

Umfelandawonye (Collaboration)

Uthungulu Community Foundation (UCF) Monthly News
Letter – July 2008

Overview

The first newsletter published by the Uthungulu Community Foundation in June 2008 was well received by local readers who have an interest in knowing what is happening within our developmental local governments. The title of this newsletter, therefore, was born out of the general desire for collaboration among local residents. The Foundation has always felt it important that it publishes and produces a monthly newsletter to focus exclusively on development issues. We could then not call this newsletter Developer or any other name except Umfelandawonye. We needed a name most residents would associate with.

The name UMFELANDAWONYE (COLLABORATION) calls for and recognises a unity of purpose and a sense of solidarity in the process of integrating and combining available community resources. We jointly should continue to develop our business operations and local communities. Nobody should be excluded from joint efforts the aim of which should be to develop all: local councils, operations of government agencies, corporate organisations, institutions, business entities and civic organisations. Corporate organisations and business entities spoken to found that this initiative sounded like muzak (music) to their ears.

What does Uthungulu Community have in mind with this initiative? Please do not be disappointed. Uthungulu Community Foundation certainly does not have all the answers to development approaches. All that the Foundation can do is to facilitate initiatives, dialogue and talks among identified local stakeholders, to drive forward required socio-economic values and programmes that address the needs of individuals and organisations in the Zululand region. The Foundation, first and foremost, would like to see the Zululand region become and remain an engine for stable and prosperous institutions, peace, safety, justice and cooperation among development agencies. This requires all of us to work together for a common purpose. We all should put our shoulders to the wheel. We all need to make a contribution, no matter how small.

On a monthly basis the Foundation will request a local company to sponsor this newsletter. The sponsorship cost will be paid direct to the publishers, and not to Uthungulu Community Foundation. The Foundation does this to make the publication of the newsletter a truly community newsletter. To this end, the Foundation invites local readers to write and make suggestions. For example, how can we help create employment opportunities for young people prepared to work and develop life-careers? As a region, we all now face the problem of a

frightening number of unemployed young people. We need to pull our combined experiences, wisdom and resources together, to address this worrying problem. No single sector, including local government, working in isolation from other sectors and role-players, can succeed in finding a sustainable resolution of this problem.

Stakeholder analysis

As the Foundation continues to facilitate talks and dialogue between and among stakeholders, it is also important that stakeholders be identified. The primary aim is to have all come on board. There is certainly no intention to exclude any individual or organisation. The Foundation believes the socio-economic success of the Zululand region, largely depends on the active role and participation of individuals, and private and public sector organisations. We need all in Zululand to invest their time, expertise and resources in processes aimed at achieving sustained local economic growth and development. Whilst individual organisations continue to pursue their mission and objectives, they certainly also face challenges to participate in public affairs and public administration. In short, each organisation is expected to contribute to joint ventures to which other local organisations and role-players also contribute.

How could organisations contribute to local initiatives, projects and programmes? Local communities already have different structures to which individuals and organisations should affiliate and, thus, contribute to community efforts at improving the lives of all role-players: local corporate organisations, business entities, local government, institutions, government agencies and civic organisations. Members in these organisations, for example, participate in community or professional meetings. I am using the word professional in its generic sense. In this regard, the following are identified as some of the professional stakeholders operating in our local communities: local government, government agencies, corporate organisations, business associations and civic organisations.

General Grant-Making Processes

Grant-making organisations and institutions, including Uthungulu Community Foundation, local councils, government agencies, institutions, corporate organisations and business entities quite often receive requests for funding of community projects. We are all doing excellent work in improving the lives of our local communities. What happens to these requests?

Giving to a community or an organisation helps donors of all types achieve their charitable and financial goals by providing tools and resources that make giving easy, flexible and effective. Donors could also find a comfortable way in complying with legislative directives. Recipients of grants, among other things, provide the following: they have an in-depth understanding of the community's challenges and the groups and individuals addressing them; they play a key role in addressing community needs, now and in the future. They also help individuals, families, businesses and, sometimes, non-profit agencies achieve their charitable and financial goals by providing tools and resources that makes giving easy, flexible and effective.

What is sustainable development?

One definition of sustainable development is that it is a process of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. However, the term sustainable development continues to be criticised as ambiguous and open to a wide range of interpretations.

Confusion over the term sustainable development results sometimes from using the terms sustainable growth and sustainable use interchangeably as if their meanings were the same. They are not. Sustainable growth is a contradiction in terms: nothing physical can grow indefinitely. Sustainable use, on the other hand, is applicable only to renewable resources: it means using these resources at rates within their capacity for renewal.

Many people use the term sustainable development to simply mean either environmental protection or else sustained economic growth. The concept of environmental protection is based on the separation of humanity from nature. However, social equity demands that we balance the needs of the biosphere with those of the vast majority of the human population, the world's poor. Sustainable development, therefore, incorporates an inescapable commitment to social equity.

Making sense of our local communities

We sometimes easily forget that we are all connected to one another, perhaps in the same way organs of a human body remain connected and operate and have a symbiotic relationship. If any of the body's organs is negatively affected, the entire body also gets affected. The same thing applies to community structures. Community development initiatives, for example, should affect all: individuals, local government, corporate organisations, government agencies, professional bodies, business entities and civic organisations. We just cannot afford to remain increasingly less and less inclined to become part of civic groups. Such tendencies might have unintended consequences, for example, low voter turnouts at election polls, and poor church attendance and union membership, as well as finding no volunteers to promote and develop activities of non-profit organisations.

We all have some responsibility to contribute to programmes and initiatives taken in the interest of developing local communities, our businesses and industries. This is all about developing the social capital required in any community development enterprise: exchange of views and ideas among local residents on common and community issues. We need, for example, to hold discussions with education authorities on the state of education in local schools. This is about the future of our businesses, industries and that of our children. Problems in the education sector, for example, currently require more capacity than the sector itself can offer. It will not help us to always complain about poor grade 12 annual examination results or complain about the quality of students coming from our institutions of higher education. The best we could do is to join some excellent local

organisations that are already doing something about these problematic issues.

Some of UCF's Supported Community Projects

Zululand Mental Health

Zululand Mental Health caters for patients with mental illnesses. This organisation has an office in Empangeni. They are responsible for the entire Zululand region. They really struggle to get funding for the wonderful work they do.

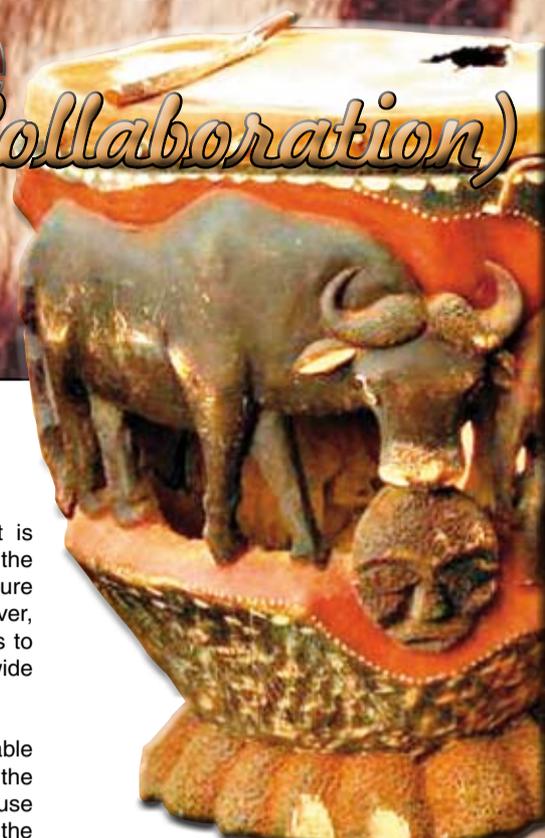
UCF supports Zululand Mental Health primarily to help the organisation deal with the multiple causes of mental illnesses. Most donor agencies and individuals quite often forget that the most serious illness you and I could have is something to do with our power to think, walk, talk, laugh, enjoy, play and reason logically.

National Institute for Crime Prevention Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO)

Public perceptions are that people who have been to prison for offences often go back to that lifestyle because some communities remain reluctant to accept them back. The Foundation supports NICRO in the belief that fighting crime in local communities is not something we could leave to government alone. The task at hand is complex, vast and challenging. We all have to declare war on crime. One way of doing so is to support NICRO. They have offices right at our door in Empangeni.

Reaching Out

Reaching Out is based in Richards Bay. The organisation's primary focus is to mitigate on reported incidents of women and child abuse in the Zululand region. Statistics show that there are an unacceptably high number of such cases in our community. UCF supports Reaching Out as a contribution to efforts at ridding local communities of abuse of women and children. At present, the organisation needs funding to cope with mainly administrative costs, such as office rent and remuneration of staff and volunteers. Please come forward and assist!



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