

URBAN DESIGN INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICA

UDISA

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UDISA - TRANSFORMATION POLICY - 2022

1. Introduction

URBAN DESIGN INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICA (UDISA) was legally constituted in 2006 as a Voluntary Association representing the URBAN DESIGN Profession of South Africa.

URBAN DESIGN is both a specialised and an integrating profession. URBAN DESIGNERS are specially trained in the discipline, usually after qualifying as Architects, Town Planners or Landscape Architects.

The unique focus of URBAN DESIGN lies in the understanding of three-dimensional form and space in cities and settlements, the space between buildings, and the relationship of this form to land, context, society, and history. This understanding is firmly rooted in an awareness of nature, landscape and urbanism and consideration of the needs and dynamics of society, economy, and space. URBAN DESIGN is as much process as product and the implementation of URBAN DESIGN proposals require knowledge and skill in decision-making techniques and structures.

The UDISA, its Committee, members, and employees, seeks to draw guidance from our nation's National Development Plan published on 11 November 2011, and address the elimination of inequality and the reduction of poverty, through the establishment of its own Transformation Policy.

The Foreword of the National Development Plan states, "At the core of this plan is a focus on capabilities; the capabilities of people and of our country and of creating the opportunities for both. The capabilities that each person needs to live the life that they desire differs, but must include education and skills, decent accommodation, nutrition, safe communities, social security, transport and job opportunities. The capabilities that the country needs to enable citizens to thrive include a capable state, leadership from all sectors of society, a pact for mutual sacrifice and trust."

URBAN DESIGNERS, through their education, experience and their critical role in the ongoing creation of the built environment, are strategically placed to lead this drive through a series of development strategies, to assist in achieving these goals especially in the urban environment.

2. Policy Outline

UDISA's approach to the normalisation of our society is guided by a single important philosophy:

That our efforts towards transforming the URBAN DESIGN profession should be employed in such a way that the skill and experience be retained and enhanced towards building a transformed profession which will meet the needs of South African society in the creation of a human(e), livable and accessible built environment for all in the country.

THE AIMS OF UDISA ARE TO:

- Promote a greater awareness among government bodies, associated built environment professions, development agents, and the public of the benefits of urban design.
- Promote urban design as a career path for students and potential students.
- Build cooperative relationships with sister fields within the built environment including architecture, landscape architecture, civil engineering, heritage resource management, environmental management, and transport planning.

3. Key Strategic Transformation Objectives

- 3.1. Increase the number of URBAN DESIGNERS to address built environment demands;
- 3.2. Improve benefits to practices through beneficiation and development of URBAN DESIGN urbanists, URBAN DESIGNERS, planners and planning officials
- 3.3. Advocating that URBAN DESIGN values and practice standards are maintained;
- 3.4. Advocating for a resilient, sustainable & empowering built environment;
- 3.5. The adoption of mentorship programmes that are aligned to transformation to guide and assist new entrants to the profession.

4. Strategies for Implementation

- 4.1. Growth - Increase the number of URBAN DESIGNERS to address built environment demands.

Objective Outline

Driven by the current shortage of URBAN DESIGNERS in South Africa, the erosion of the profession, coupled with socio-economic challenges, and the need to increase the number of URBAN DESIGNERS, in order to meet many built environment demands, has become imperative. UDISA has a responsibility to identify and provide platforms that offer educational opportunities, mentorship and apprenticeship, to individuals displaying a keen interest in studying URBAN DESIGN, as well as individuals who may not have the support to further their studies, in their ambition to become registered as Professional URBAN DESIGNERS.

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In this instance, UDISA through partnering with academic institutions and alternative educational mode learning systems, aims to create a system of support which will see future URBAN DESIGNERS been awarded with affordable tuition, mentorship and opportunities in order to gain the necessary skills to be competent in their craft. This will ultimately lead to the profession gaining URBAN DESIGNERS that are suitably prepared to enter into the built environment, equipped with the ability to address Built Environment demands.

As a developing country, the demand for development, especially within the built environment, is one of the many key areas that the government must aim to deliver upon. Therefore, through educating our society about the profession and further rendering our URBAN DESIGN skills, by working together with the various organs of state and communities, we are able to contribute to the delivery of these demands.

For Implementation:

A) Bursary Opportunities

Currently as UDISA is a small profession, bursaries will be placed on hold. However, if UDISA is in a position, bursaries will be facilitated to assist needy and worthy applicants. If any opportunity presents itself, UDISA will facilitate the process without delay.

B) Mentorship / Internship

By working with practices, UDISA is to further support the candidates with internships, mentorship programmes and final exam preparation support. A list of Mentors are kept at the Administrative Officer. Criteria for the selection of Mentors, the management of the Process and the desired Outcomes is being developed further.

4.2. Benefit - Improve benefits to practices through beneficiation and development of URBAN DESIGNERS

Objective Outline

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, and inter alia (Section 9) on equality (and unfair discrimination) in the Bill of Rights, states the imperative of redressing historical and social inequalities.

Through URBAN DESIGN, and our pivotal role as designers of the built environment, we must work towards the normalisation of our society and the upliftment of all of our citizens, for the mutual benefit of all, through the upholding and promotion of the objectives of our Constitution.

Mutual benefit can be achieved through UDISA seeking to gain:

- ◇ An improved access to work (procurement of work);
- ◇ Assistance with practice management skills;
- ◇ Improved marketing of URBAN DESIGN services;
- ◇ Maximisation of benefits through improved BBBEE ratings;
- ◇ Play an advisory role for URBAN DESIGNERS that require advice to deal with issues, such as legal advice, client engagement, dispute resolution, etc.

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Whereas the 'generic' Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act, as amended by Act No. 46 of 2013, states that the revised B-BBEE Codes of Good Practice which came into operation on 1 May 2015 requires focus on five elements, namely ownership, management control, skills development, new enterprise and supplier development and socio-economic development initiatives. Most of these efforts are promoted through the relevant Institutes that the members belong to rather than through UDISA.

UDISA is a voluntary association of URBAN DESIGNERS who choose to become members of the institute and as such, there is no ownership of the institute. UDISA is measured under the Exempted Micro-Enterprise (EME) category and is therefore deemed to be a Level 4 B-BBEE.

The Specialised Generic B-BBEE Scorecard Element Weightings for the Built Environment Professionals (BEPs) within the Construction Sector are:

Element	Weighting (BEP)	Code Series Reference
Management Control	20	200
Skills Development	25	300
Enterprise and Supplier Development	50	400
Socio-Economic Development Initiatives	5	500

For Implementation:

C) B-BBEE Strategy

In executing its B-BBEE strategy, UDISA must maintain and improve its operations to deliver services of the highest order to its membership. Whilst exercising good corporate governance, the development of the institute as an organisation to support its membership and the wellbeing of communities through the design of appropriate and humane buildings and precincts within the South African context remains the highest priority.

The following elements are to be implemented, where possible:

i) Management Control

For the purposes of measuring Management Control, the Management/Steering Committee, Portfolio Committees and the Executive Officer and/or Administrative officer are taken into consideration. While the Management Committee members serve as volunteers and are nominated by the members, it is essential that due consideration of their nomination is considered in terms of representivity of that regions' demographics, however reflecting a ratio at least close to 50/50 gender and racial transformation.

Likewise, while the Executive or Administrative Officer must first be considered appropriate for the role due to their qualifications and expertise, their appointment should, where possible, again be based on national demographic representivity.

Portfolio Committees members to also consider a balanced gender and racial representivity.

As we are a relatively small organisation the available pool of candidates is limited, however, where possible we should strive to achieve the above objectives.

ii) Skills Development

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The UDISA team comprises of a small group of individuals, each responsible for a specific task within the organisation. As the operational needs evolve, priority is given to task orientated training to ensure that standards of service are maintained and continuously improved.

iii) Enterprise and Supplier Development

Within the constraints of its constitutional status UDISA is unable to undertake enterprise development as contemplated in the Codes, however its role will be to advocate and promote. UDISA does however facilitate and coordinate the proper management of membership, subscription and related matters with the management structures.

UDISA will not procure goods or services from entities who cannot produce a valid B-BEE Scorecard. Preference will be given to previously disadvantaged suppliers where practically possible, and UDISA furthermore aims to procure only from companies who are certified as level 4 contributors or better.

iv) Corporate Social Investment

Through its Transformation Strategy, UDISA is implementing a number of nationally facilitated projects, where participation by the members are being coordinated to enhance access to the progression of the profession and to improve academic preparation of learners to encourage them to study URBAN DESIGN.

4.3. Standards - Advocating that URBAN DESIGN values and standards are maintained

Objective Outline

There are concerns that the processes involved in Transformation result in a lowering of standards and the increased risk of non-compliance (fronting) to procure work from government institutions.

While the ambit of gatekeeping rests with accrediting bodies such as the Built Environment Professions and the various URBAN DESIGN learning sites, UDISA must strive to nominate suitable candidates from its membership, to assist these bodies in ensuring adherence to the standards.

For Implementation:

D) UDISA and Professional Liaison

UDISA is to set up on-going dialogue with SACAP, ILASA SACAP and Schools of Architecture and Planning to ensure representation on accrediting panels and feed-back regarding accreditation visits.

E) Involvement in the Built Environment Forum (BEF)

UDISA strives to be actively involved in the engagement and decision – makings taken at the Built Environment Forums. To use the BEF as a platform to promote the professions values & standards as well as to collectively find solutions for built environment challenges.

4.4. Sustainability - Advocating for a resilient, sustainable and empowering built environment.

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Objective Outline

In South Africa, the current reality show URBAN DESIGN as a profession which is under represented and therefore a scarce and critical skill. By aligning to the South African Constitution and various Acts of the Built Environment that promote sustainable built and natural environments, our aim is to highlight URBAN DESIGN as a profession that is a vital contributor within the built environment.

Through aligning ourselves with strong affiliations and partnerships that promote a need for a resilient and sustainable built environment, we better position ourselves, regional representatives and the members we serve to be more socio-economically empowered.

By using transformation as a tool to create awareness around the need for a resilient, sustainable, liveable and enabling built environment, we not only educate, but we transform the mind-set of many on the importance of URBAN DESIGN and the socio-economic role it plays in the creation of liveable and equitable urban environments in South Africa.

For Implementation:

F) Engagement with Local Government and National Government

Meet with department heads to establish an understanding of the roles that URBAN DESIGNERS can play in assisting in the creation of liveable and equitable urban environments;

- Build relationships with and provide support to academic institutions.
- Build relationships with and provide support to local government.
- Engage with municipalities and developers around strategic developments.

G) Dialogues and Forums

Arrange a series of discussion groups addressing issues of transformation within the built environment, urbanisation and rural degradation, to name a few. This is to be coordinated by all regional representatives and to become an on-going dialogue that allows members and stakeholders the opportunity to be involved in the transformation process.

H) Other Social Media Platforms – Virtual Dialogue

Through social media platforms such as Facebook & Twitter, UDISA to take URBAN DESIGN dialogue online, create local and international communities in order to create empowering debates and views centred on the profession and influencers.

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4.5. Legacy - Adoption of identified programmes that are aligned to transformation.

Objective Outline

In addition to the anticipated lasting impact that URBAN DESIGN has on the community at large and specifically the marginalised in our society, specific programs need to be developed for each of the portfolios to ensure that the efforts of UDISA is most effectively implemented.

I) Social Media + Promotions

Develop social media platforms to disseminate Urban Design information to the broader community and stimulate public debate on urban social issues and possible solutions

J) Advocacy

Comment on proposed policies and projects and actively respond to any issue that is not in the interest of the community especially the marginalised and vulnerable.

K) Events

Arrange events that will expose the built environment practitioners and public at large to the benefits of Urban Design

L) Education

Education consists of University Education and Mentorship Program:

URBAN DESIGN education

- o to engage with tertiary education institutions to promote and monitor the delivery of URBAN DESIGN education;
- o to increase awareness and engagement of URBAN DESIGN within undergraduate programmes (architecture, urban planning)

URBAN DESIGN mentorship

- o Continue Mentorship process with URBAN DESIGN Practices
- o A Call was sent out to UDISA Members to be added on the mentorship list to date (06 June 2022). Seven UDISA Members have to far volunteered as Mentors and the program is ongoing. Criteria, Processes and Desired Outcomes are being developed to ensure an effective Mentor Program to assist aspiring candidates to fully qualify as URBAN DESIGNERS.

N) Spatial:

Promote an equitable city structure that will increase access for the marginalised population; Ensure that the City is a generator of Social and Economic transformation; to promote the access to social and economic opportunities for all.

To promote an urban environment that ensures walkability and/or all modes of transport thereby increasing access to the most vulnerable of society.

5. Conclusion

As an organisation that strives to lead with integrity and set values, our view on transformation is that it is not a means of taking away from one to give to another. Our strong focus on education and transformation, will hopefully in time address previous inequalities which will ultimately normalise the playing field for all to be afforded equal opportunities. We will actively support the vulnerable and marginalised in our community by promoting affordable, accessible and equitable urban environments.