

APPLICABILITY OF PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS: THE CASE OF UTHUNGULU COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Glossary of terms

Principles: The word principle is often used as a synonym for rule. Instead of referring to the rules of grammar, logic, safety or morality, for example, we might simply refer to principles. The use of the term is illustrated in the United Nations Charter, in which the members bind themselves to act in accordance with a series of principles, for example, the principle of the sovereign equality of members and the principle that international disputes shall be settled by peaceful means.



Networking: This refers to the process of building and maintaining relationships. It is the development of a team that should support your efforts and the efforts of your network team mates to reach your respective goals. In practice networking is the establishment of multiple informal, loosely knit, mutual support alliances. The object is to build the best possible team. It is about forging bonds and sharing. Above all, it is connecting with people who have common interest and objectives and generously give to one another.

Sustainability: This concept refers to an organisational advancement path that is resistant and resilient to stresses and shocks while being able to extend choices and capabilities in fulfilment of the organisation's mission to have a positive and lasting impact in a defined field or operational area. In an organisation sustainability pivots in the interplay between resources, impact and organisational regeneration. There is no single option that presents itself as "the" answer for resource mobilisation. One guiding principle that stands out is the need for "resource diversification".

Community Foundations: Community Foundations are difficult to define in terms of what they do in a local community. In general, Community Foundations have as their primary objective to improve the quality of life in local communities. One definition of a Community Foundation is that it is an independent public charity supported by combined funds contributed by individuals, foundations, non-profit institutions and corporations. A Community Foundation's giving is limited almost exclusively to a specific locale such as a city, municipality or province. The organisation is independent from direct control or influence by other organisation, government or donors.

Public Accountability: Community Foundations have to publicly provide explanations to all about their operations: local communities, grantees, non-profit organisations, donors, sister organisations and registering authorities in their respective countries. In short, there is a greater responsibility on the part of Community Foundations to account fully for their activities and relations with other sectors of society. Community Foundations must pass the public test for remaining and operating as Community Foundation. This public test, among other things, refers to the process of adhering to Community Foundation principles, such as issuing of grants, having an independent Board of trustees and operating in a manner acceptable to global Community Foundations.

Grant-Making: Grant-making refers to the whole process of inviting applications from potential fund seekers right up to when decisions are taken to award a grant to needy and deserving applicants. Some of the questions grant-making processes answer could be the following:

- Was the process of inviting applications transparent, free and fair?

- Was the selection of needy and deserving applicants transparent, free and fair?
- Were the funded projects and organisations in line with the organisation's objectives for funding to projects and organisations?
- Will issued grant have some positive impact on target communities?
- Can the whole process be described as just, fair, objective and open to public scrutiny?

Diversity: Numerous definitions of diversity could have been advanced by writers on diversity. For the purpose of this paper managing diversity accepts that the workforce and local community consist of visible and non-visible differences which include factors such as gender, age, background, race, disability, and personality and work style. It is founded on the premise that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met. The difference come together create a whole organisation in the same way that single pieces of a mosaic come together to create a pattern.

Leadership: For the purpose of this paper leadership refers to leadership roles Community Foundations normally play in local communities. These roles include developing, disseminating, sharing and advancing public knowledge, skills and judgement required for effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, transparency and professionalism in the process of managing a Community Foundation. To this end, Community Foundation leaders and practitioners are expected to make choices that affect themselves and other people. What this means is that being a Community Foundation leader or practitioner does not make someone a better person than someone else who is not in those positions. Instead, it means that stakeholders have to perform different but complementary jobs/roles. Uthungulu Community Foundation's CEO, Chris Mkhize, (2008) talks about interactive leadership. He says leadership never happens in isolation. "There can be no leaders without followers, and all leadership activities take place in context". "To understand leadership behaviour, one has to also consider not only the make-up of the leader, but, also, the make-up of the followers and the specifics of the situation". "Certain styles of leadership simply don't fit certain follower types or situations". "The personality, position and experience of the leader play a role in the leadership equation, but so do the personalities of the followers, as well as the nature of the task at hand, the type of the organisation, corporate culture, industry factors, and the socio-economic situation".

Executive Summary

Uthungulu Community Foundation was officially launched on 03 July 1999 as a South African pilot project. Involved organisations include defunct Southern African Grant-Makers Association (SAGA), Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, BHP Billiton, Zululand Chamber of Commerce & Industries and others.

The agreement reached among the parties was that the Zululand Chamber of Commerce & Industries would incubate a Community Foundation until there was an appointed Board of Trustees to manage the Foundation. An interim and diverse Board of Trustees was appointed and provided with the necessary training.

In 2001 the Foundation appointed its first Chief Executive Officer, Chris Mkhize. Upon taking over as CEO, Chris Mkhize had to develop required administrative and management structures, and market the Foundation to internal and external stakeholders. In my observation I have no doubt that Chris did an excellent job in this regard, quite often against odds. Our operational area was too wide and rural. Most people were not employed and Community Foundation concept was not known. We now all need to build on what is already available. Most people in our operational area now know how Uthungulu Community Foundation operates.

Introduction

This position paper looks at certain Community Foundation principles as they should also equally apply to Uthungulu Community Foundation. The author has been the project officer for Uthungulu Community Foundation since the year 2003. He has been exposed to almost all aspects of community foundation work: board and committee meetings, grant-making processes, fund-raising, workshops, community functions and others.

Specifically, the paper is an analysis of practices and processes relating to networking, sustainability, principles, public accountability, grant-making, diversity and leadership in the context of managing a Community Foundation. To this end, it is the author's intention to highlight strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats Uthungulu Community Foundation currently faces.

Above all, in this paper the author provides invaluable information on how Uthungulu Community Foundation in the past managed to navigate through troubled waters to ensure that the organisation succeeds in its commitment to remain sustainable as a South African Community Foundation. In this regard, it is the author's conviction that the success of a Community Foundation lies in its ability to rise and fall at regular intervals. The worse thing to happen to a Community Foundation would be to fall and not rise. There are no indications at the moment that Uthungulu Community Foundation could fail to live up to its mission and meet its stated objectives.

Objectives of Uthungulu Community Foundation

The following are the objectives of Uthungulu Community Foundation:

- To improve the quality of life in local communities. How does the Foundation achieve this? The Foundation issues grants on an annual basis to needy and deserving local communities and organisation. We go beyond issuing grants and empower our grantees through information sharing and capacity building training programmes on project management. In this regard, the Foundation is doing it's very best to develop and grow together with its grantees.
- To establish, promote and maintain a sound community-based capital growth fund that supports community-based organisations. We have been able to grow our endowed funds from R5 Million to figures ranging from R12 – 15 Million over the past eight years. Interest on these investments is used for operations and grants. It is unfortunate that some local communities and individuals continue not to fully understand the importance of growing an endowment fund on the part of Community Foundations. We believe with our consistent efforts at educating local communities local communities will eventually understand the importance of growing an endowment fund for sustainability.
- To mobilise community resources and public support for the Foundation's programmes. Uthungulu Community Foundation still remains weak in achieving this objective. However, we continue to intensify our efforts at making local individuals and organisations to understand and accept that the Foundation is for all in the local community. At present the culture of philanthropy in local communities remains under-developed. A few individuals and organisations continue to support the Foundation. We would like to see more individuals and organisations support the Foundation's programmes and activities. May be we need to conduct research and find out what would encourage more individuals and organisation in our local communities to support the Foundation. The support we continue to receive from

external organisations enables us to run our operations. Indeed, we remain highly indebted to each of the involved organisations.

- To instil confidence in local communities, through reviving traditional philanthropic practices. Uthungulu Community Foundation continues to educate local communities on reviving traditional philanthropic practices. In some instances local communities complain about poverty when they could be having some vacant land on which they could, at least, plant vegetables for domestic consumption. Laziness in some local communities is also becoming a cause for concern. The Foundation is sparing no moment in encouraging affected local communities to roll up their sleeves and start making an effort in contributing to local economic development initiatives.

Networking

In the process of networking Uthungulu Community Foundation uses a variety of strategies. The organisation is probably one of the leading local organisations on networking and marketing strategies. We are now certainly part of a spider web local and global network of organisations involved in efforts at improving the quality of life in local communities. Our undefined activities include being advocates for social justice and a resource organisation on community development strategies.

How does the Foundation achieve this? We quite often get invited to community events and gathering to talk about issues relating to development, unemployment, crime and others. At these events we get an opportunity to let people know who we are and what we do. At the Foundation we believe that information and knowledge not shared with others soon become obsolete and useless. In our network we remain in contact with almost all sectors of society, particularly on matters of common interest.

In the community development field we work collaboratively on some community projects with private and public sector organisations. In the process of developing local communities we work with and through some of our grantees, strategic social partners and supporters. These networks help us spread our wings far beyond contacts we regularly have with grantees as we have to visit, monitor and evaluate them. This strategy helps promote and develop the kind of partnerships we would like to sustain with all who do business with Uthungulu Community Foundation.

At a professional level, Uthungulu Community Foundation remains a role-player in South and Southern Africa. We were instrumental in establishing the South African Community Foundation Association (SACOFA). We are also one of affiliate organisations to the Southern African Community Grant-Makers Leadership Cooperative. Emerging South African Community Foundations rely mainly on Uthungulu Community Foundation for guidance, mentoring and advice. The Foundation extends this service to also other organisations that develop an interest in knowing how a Community Foundation operates. To higher education students involved in research projects on community organisations, Uthungulu Community Foundation remains a shining example of what it means to be a sustainable and accountable organisation, not only in financial terms, but also on management capacity.

Internationally, Uthungulu Community Foundation remains an affiliate organisation of Worldwide Initiative for Grant-Maker support (WINGS), European Foundation Centre and American Council on Foundations. These organisation help spread Uthungulu Community Foundation's global network. Involved organisations through these networks are able to learn from one another as the Community Foundation field continues to develop.

Locally, our relations with the press can be described as excellent. We are quite often invited to write articles on community issues. These articles afford the Foundation an opportunity to educate local residents on the activities and functions of the Foundation. In our local communities the name Uthungulu Community Foundation is associated with an organisation

that exists to help people help themselves, in line with the Foundation's motto: "We help people to help themselves".

Community Foundations

COMMUNITY GIVING is the act of individual citizens and local institutions contributing money or goods, along with their time and skills, to promote the well-being of others and the betterment of the community in which they live and work. Community giving can be expressed in informal and spontaneous ways such as citizens and local businesses helping other residents in times of crisis. It can also be expressed in formal and organised ways whereby citizens give contributions to local organisations which in turn use these funds to support projects that improve the quality of life in the local community on a permanent, long-term basis.

COMMUNITY GIVING ORGANISATIONS serve as vehicles to nurture, sustain and enhance community development, and make it possible for individual citizens to have a larger impact at local level than acting alone. They are the instruments that structure the individual or institutional impulse to give, providing all those who wish to be donors with the means and the capacity to have a real impact in the community.

COMMUNITY GIVING ORGANISATIONS collect, manage and redistribute donations from a wide range of local donors to meet critical needs and improve the quality of life in a specific geographic area, typically a town, village, city, informal settlement or rural community, although experience shows that the geographic areas covered by these organisations can be considerably larger and encompass a bigger metropolitan area, or even a group of regions. Community Foundations, in particular, play a valuable role in helping communities address new and increasing social, economic and environmental needs, especially as conventional approaches prove less effective and funding from traditional sources decreases. This is done by mobilising new resources, involving citizens in local problem-solving and decision-making, as well as by building partnerships among local businesses, local authorities and non-profit organisations.

COMMUNITY GIVING is not a modern concept. Organised forms of local giving existed in Africa from time immemorial, and it took various forms, such as, in Zulu, *ilimo*, *ukwenana*, and *ukusiselana*. These practices ensured that no family, unlike today, would go to bed without a meal. Organised forms of community giving also existed in Europe in the Middle Ages in countries such as Italy, Germany and Portugal, to mention only a few. Many of these forms of community giving could be best described today as "community chests" and had many times a strong religious component to them. The United States of America, for example, currently has numerous Community Foundations, and some of these Foundations, for example, the Ford Foundation, Charles Mott Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation, provide short-term financial donations to international Community Foundations, just to enable them to start their own Foundations, stand on their own and remain sustainable.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS, for example, the Uthungulu Community Foundation, are independent community giving organisations whose main mission is to improve the quality of life of the communities that they cover geographically. Community Foundations do this by involving local citizens and by generating new permanent resources (collection of endowed funds contributed by many donors). These endowed funds allow Community Foundations to make grants and address the long-term needs of the local community. Community Foundations serve three main audiences: the community as a whole, the non-profit sector and donors. Below are some of the features of a Community Foundation:

A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION IS INDEPENDENT FROM CONTROL OR INFLUENCE by other organisations, government or donors. It has its own legally-recognised nature and makes its decisions autonomously via a Board of Trustees or citizens broadly reflective of the community it serves. Although Community Foundations invest their assets and use the

returned interest to cover their costs and make grants, they are not commercial entities and their operations are exclusively for charitable purposes. Unlike other nonprofits that focus exclusively on one area of community or economic development, like attracting new business, conserving natural resources, providing social services, improving job skills or organising arts and cultural events, Community Foundations can support the entire range of economic development activities.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS ARE GRANTMAKING INSTITUTIONS that use the interest from their investments to make grants and to operate programmes that respond to the needs of the community. Grant-Making is an important feature of Community Foundations, more so because Community Foundations do not concentrate their action on a single field of interest but, instead, they support any project or programme that can promote community development, be it in the area of education, health, agriculture, environment, elderly, disabled, economic development, arts,, culture, historical heritage or women. At the core of the Foundation's work is the improvement of the life in the community and anything that may contribute to it is worth the investment and the attention – a holistic approach to community development.

STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY: Along with this vision, Community Foundations can offer flexibility to respond at the right time in the right way to a community challenge predicting when a strategic planning meeting, a small grant or key collaboration might result in positive, systemic community change.

INCLUSIVE AND NONPARTISAN: Community Foundations are one of only a few institutions whose job it is to bring diverse, sometimes divergent community members together in a neutral setting. In a sense, therefore, Community Foundations are about creating the next generation of a solid mix of leaders and learning organizations.

A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION NORMALLY HAS A PERMANENT AND AN UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT FUND. The Uthungulu Community Foundation uses the expression "people helping people". The Zululand Chamber of Commerce and Industries uses the expression "Making a difference with the people of Zululand". The Council of Michigan Foundations, in the United States, uses the expression "for Good. For Ever" to describe the work of the Community Foundations in the State of Michigan. The Community Foundation Network, in the United Kingdom, uses the expression "Local Giving for Lasting Value". Wherever you look, Community Foundations are about planning ahead and addressing issues at local level on a long-term basis. The Council of Michigan Foundations defines Community Foundations as "a platform to build the community". A community cannot be built in a year or two, or five, or twenty, or fifty, a community is an evolving entity that changes with time (new people, new needs, new challenges, and new opportunities). A permanent endowment allows a Community Foundation to evolve with the community and to be there at all times giving the right response.

An endowment is a collection of funds, created for generating income, which will be used for charitable purposes, for example, grants to local non-profit organisations. An endowment provides sustainability to the Community Foundation and gives donors the guarantee that their donations will have an impact into the future.

DONATIONS TO A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION can include a gift of money, equities, and bonds, property or in-kind services. After all, a Community Foundation cannot exist without donations, and for these to happen, the Foundation must cultivate relations with potential donors in the community. This implies a professional and flexible response to the needs of donors, efficient ways of giving, and a wish to serve their interests. No donor will normally consider making a donation to a Community Foundation that does not listen to his/her needs, and tries to make the act of giving as simple as possible. A Community Foundation, for example, the Uthungulu Community Foundation, also has the following types of fund portfolios: unrestricted funds, trust funds, field of interest funds, donor-advised funds,

designated funds and scholarship funds. Donors could request to have their donations accommodated into each of these fund portfolios.

When talking about donors and donations it is important to demystify the impression that only those that are very wealthy can give to a Community Foundation. It is true that an endowment needs to have a certain size and grow at a regular pace to give the Foundation the possibility to survive and make grants, but in a Community Foundation all donations are welcome and all citizens can participate in the giving. This is what makes a Community Foundation so special from giving point of view, no matter how small such contributions could be.

How can you easily support your Foundation – the Uthungulu Community Foundation?

- Money/cash
- In-kind donations
- Real estate
- Shares or bonds
- Copyright
- Time and know-how
- Mutual funds
- Live stock
- Property
- Insurance policy
- Promissory notes
- Partnership interest

What happens to a charitable donation?

Step one – making the donation

- By direct payment at the Foundation's office.
- By payment by mail order or bank transfer. Our account number is: First National Bank, Richards Bay, Cheque Account Number 62022234645, Branch Code 220830.
- One-time payment.
- Monthly deductions from salary.
- Annual or long-term declaration of payment.
- By making a donation or financing agreement.
- Through internet - the so-called "click and donate".
- By means of bequest.
- By making a loan-for-use agreement.

- Auctions and lotteries.

Step two – Response to your needs

The donor can choose the purpose and destination of his/her donation. After all, the role of a Community Foundation is to satisfy the philanthropic intentions of the donor. Possible destinations of donations include the following:

Donor-Advised-Funds:

These funds allow donors to recommend charitable organisations and causes to be considered for grants.

Unrestricted funds:

These funds give the Foundation the direction to make grants that address the most urgent needs of the targeted communities as community needs may change from time to time.

Field-of-interest funds:

These funds are donor controlled and benefit a specific area – such as education, health, arts and culture, agriculture, disadvantaged children or people with disabilities.

Designated funds:

These funds make grants to specific organisations chosen by the donor when the fund is established.

Scholarship and Award funds:

Donors wishing to make education available to their communities establish these funds.

Capital grants:

These grants contribute to the process of building an endowment fund from which only interests on invested funds may be used for issuing grants to needy communities.

Challenge or Match Grants:

A donor may make a grant on the condition that the grantee or recipient raises funds from other sources, usually within a specific period of time.

Step Three – Management and Investment

After the donation is made, it is immediately incorporated into the capital endowment to be invested. The interest on your donation will permanently support the charitable purpose you have defined. If you set up a certain fund and name it, the future generations will know from whom they received support.

Step Four – Awarding Grants

Grants are awarded in accordance with the donor's will, unless you do not specify any specific charitable goal. In such a case the Community Foundation will define its priority areas and award grants to support initiatives based on an analysis of local needs. The Community Foundation, or its appointed agent, inspects most projects.

TO GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS are an attractive option for several principal reasons:

- They give the government a “human dimension”.
- They discuss and express opinions on public affairs.
- They are not political entities, although they do discuss politics, but not party politics.
- They are involved on all social, political, economic, technological and educational issues that may have or do have a potential to harm society or individuals.
- They work normally through nongovernmental and community-based organisations.
- They develop a fund from which interests on invested funds are used for grants to nongovernmental and community-based organisations whose mission may be to improve the quality of life in target communities.
- They can enter into funding partnerships with governments, at all levels of the governmental hierarchy.
- They complement governments or add resources where the latter are unable to operate due to legal or other restrictions.
- They are free of short-term considerations faced by elected bodies.
- They are a vital link between government and civil society organisations.
- They provide information from which government could plan for the future.
- They provide required capacity to nongovernmental and community-based organisations.

Accountability

Uthungulu Community Foundation is a publicly accountable organisation. First and foremost, the Foundation is accountable to the national Department of Social Development as the registering authority. Second, the Foundation is accountable to local communities. Third, the Foundation is accountable to its Board of Trustees. Fourth, the Foundation is accountable to the South African Community Foundation Association (SACOFA). Fifth, the Foundation is accountable to the global network of Community Foundations. Sixth, the Foundation is accountable to every member of staff at the Foundation. Seventh, the Foundation is accountable to its grantees and other interested parties.

The significance of this public accountability also calls on Uthungulu Community Foundation to respect and observe, among other things, certain Codes of Ethics and Standards for Grant-Makers. These Codes of Ethics and Standards include the following:

- Build and maintain a reputation of integrity, competence and professionalism in the process of managing the Foundation
- Make the mission, goals and programmes of the Foundation public for these to be easily accessible to anyone who might benefit from them
- Use the resources at the disposal of the Foundation solely for charitable and public benefit purposes
- Ensure maximum transparency of their actions and decisions, thus improving public awareness of and confidence in the non-profit sector
- Base their work and grant-making decisions on objectivity and fairness, as well as lack of nepotism and bias
- Adhere to the principles of tolerance and non-discrimination of applicants
- Introduce and encourage policies to avoid all forms of conflict of interest
- Treat all applicants with respect and protect the confidentiality of intellectual ideas and personal information, which they might have become privy to the process of application
- Use their financial and human resources in the most effective manner to the benefit of society

- Ensure constant improvement of their organisations, staff and activities through evaluation and self-evaluation

Sustainability

As a Community Foundation, Uthungulu Community Foundation is still vulnerable. The organisation still has to succeed in diversifying its sources of funding. Staff at the Foundation continue to do their very best to get local individuals and organisations join mainly a few corporate organisations that remain donors to the Foundation. To this end, CEO, Chris Mkhize, is currently looking for funding a post of fund developer. This post would help provide the Foundation with required financial resources. At present staff are not in a position to give full attention to fund-raising activities. Staff members currently consist of four (4) people: CEO, project officer, finance officer and an office administrative officer. There is currently no person with the primary responsibility of raising funds for the Foundation.

Uthungulu Community Foundation believes sustainability of a Community Foundation can only be possible where local individuals and organisations take a lead in supporting their Foundation. This process takes time, and more so, in the case of Uthungulu Community Foundation. The negative factors the Foundation continues to contend with include the following: number of unemployed people, rural nature of the Foundation's operational area, limited knowledge of what a Community Foundation is about, as well as the fact that a culture of philanthropy in South Africa generally remains under-developed. This state of affairs could also be ascribed to the fact that South Africa is still in some communities emerging from its racially divided history of racial segregation. There are people that still look at social realities through the lenses of racial separation and divisions. These attitudes in some instances have a negative effect on raising funds for community-based organisations.

Diversity

Uthungulu Community Foundation in its operations respects and observes multiculturalism, affirmative action and equal opportunity. This is also in line with the South African Constitution Act, 1996 (ACT108 of 1996). This Act outlaws discrimination based on race, nationality, gender, religion and other divisive characteristics.

Uthungulu Community Foundation achieves this inclusiveness mainly through appointment of members of Board of Trustees, appointment of staff and in the way the Foundation conducts business with all: grantees, donors, staff, grant-seekers and other private and public sector organisations.

At Uthungulu Community Foundation we believe persons drawn from diverse groups will bring to bear upon decisions and activities of the Foundation required new and different perspectives, knowledge, values and abilities. This interaction is more likely to lead to one or more of the following:

- More democratic decision-making but better decisions because it would expand the number and diversity of views brought to bear on policy-making
- Improved operations and outputs by ensuring that decisions and services were more responsive to the needs of the Foundation and serviced individuals and communities, particularly marginalised communities
- A more efficient use of the Foundation's human and material resources
- Elevation of social equity and justice

Diversity management in organisation is a process. It is something organisations should work towards achieving at all times. It is not something one could achieve without taking into account other aspects, such as ability and willingness to perform the task at hand. This is what Uthungulu Community Foundation looks at in its commitment to achieve diversity in the management of the Foundation.

May 2008 xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals in South Africa, for example, were severely criticised in the media by the Foundation. "Uthungulu Community Foundation condemns in the strongest possible terms criminal attacks on foreign nationals. These attacks can only come from faceless and irresponsible people one would be shy to call true South Africans. Whatever reasons might be advanced by perpetrators and supporters of these attacks the Foundation remains firm in its condemnation of attacks on foreign nationals".

Leadership

Leadership functions at Uthungulu Community Foundation can best be described as highly interactive. Involved parties take decisions at their operational levels after consultation with others. Even business letters written to individuals and organisations outside the Foundation are quite often shared with staff. This is done mainly to have us all learn from one another, and to strengthen and promote interactive and collective leadership.

In short, leadership at the Foundation takes place at all operational levels: organisation members learn to influence one another throughout the organisation: you learn to lead and at the same time follow and influence others within your area of responsibilities. However, this does not mean accountability is lost in the way the Foundation operates. Uthungulu Community Foundation is, in a true sense, an empowering organisation.

The Foundation believes leadership styles only make sense in context. To this end, the Foundation believes that there is no one leadership style that can be taken to be the best. Leadership at the Foundation is defined and practised as a set of processes that help strengthen the Foundation to easily adapt to changing needs and circumstances in local communities. Members of Board of Trustees and staff jointly manage and lead the Foundation mainly through consultation and robust debates. This management approach has sustained the Foundation. Its leadership roles within local communities remain shining examples of sustainable community-driven development initiatives.

One major thing I have learned as one of the staff members at the Foundation is that the success of a Community Foundation, to a large extent, depends on hard work, commitment and appropriate leadership for different challenging and demanding situations. I have been highly privileged to have worked with the Foundation's current CEO, Chris Mkhize. When things got tough, Chris would warn us not to panic, assuring us that things will soon change for the better. Indeed, more often than not things changed for the better. Chris teaches us at the office to be leaders in our own areas of operation. We only refer to him as our CEO when we experience complex problems we cannot resolve at our levels of operation.