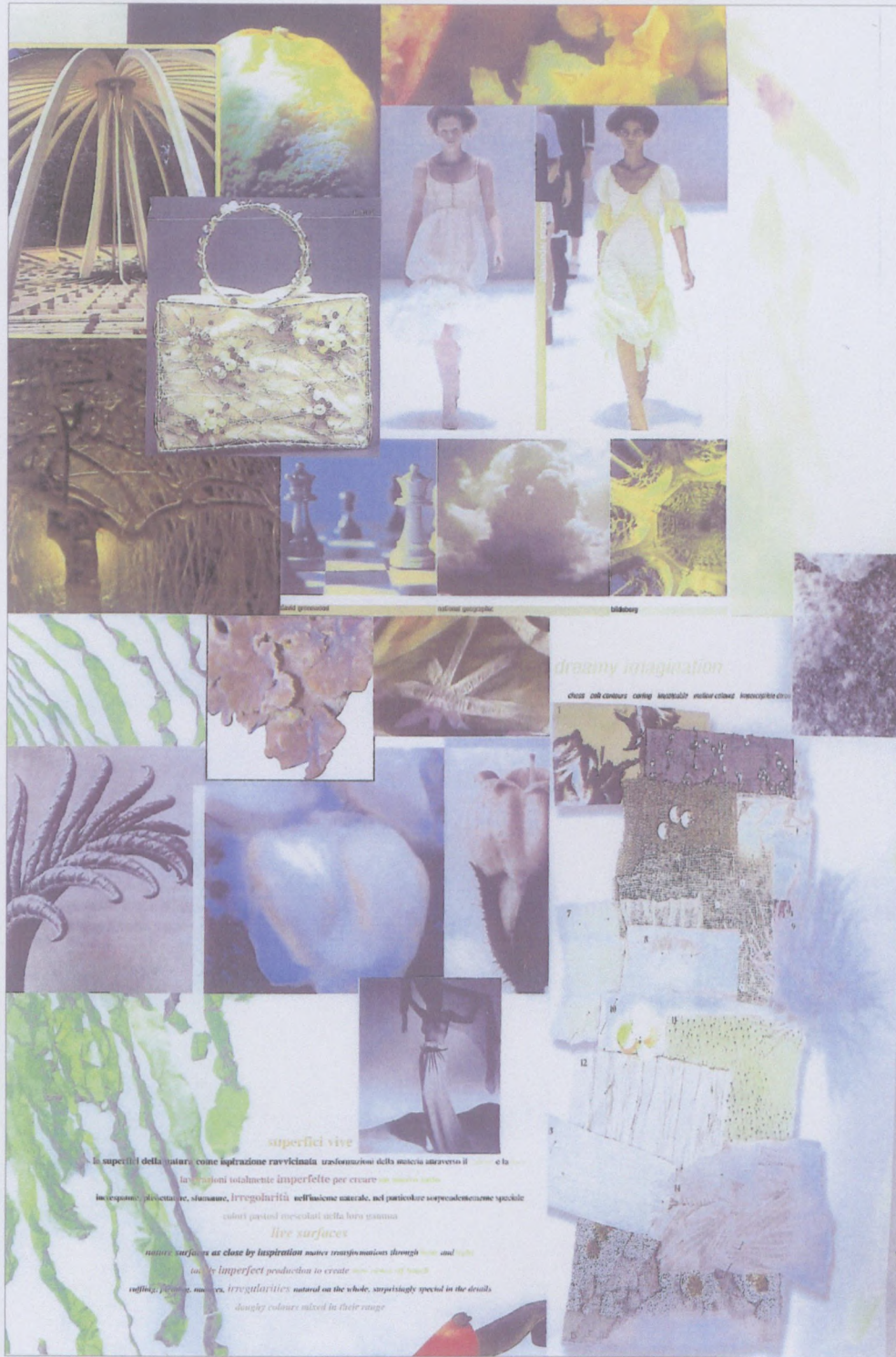


# Inspirational Boards: Kaapse Klopse Carnival





## Inspirational Boards: Skeleton Coast







# Inspirational Boards: Wild Durbs





# Inspirational Boards: Opulent fynbos Gypsy





**Skill-Training Workshop 1: Felting (GAPA)**



**Skill-Training Workshop 2: Knitting (GAPA)**



Skill-Training Workshop 3: Creative (GAPA)



**Historical Inspiration**



**Appendix 6.1. 1900's Postal Satchel.** Johnson. 2002: 404.



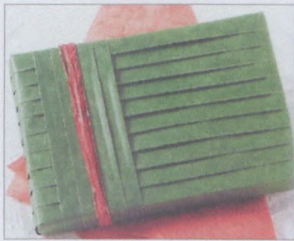
**Appendix 6.2. Victorian souvenir bag.** Johnson. 2002: 278.



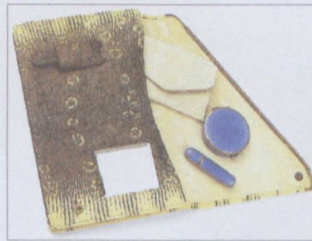
**Appendix 6.3. Marabou feather, Swarovsky crystal and silk bracelet evening bag.** Johnson. 2002: 130.



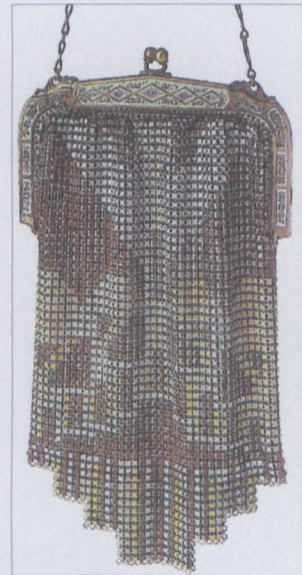
**Appendix 6.4. Belle Époque ostrich-trimmed opera bag.** Johnson. 2002: 105.



**Appendix 6.5. Overlapping tuxedo pleats.** Fritsch, 2006: 40.



**Appendix 6.6. 1930's J. E. Caldwell pochette.** Johnson, 2002: 201.



**Appendix 6.7. 1920's Whitting and Davis tango purse.** Johnson. 2002: 76.



**Appendix 6.8. 1970 Bonnie Cashin Double Header.** Johnson. 2002: 354.



**Appendix 6.9. 1950 Will Hardy sculptural bracelet bag.** Johnson. 2002: 205.



**Appendix 6.10. 1790's English silk work bag. Johnson. 2002: 268.**



**Appendix 6.11. 1914 American Belle Époque style dance bag. Johnson. 2002: 310.**



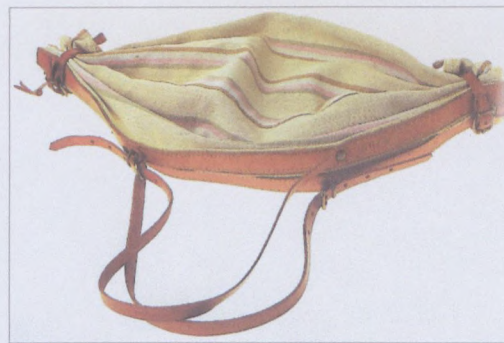
**Appendix 6.12. 16<sup>th</sup> Century Elizabethan frog bag. Johnson. 2002: 412.**



**Appendix 6.13. 1991 Ferragamo evening handbag. Johnson. 2002: 141.**

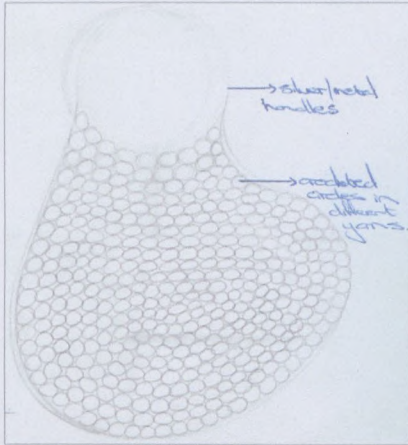


**Appendix 6.14. 1850's American carpetbag. Johnson. 2002: 358.**

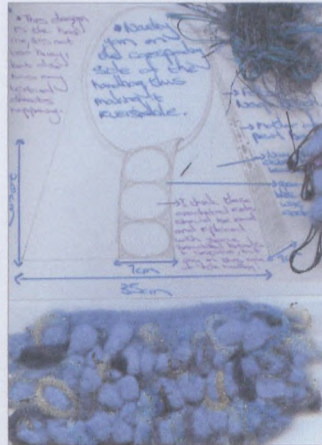


**Appendix 6.15. 1981 Unisa travelling bag. Johnson. 2002: 222.**

Conceptual Drawings, Patterns And Prototypes



Appendix 7.1. Shakaland Peacock queen initial handbag concept.



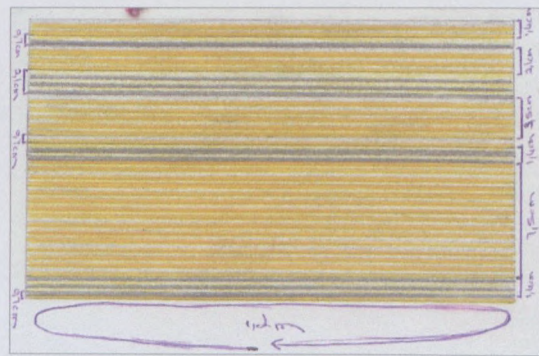
Appendix 7.2. Shakaland Peacock queen final handbag design and pattern.



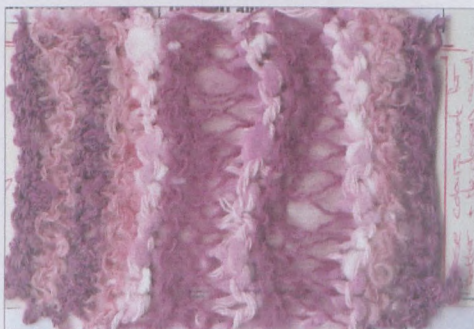
Appendix 7.3. Prototype of Skeleton Coast winter wedding shawl.



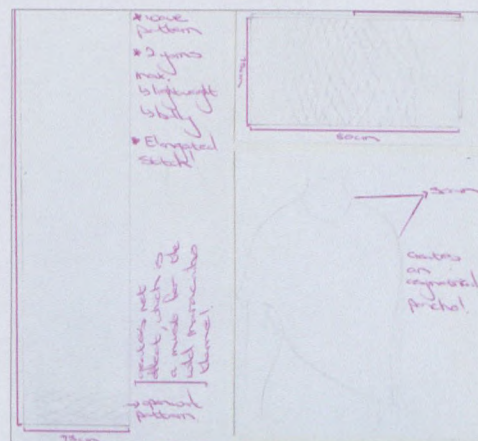
Appendix 7.4. Prototype of Kaapse Klopse Carnival shadow knitted tie scarf.



Appendix 7.5. Patterning sequence for Kaapse Klopse Carnival circular poncho.



Appendix 7.6. Prototype of shadow knit and openwork patterning for the components of the Opulent fynbos dusty pink Gypsy wrap. .



Appendix 7.7. Conceptual drawing for Wild Durbs openwork poncho-wrap.

**Example Of Original Knitting Pattern Developed By Christel Stipp For The  
Kaapse Klopse Carnival Circular Poncho**

**Cast On 150 stitches, being careful not to twist the stitches onto a 6½ mm Circular Needle.**

- **Row 1 & 2:** *(Right Side & Wrong Side) With Silk Yarn (S), Knit.*
- **Row 3:** (RS) With Light Yarn (L), Knit.
- **Row 4:** (WS) With L, Purl.
- **Row 5 & 6:** *(RS & WS) With S, Knit.*
- **Row 7:** (RS) With Light Grey (LG), Knit.
- **Row 8:** (WS) With (LG), Purl.
- **Row 9 & 10:** *(RS & WS) With Dark Grey (DG), Knit.*
- **Row 11:** (RS) With LG Yarn, Knit.
- **Row 12:** (WS) With LG, Purl.
- **Row 13 & 14:** *(RS & WS) With Silk Yarn (S), Knit.*
- **Row 15:** (RS) With Light Yarn (L), Knit.
- **Row 16:** (WS) With L, Purl.
- **Row 17 & 18:** *(RS & WS) With S, Knit.*
- **Row 19:** (RS) With L, Knit.
- **Row 20:** (WS) With L, Purl.
- **Row 21 & 22:** *(RS & WS) With S, Knit.*
- **Row 23:** (RS) With Light Grey (LG), Knit.
- **Row 24:** (WS) With LG, Purl.
- **Row 25 & 26:** *(RS & WS) With Dark Grey (DG), Knit.*
- **Row 27:** (RS) With LG, Knit.
- **Row 28:** (WS) With LG, Purl.
- **Row 29 & 30:** *(RS & WS) With DG, Knit.*
- **Row 31:** (RS) With LG, Knit.
- **Row 32:** (WS) With LG, Purl.
- **Row 33 & 34:** *(RS & WS) With Silk Yarn (S), Knit.*
- **Row 35:** (RS) With Light Yarn (L), Knit.
- **Row 36:** (WS) With L, Purl.
- **Row 37 & 38:** *(RS & WS) With S, Knit.*
- **Row 39:** (RS) With L, Knit.
- **Row 40:** (WS) With L, Purl.
- **Row 41 & 42:** *(RS & WS) With S, Knit.*
- **Row 43:** (RS) With L, Knit.
- **Row 44:** (WS) With L, Purl.
- **Row 45 & 46:** *(RS & WS) With S, Knit.*
- **Row 47:** (RS) With Light Grey (LG), Knit.
- **Row 48:** (WS) With LG, Purl.
- **Row 49 & 50:** *(RS & WS) With Dark Grey (DG), Knit.*
- **Row 51:** (RS) With LG, Knit.
- **Row 52:** (WS) With LG, Purl.
- **Row 53 & 54:** *(RS & WS) With Silk Yarn (S), Knit.*

- **Row 55:** (RS)  
With Light Yarn (L),  
Knit.
- **Row 56:** (WS)  
With L, Purl.
- **Row 57 & 58:**  
*(RS & WS) With S,  
Knit*
- **Row 59:** (RS)  
With L, Knit.
- **Row 60:** (WS)  
With L, Purl.
- **Row 61 & 62:**  
*(RS & WS) With S,  
Knit.*
- **Row 63:** (RS)  
With L, Knit.
- **Row 64:** (WS)  
With L, Purl.
- **Row 65 & 66:**  
*(RS & WS) With S,  
Knit.*
- **Row 67:** (RS)  
With L, Knit.

- **Row 68:** (WS)  
With L, Purl.
- **Row 69 & 70:**  
*(RS & WS) With S,  
Knit.*
- **Row 71:** (RS)  
With L, Knit.
- **Row 72:** (WS)  
With L, Purl.
- **Row 73 & 74:**  
*(RS & WS) With S,  
Knit.*
- **Row 75:** (RS)  
With L, Knit.
- **Row 76:** (WS)  
With L, Purl.
- **Row 77 & 78:**  
*(RS & WS) With S,  
Knit.*
- **Row 79:** (RS)  
With Light Grey  
(LG), Knit.
- **Row 80:** (WS)  
With LG, Purl.

- **Row 81 & 82:**  
*(RS & WS) With  
Dark Grey (DG),  
Knit.*
- **Row 83:** (RS)  
With LG, Knit.
- **Row 84:** (WS)  
With LG, Purl.
- **Row 85 & 86:**  
*(RS & WS) With Silk  
Yarn (S), Knit.*
- **Row 87:** (RS)  
With Light Yarn (L),  
Knit.
- **Row 88:** (WS)  
With L, Purl.
- **Row 89 & 90:**  
*(RS & WS) With S,  
Knit.*

**Cast off.**

**Initial Interview Questions For Haven Homes And GAPA's Participants**

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	
HAVEN HOMES	
G. A. P. A.	

1. Age
2. Are you receiving a social pension or private pension?
3. How much are you receiving monthly, to date?
4. Could you please give me a rough estimation on what your pension is spent on?
5. Are you able to afford luxuries? Why?
6. With the rising cost of living, do you think the fixed income, which you receive on a monthly basis, is adequate? Why?
7. Do you receive financial help from other resources? If yes, please specify.
  - 7.1 How do you feel being dependent on your economical active children or relatives for financial assistance? Why?
8. Do you consider yourself poor? Why?
9. If you had more money, what would you spend it on?
10. Are you retired or still employed (full-time or part-time)?
11. How has retirement impacted on you?

**11.1 Do you experience feelings of uselessness? How often and why?**

**11.2 Do you get depressed? How often and why?**

**11.3 Do you feel as an outcast of society? How often and why?**

**12. Have you tried to re-enter the work force? Why?**

**12.1 Were you successful? Why?**

**12.2 Do you think your age prohibited you? Why?**

**13. Would you favour being economically active again, if given the opportunity? Why?**

**13.1 What would the economic rewards represent for you?**

**13.2 What would the social rewards represent for you?**

**13.3 Would you prefer the economic rewards or rather favour the social rewards. Why?**

**14. How does your current circumstance make you feel?**

**14.1. What makes you get out of bed in the morning? Why?**

**14.2. What worries you?**

**14.3. How often do your relatives and friends visit you?**

**14.4. Do you ever get lonely? How often and why?**

**14.5. Do you feel isolated? How often and why?**

**14.6. Has your self-esteem and dignity been affected? How and why?**

**14.7. Has your role and status in society been affected? How and why?**

**15. Are you satisfied with your standard of living? Why?**

**16. Have you been affected by the HIV/Aids epidemic? If yes, in which way and to what extent has it affected you financially and emotionally?**

**Progress Interview Questions For Haven Homes And GAPA's Participants**

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	
HAVEN HOMES	
G. A. P. A.	

**1. Which workshop did you like the most?**

Felting \_\_\_\_\_ Knitting \_\_\_\_\_ Creative \_\_\_\_\_

**Felting workshop**

**1.1. What did you like about the felting workshop.**

**Knitting workshop**

**1.2 What did you learn from the knitting workshop:**

**Creative workshop**

**1.3. What did you enjoy most about the creative workshop?**

**Product development**

**1.4. What did you enjoy most about the product development focus group?**

**Socio-economic well-being/ opportunities**

**2. What effect has this fibre-arts design project had on you personally?**

**3. How has your participation in this a fibre-arts design project impacted on your well-being? (Or) How does your participation in this fibre-arts design project make you feel?**

**4. Are you using any of the techniques you've learnt already?**

**5. What opportunities do you think such a project holds for you in the future?**

**Threats**

**6. What would threaten the projects success?**

**Final Interview Questions for Haven Homes and GAPA's Participants**

ORGANISATION	
HAVEN HOMES	
G. A. P. A.	

- 1. What did you not like about the Fibre-Arts project? Why?**
- 2. How did you overcome these problems?**
- 3. What did you like most about the Fibre-Arts Project? Why?**
- 4. What was the most important (useful) experience (knowledge or skill) that you learnt (or took away) from this project?**
- 5. Where do you see the project in the future?**
- 6. What are your hopes and desires (expectations) from the project in the future?**

**Market Research Interview Questions Conducted At The 2008 Design Indaba**

**1. Gender**

Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Age.**

13 – 19: \_\_\_\_\_ 20 – 39: \_\_\_\_\_ 40 – 59: \_\_\_\_\_ 60 – 69: \_\_\_\_\_ 70 – 80: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Which product or products appealed to you the most? Why?**

**3. Which product or products did not appeal to you? Why?**

**4. Do you like the combination and assortment of materials that have been used in the product range? Why?**

**5. If no, what would you have favoured?**

**6. Do you like the various colour combinations that have been used in the product range? Why?**

**7. If no, what would you have preferred?**

**8. Do you like the various craft techniques that have been used? Why?**

**9. Do you like the versatility of the products? Why?**

**10. Would you change any of the products designs? Why? Which product/s?**

**11. Would you be prepared to pay the asking price? Why?**

A Portion Of The Market Research Questionnaires Survey Coding At The 2008 Design

Indaba

MARKET RESEARCH AT DESIGN INDABA 2008					
Respondents	Gender	Age	Favourite Product	Product did not appeal	Like the assortment of materials
Respondent 1	Male	20 - 39	Cowgirl handbag		Yes
Respondent 2	Male		Travel bag		Yes
Respondent 3	Male	20 - 39	Cowgirl handbag	Triangular bag with gold hoop handles (Wild Durbos).	No
Respondent 4	Female	40 - 59	Higveld Charleston bag		Yes
Respondent 5	Female	20 - 39	Summer wedding shawl		Yes
Respondent 6	Female	20 - 39	Wraps, specifically the dusty pink Gypsy wrap.	Handbags	Very much so.
Respondent 7	Female	13 - 19	Travel bag.		Yes
Respondent 8	Female	20 - 39	Cowgirl handbag Summer wedding shawl		Yes
Respondent 9	Female	20 - 29	All the products Travel bag	Nothing	Yes
Respondent 10	Female	60 - 69	Cowgirl handbag		Yes
Respondent 11	Female	40 - 59	Long scarves	Nothing	Yes
Respondent 12	Female	40 - 59	Handbags		Yes
Respondent 13	Female	40 - 59	Knitted textured pieces	Chocolate items	Yes
Respondent 14	Female	40 - 59	Winter bridal shawl		Yes
Respondent 15	Female	40 - 59	Bags		Yes
Respondent 16	Female	20 - 39	Bags		Yes
			Graphic Kalahari bag		
			Both wedding shawls		
			Cowgirl pocket scarf		
Respondent 17	Female	20 - 39	Travel bag		Yes
			Graphic Kalahari bag		
Respondent 18	Female		Bags	Nothing	Yes
Respondent 19	Female	20 - 39	Travel bag Cowgirl bag		Yes

**Online Newspaper Article Published On Fibre-Arts Design Project**

**TONIGHT  
YOUR ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE FROM INDEPENDENT NEWS AND MEDIA**

OUT AND ABOUT

**Browsing about the 2008 Design Indaba Expo**

February 27, 2008

By Alan Cameron

Invited to peruse the [Design Indaba Expo](#) for Tonight, I took myself off to the Cape Town International Convention Centre for a look at what creative South Africa has come up with this year.

Frankly, I was blown away. There were so many ideas on display, colourful hairstyles being worn accompanied by alternative fashion sense, a short-back-and-sides kinda guy feels a bit like an observer into another attitude to life.

Focussing on two themes, T-shirts and bags I took a look at Give-it-bag, Mingo Lamberti, and at Christel Stipp's community-conscious masters project.

**Give-it-bag**

Regina Borth is a German who wants to make the world a better place. When she came to South Africa the designer inside her immediately noticed a new material that she had never seen before – the large finely woven plastic bags that carry heavy consumer goods.

She wanted to use it to make something new, to introduce a concept that would create awareness, and motivation to spread good will. Making bags out of this material was no problem, the only hurdle is that it frays easily.

"We solve that issue by melting the plastic carefully together," she explains. This makes the bag more durable and much smoother. "You know I am German " by way of explanation in the tone of voice that

assured me that any loose end in the material is mercilessly dealt with.

The business employs and empowers local workers.

Borth's project asks buyers to give back good will to the community by realising that 50 percent of the asking price is donated in the company's charity projects.

And the best part is that you're more than just a number when you get a bag. Each bag has a unique number and with this number you can register on the website and say how you have given it back, passed it forward or however else you'd like to describe passing on good will.

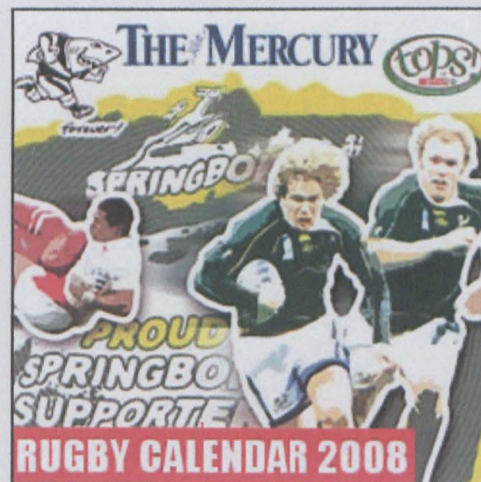
### **Mingo Lamberti**

"It was my grandfather's name," says Brad Hodgkiss, founder of the vibrant design-centred T-shirt brand Mingo Lamberti.

Hodgkiss was exposed to design by working with designers in an office environment and decided to take his corporate experience to spice up the funky T-shirt market.

Each T-shirt has a message he says, the first line produced has been called The Nature Range and includes such gems as the Vegetate T-shirt and Robot Loves Tree T-shirt.

Hodgkiss is currently running a competition on his website, along with the Vespa coffee chain and Bibloteq that challenges anyone with a design to submit it.



Each design only gets printed 200 times and, scattered around independent clothing stores in Cape Town, Joburg and Durban, buyers are assured that their T-shirt remains moderately unique.

### **Christel Stipp**

She is a student currently doing a masters in Surface Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. "I wanted my masters to socially and economically empower the elderly," she explains by way of introduction.

Joining with Grand Mothers Against Poverty And Aids, she entered their local community and started to teach them skills. Knitting they already knew, she says, but advanced techniques, working with felt and other mediums was new to them.

Equipped with new confidence and abilities they gave her a new name, 'Nomondle', meaning patience in Xhosa, in tribute of her time she devoted to them.

"The new skills have given the group a new lease on life" she says. One gran has decided to start to design and make teddy bears, handbags and shawls that she supplies to hotels and another has started a knitting class for children in the community.

The characteristic of their work is that the items can be used for multiple uses. A shawl transforms into a scarf or a wrap-around poncho with the fastening of some buttons and a large travel bag is equipped with clips that enable it to become smaller so it isn't loose when partially empty.

She also has a range of accessories that allow you to impart your own touch to your purchase, such as handbags that come with a transparent photo or a business card holder.

"Local and international interest has been expressed in what I'm doing," Stipp says, explaining why she has come to the Design Indaba. She sees herself continuing in being involved in projects that empower, encourage entrepreneurship and teach crafts to communities - and not tucked away behind a computer screen.

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