District Six Museum
Current operations and future plans

Overview of past and plans for future
The Museum itself pre-dates its life in the current buildings that it occupies.

The Museum movement grew out of the ‘Hands off District Six’ campaign of the 1980s, during which time the call for a place of memory was made.

It was always linked to the rights of people to return to the land from which they were removed.
The Museum interior

Overview of past and plans for future
The Homecoming Centre

- Community Centre for returnees
- Performance
- Public programmes
- Conservation Centre
- Rental and retail
- Workshops & seminars
- Digital Arts Club
- Exhibitions
- Venue hire

Overview of past and plans for future
The vacant site

Overview of past and plans for future
“In this exhibition we do not wish to recreate District Six as much as to repossess the history of the area as a place where people lived, loved and struggled. It is an attempt to take back our right to signpost our lives with those things we hold dear… the exhibition is also about pointers to our future. We, all of us, need to decide how as individuals and as a people we wish to retrace and re-signpost the lines of our future. Such a process is neither easy nor straightforward. It is not predictable either.”
It has always been linked to opposition to the violent acts of apartheid destruction.
… which resulted in a scarred landscape.

Overview of past and plans for future
Supporting people in claiming restitution

Overview of past and plans for future
In locating selves on the map, and inscription

Overview of past and plans for
Supporting the ‘return of the elders’

Overview of past and plans for future
ORGANISATIONAL HISTORY

- Formally established as a trust in 1994
- Registered as NPO in 2001; PBO status in 2009
- Generously funded in early days (list on next slide)
- Started charging entrance fees in 2004 as funding starting reducing
- Acquired Sacks Futeran building in 2004 as part of expansion and sustainability plan
- Ratio of funding : revenue generation was in the region of 70:30 for a long time; as funding reduced, needed to reverse the ratio
- Lost operational grants from Mott and Ford ended in 2011
- Since then, only project grants + revenue generation
MUSEUM’S EXPERTISE CONFIRMED ON A NUMBER OF LEVELS:

• Nominated for the Nedbank / Mail and Guardian Arts and Culture Trust Award, 2002
• Winner of the Prince Claus Award for excellence and innovation in the field of cultural development, 2003
• Khula Trust Award, Stellenbosch, 2004
• Museum of the Year, PGWC in recognition for visual arts work, 2005
• Museum of the Year, awarded by the Dept of Arts and Culture, PGWC, 2010
• Founder member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
• Lead site of the African Sites of Conscience
• Part of team of experts advising UNESCO on promotion and protection of museum collections
• Part of consultant team for African Union Memorial development
PAST FUNDERS INCLUDE:

- SIDA (Swedish)
- Royal Netherlands Embassy
- Ford Foundation
- CS Mott Foundation
- Atlantic Philanthropies
- British Council
- Rockefeller Foundation
- NDLTF
- National Arts Council
- City of Cape Town
- Provincial Govt
- Dept of Economic Development and Tourism
- Dept of Arts and Culture
- National Heritage Council
Overview of past and plans for future
Overview of past and plans for future
Overview of past and plans for future
Overview of past and plans for future
MISSION

A museum of innovation working with the memories of District Six and other communities affected by forced removals, and supporting the cultural restitution of Cape Town

VISION

A vibrant cultural life built on a dynamic engagement with the past
STRATEGIC GOALS 2012 - 2015

1. To retain the Museum at the centre of the cultural reconstruction of District Six and Cape Town through working with the memories and experiences of displaced people
2. To play an advocacy role in terms of heritage and museum policy development
3. To consolidate the Museum’s place as a centre of knowledge-making, for creativity and innovation
4. To develop a new funding and governance model based on diversified funding streams and new forms of income-generation
In terms of dealing with reduced grant income and with reference to strategic goal 4, we are focusing on:

1. Increasing number of visitors
2. Diversifying offering
3. Increasing overall increased revenue

Overview of past and plans for future
The strategy has the following main components:

1. District Six Encounters
2. Merchandise and retail development
3. The Visitor’s Centre
4. Packaging, positioning and marketing on new platforms
Despite signs of financial achievements as a result, we need to resolve the following:

1. All resources for past number of months have been geared towards income generation; losses have been experienced in other areas.
2. In order to live within our earned income, we have had to reduce our expenditure and cut costs which included losing human resource capacity.
3. Achievements have been possible based on an unsustainable demand on the remaining human resources.
4. Ongoing communications and administrative support will be needed after what has been made possible by this grant.
5. How to fund the components that cost money and have little or no potential to earn: education and memory work with ex-residents.

Overview of past and plans for future.
Current challenges

• National significance confirmed through the provisional Grade 1 status conferred in 2006
• The failure to formally declare has rendered the site vulnerable
• Difficulties of balancing work of heritage, memory and responsible commercialisation of aspects of work
• Development of income streams and reduction of costs has been an important focus of work
• Losses and gains have resulted
What support might be possible for institutions not created by government?
Thank you

Ciraj Rassool: Chair
Bonita Bennett: Director

District Six Museum