

The Mama Project

Overview: The Mama Project brings female artists from the United States to collaborate with women from under-resourced township communities in the Cape Town area of South Africa. Together, they create, share stories, make art, share food and culture—and make friends.



The Mama Project works with women from Cape Town townships in South Africa, and female artists from Boston, inclusive of women from other nationalities and under-resourced communities, to create opportunities for women to meet, make art, share culture, develop relationships, and build confidence around what it means to be a woman and a mother, so women can thrive. More information can be found at <https://www.themamaproject.net>.

The day the Mama Project began in South Africa (in the summer of 2017), a group of women gathered in a small room, brought together by a woman from the Boston area. There were artists (predominantly white) from the United States, black Xhosa-speaking women from the Khayelitsha township outside Cape Town, and colored Afrikaans-speaking women from an “informal settlement” called 7de Laan (a tumble of shacks in sand dunes a few miles from Khayelitsha). I was there to film this new project. English was a common language, but the cultural differences were clear. Each group sat together in one part of the room, staying close

to the folks like themselves. As the meeting progressed, stories and feelings were shared and art projects were created (a first for many of the South Africa women). When the meeting was over, women from all these different worlds were dancing and singing together, and already shared the delight of making beautiful art.



This is the essence of The Mama Project. Across borders of culture, geography, ethnicity, and religion—deep friendships have formed, and women who have never had a chance to do anything but survive have seen their artistic potential. These woman from different worlds have learned to work together. The world needs people working together making beautiful art.

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