

The Global Summit of Women 2009



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Presentation on “Scaling Up: Moving Micro Enterprises to Mainstream Business”

By Melanie Harteveld Becker,

Co-Director, Pambili Foundation (Namibia)

Namibia

- Located in Africa, north-west of South Africa, west from Botswana and south of Angola
- 2,1 million population living on 825,418 square kilometres – the least densely populated country globally after Mongolia
- Non-homogeneous society: 11 recognised cultures and many more cultural diversifications
- 36% unemployment: mainly the youth
- Namibia needs to diversify its economy – main industries are mining, fisheries and agriculture

What is Pambili Association?



- Young organisation - registered in '05

'05-'06 part time activities - '07-'09 started around the clock activities

The challenges I faced as a successful young and award-winning designer drove the development of the association's vision to encourage individuals and groups to become self-sustainable through craft design. My personal vision to develop entrepreneurship opportunities in the design area for the Namibian youth was channelled into the vision of the Association.

- Product development and marketing for craft design

The individual, the process, the product, the market/end user

- Business – one sale is one step closer to poverty reduction

Market-able vs. make-able



Why Pambili Association?



- Address unemployment

Pambili activities target women, the youth and also men

- Find local solutions – localism is sustainability

Fletcher (2008:140) mentions “localism is an antidote to unsustainability...local action helps develop human creativeness as we inventively respond to problems with the resources and expertise that is to hand”.

- Empower through entrepreneurship

Facilitate business and trade opportunities for craft producing communities, designers and for the Association itself. Thus Pambili is presenting and marketing Namibian products here at the summit, as we do at various other international platforms.



Challenges

- Namibian producers suffer due to market domination by imported products
- Due to imports, Namibian product identities are becoming so hybrid that they are unclear
- Lack of training by professionals with sufficient local knowledge
- Lack of a holistic approach which includes product design, skills training and product marketing
- Availability of Funding

Pambili's specific initiatives

- **Training:** mentorship programmes and knowledge sharing (training, product development workshops, seminars, knowledge-sharing sessions)
- **Marketing:** the creation of platforms and the participation in marketing activities (trade fairs, exhibitions, shows, expo's)
- **Research:** market-related and design research

How is Pambili “scaling-up”?

- **Design investment – product development and social design processes**
Social design is “a design process that contributes to improving human well-being and livelihood” (Holm, 2006).
- **Invest in ongoing product development processes**
- **Pro-actively create marketing drivers through platforms and networks**
Drive professionalism, forge network links, take the micro-enterprise into mainstream, fight isolation and mobilize people, drive professionalism, forge network links, take the micro-enterprise into mainstream, fight isolation and mobilize people.
- **Value the “experience economy” – relationship marketing**
*PERSONALIZE Product, Price, Place, Promotion and Packaging.
FOCUS on People, Processes and Physical evidence of the value you can add to your product.*
- **Advocate clear product identity**

Lessons learnt

1. Value local culture and strengthen local identities.
2. Forge partnerships and develop give-and-take relationships.
3. Value the producer's ownership – “ownership implies responsibility”.
4. Knowledge shared is knowledge gained.
5. Understand and apply personalised marketing and distinguish between market-able and make-able products.
6. Pambili in principle does not invest in basic craft skills training.
7. Creativity should be channelled towards market sense.
8. Limited resources drive creativity.
9. Think and strategise – “Nurture great thoughts, for you will never bigger than your thoughts” (Benjamin Disraeli).

What works

- ***Clear vision; work goal-oriented***
Never lose overview over your vision. Always ask yourself whether what you plan or execute fits into your project goals. If not, drop it.
- ***Drive for results*** – (John Maxwell, 2003) “The right thought plus the right people in the right environment at the right time for the right reason = the right result”.
- ***See the bigger picture ... and act*** – Think, see the bigger picture, stretch your thoughts, follow through.
- ***Be willing to risk – risks motivate the drive for results***
- ***Simplify – back to basics and clear product identity***
Clarify product identity. Understand “less is more”.
- ***Teamwork*** – ensure your team shares the vision. Nurture a “thinking” team. Do not invest in “followers”. Be sure the people setting out to follow will be able to lead.

What doesn't work

- ***Conceal/secret knowledge***

Sharing knowledge generates trust, even in the design world where previously knowledge-sharing was highly unlikely. Now it is recognised that “Creativity is often better when you do it in a team because the interaction will spur on new ideas” (Taljaard, 2009).

- ***Too many frills – no focus***

- ***Going with the flow – no thinking, no vision, no reflection***

- ***Investing in activities that will not contribute to the bigger picture in the long run – keep focusing on sustainability***

The Namibian Embassy in Berlin, Germany, wrote to me recently and this was direct feedback from the commercial office:

“It’s easy to be enthusiastic about this project because I see so much potential for Namibian arts and crafts to do well in Europe. Working with professional, goal-oriented and socially-conscious organizations such as Pambili makes my job (promoting Namibian products in Germany and beyond) a whole lot easier and even more enjoyable. I really look forward to working together with you.”