

HARARE LIBRARY

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On 3 June 2011 the City of Cape Town opened the doors to its latest library, Harare Public Library, situated in Khayelitsha. The construction of Harare Library was realised through the awarding of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and additional partnerships with the VPUU (Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading), the NDPG (Neighborhood Development Partnership Grant), and Provincial Grant funding.

The Harare Library forms part of a broader intervention under the VPUU in Khayelitsha. The library is situated on a major public square – Harare Square – which itself was also upgraded under the VPUU programme. Harare Square also forms part of the 2010 Quality Public Spaces Programme legacy of the City of Cape Town. An interesting feature is that it is not surrounded by a fence that separates the building from the public environment, as is typically the case with other municipal libraries in previously marginalised townships in the city.

The library is also adorned with public artwork, both internally and externally, created in collaboration with local artists.

AN ECO-FRIENDLY LIBRARY

Harare Library is built on three levels and is a multi-purpose building that comprises the library, offices, and a caretaker's flat. The architects were Charlotte Chamberlain and Nicola Irving. Part of the philosophy of the structure is that it is environmentally sustainable, making use of maximum daylight and natural ventilation. Some of the environmental features include a heat pump system, light sensors, and recycling of rain water. Other environmental features include photosensitive light fittings (these only switch on when daylight levels drop below a comfortable point), the use of energy

efficient light bulbs and the installation of solar panels to heat water. Tanks for rainwater harvesting are also installed. This water is then used to flush the toilets, and a borehole supplies much of the remaining water needs.

The building's heating needs are supplied by hydronically heating the floor slabs where needed. The water running in pipes through the concrete floor is heated by a heat pump, which uses a third of the normal energy load of a conventional system.

When selecting materials to use for both the construction of the building and the finishes, the issue of the carbon footprint and level of toxicity of all materials were looked at:

- the majority of the building is constructed with face brick obtained from a local supplier. Face brick is also an easy material in terms of maintenance
- a large portion of the library has a brick floor, which psychologically links it with the outside public square, in order to ground this facility well in the local community and to create a sense of ease and relaxation. The brick flooring also acts as a thermal mass - retaining heat from the sun, computers and people in winter; then slowly releasing this at night so that in the morning the building does not need much heating to raise it to a comfortable temperature, with a good thermal mass. The reverse happens in summer; with the assistance of night flushing (allowing the hot air to be released from the top windows). The floor will then serve to cool the building in the morning and will absorb hot air released by the computers, people, et cetera, throughout the day
- the interface carpets chosen have a strong track record in the use of non-toxic, high quality and recyclable materials in their manufacturing process. The carpet tiles are not glued down, so the inhabitants of the building will not be adversely affected by the off gassing from toxic glues
- the numerous library book shelves are made with a product that contains 65% post-consumer paper waste forming its core, as opposed to timber. The carcasses are made with the use of bamboo, which is a much more easily replenishable material of the grass family as opposed to standard timber.

FEATURES

The children's library is situated on the ground floor and is 1326.2m² in size. The adult library on the first floor comprises 917.9m². A quiet dedicated and spacious study hall can host about 150 learners.

The library has the usual collections to be found in most libraries such as books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, CDs, and videos. It also offers access to SmartCape, the city's public access initiative, and currently has 18 computers available for this purpose. One feature not yet available is listening posts which will allow users to listen to music in the library.

Harare Library also boasts many special features which makes it unique in the city, the province and the country. The special features include:

- a gaming room that has educational computer games and Nintendo Wii consoles
- Funda Udlale, an early childhood development that caters for the 0–6-year-old age group. Based on the Storyville concept of the Baltimore County Public Library, the area is divided into sections that allow toddlers to learn through play and at the same time develop and enhance essential skills.

There are also special recreational features, including:

- an outside chess area
- a big blackboard used by children as an expression board.

The additional ICT features in the library include:

- information kiosks with touch screens that will allow users to access the library catalogue, the library web site and other community information
- touch screens for Funda Udlale to allow children to play educational computer games
- mini laptops for Funda Udlale which will aid young children to become familiar with technology and its applications.

PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

Since its opening Harare Library has hosted a variety of activities to promote its services, and also to gain more members. Activities have included reading programmes, story-telling sessions, library orientation programmes, life-skills programmes, and guided visits to the gaming room and Funda Udlale. On June 16 (Youth Day), library staff were part of the Youth Day celebrations held that day by community organisations to promote their membership drive.

The library has also held a very successful Careers Indaba, an event made possible by partnering with Equal Education and Ikamva Youth. Twenty-six exhibitors took part in this event and 2,631 students were present.

STATISTICS

The library has registered 3,813 members since its opening and membership figures continue to reflect an increase. The table below provides circulation figures since the opening of the library, as well as the gate reading (indicating physical visits to the library).

Month	Circulation	Gate reading
June 2011	2 536	16 539
July 2011	3 945	19 342
August 2011	3 940	16 362

Since the library has opened in June 2011 the number of new users registered on the SmartCape free Internet system has increased each month to a current total of 658 new users (refer to the table below for detail). The user profile at the end of August 2011 can be summed up as follows: highest usage is 55% in the 18- to 25-year-old age group accessed that system, followed by the 26 and older age group that accessed the system on average 27%, followed by the younger age group of which 21% utilises SmartCape.

New members registered on SmartCape at Harare Library

June 2011	July 2011	August 2011
178	219	261
TOTAL: 658		

During this time the total number of sessions recorded for the period was 7,400, an average of 2,466 sessions per month. The total information download for the period June to August 2011 was 35 gigs, equivalent to ± eight-one-and-a-half hour videos.

STAFF

The staff complement includes one senior librarian, two librarians, five assistant librarians (two full-time and three part-time), as well as two library aids.



VIOLENCE PREVENTION THROUGH URBAN UPGRADING

Briefly, the goals of the VPUU programme include safety and violence prevention, the upgrading/provision of neighbourhood facilities, economic development and community development. The ultimate aim is to contribute to community safety in Khayelitsha, consequently improving the quality of life of local residents. Key to this is the creation of Safe Node Areas (neighbourhoods), which are geographically defined areas within Khayelitsha in which physical, social, economic and institutional improvements under the VPUU programme are applied in an area-based approach, leading to the creation of an environment in which people will experience a higher level of safety than in other comparable areas. The selection of Safe Node Areas was done via intensive public processes during the feasibility study of the VPUU programme. Throughout the various phases decisions have been informed by ongoing dialogue and collaboration with local leadership structures, including the Khayelitsha Development Forum.



↳ The computer section houses 18 computers



↳ Large water storage tanks for the recycling of rainwater

↳ A detail of one of the many delightful mosaic artwork panels



↳ A global view of the interior



↳ A large spacious area is available for study and referencing purposes



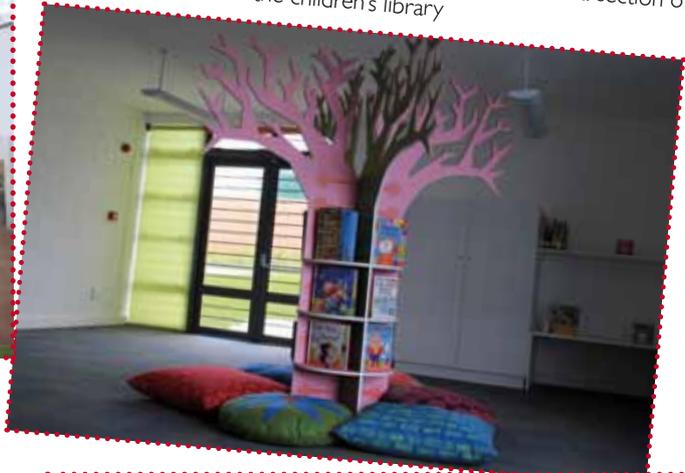
↳ Harare Library is fast becoming a landmark in Khayelitsha





↳ The 917m² adult area on the first floor

↳ An innovative reading tree in a section of the children's library



↳ A detail of the mosaic artwork that is a feature of the library's décor



↳ Beautiful mosaic panels adorn the issue desk



↳ The spacious and colourful children's library is situated on the ground floor and covers an area of 1,326m²



↳ The very well-stocked children's library