

PELMAMA ACADEMY

SOWETO

Extracts from Annual Reports issued the Principal

Annual Report 1991

Introduction: PELMAMA, a project in crisis

- 1.1. The Pelmama Academy Project has now reached the stage where its entire future is uncertain and is seen to be in jeopardy.
- 1.2. The reasons for this parlous state of being should be sought in the following factors which raise deep questions in regard to the serious intentions of officials of the Department to successfully and *wisely implement this project as directed by the Minister*.
- 1.3. It must be borne in mind at all times that the Pelmama Academy Project represents the Department's only attempt to address the profound past neglect of Education in the performing and visual Arts and if it fails it will indeed reflect most negatively on the credibility of the Department. It was seen by some as the showpiece of the D.E.T.
- 1.4. Through the Press and Radio this Academy is known far and wide. Letters of enquiry are daily received from all over the Republic of South Africa, Malawi, Namibia and many African countries such as Kenya and Zimbabwe. It should not simply be viewed as having localized relevance for Soweto. It has national relevance and potential international relevance.
- 1.5. Work that is being done at the Pelmama Academy is of a pioneering nature and if allowed to progress will have importance for future generations.

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Facilities

It had been decided (*Minutes of 16.6.1987*) that the Pelmama Academy would occupy temporary premises for a period of three years. The Academy is now in its third year of operation and all plans to build the Academy have been shelved. The Host College, Manu Technical College, have given notice that the Pelmama Academy must vacate its premises soon. This is in the interest of the expansion of both institutions. The crisis has been precipitated by the growth of both colleges.

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The Pelmama Academy has apparently been downgraded on the National Plan whereas it enjoyed second priority in 1988.

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The following is a synoptic of major events in the history of the Pelmama Academy in 1992/93:

- 1.1. A 200m² dance floor was built by the principal
- 1.2. The non-formal light music course was suspended due to problems surrounding the presenters and student demands.
- 1.3.
- 1.4. the Parent-Teachers-Students Association (P.T.S.A.) insisted on establishing parallel structures outside the regulations.
- 1.5. Classes were again disrupted by death and destruction in nearby areas. The atmosphere of learning deteriorated. Student anger was directed at nearby hostels.
- 1.6. The Haenggi Foundation Inc. and Tusk Music continued their support of the Pelmama Academy.
- 1.7.
- 1.8. On 14th May, 1992, news was received that the Old Johann Rissik School in Troyeville, Johannesburg, had been granted to the D.E.T. for occupation by the Pelmama Academy.
- 1.9. Occupation of the new premises was taken on 25th May, 1992.
- 1.10. The students and parents rejected the proposed move to new premises in the city.
- 1.11. It was agreed that adult education would operate within the new building.
- 1.12. The first occupation of offices by students took place at the Pelmama Academy, necessitating police intervention.
- 1.13.
- 1.14. The administrative offices of the Pelmama Academy were moved to Troyeville, Johannesburg, on 30th July after a burglary had forced this move. During mass action week from 3rd to 7th August, 1992, all administrative activities were moved to Troyeville (Eastside College).

Other points mentioned in this report

The Dance Theatre of Harlem, New York, presented dance workshops at the Pelmama Academy, Soweto. Eastside College was registered and establishment started. The Pelmama Academy should remain in the Manu Technical College premises, Dobsonville. The Pelmama Academy should be combined with Manu Technical College in a systematic and orderly fashion, a condition of the incorporation of the two colleges into one being that the name "Pelmama Academy" be retained to describe the specific courses which would continue to be offered in Art, Music and Dance.
