

PRIVATE/PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS: THE CASE OF UTHUNGULU COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



The building of solid and sustainable socio-economic development of community-based projects, in my opinion, can only be found in private and public sector organisations working hand in glove with Community Foundations. Local representatives from the business sector, government and civil society organisations came in their numbers to witness the official launch of the Uthungulu Community Foundation on 3 July 1999.

In Community Foundations, I see an important vehicle to accelerate delivery of public services. Various sectors of society should not only keep their eyes and ears wide open to ensure that such Foundations discharge their commitments and obligations to the satisfaction of ordinary people on the ground, government, the business sector and others, but also, financially and materially support Community Foundations to forever promote and develop the values of local communities such that they are based on sustainability, self-reliance, self-development and professionalism in the way that they manage community projects . African organisations such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Southern African development Community (SADEC) and the African Union (AU), should also, in my view, partner with and use Community Foundations as vehicles to accelerate the development of the African continent.

As we all would know, when one talks about development issues and Community Foundations, the question that immediately comes to mind is the issue of funding for Community Foundations. As charitable organisations, Community Foundations can learn a lot from how church organisations survive and sustain themselves. Church organisations, among others, survive on donations and church offerings. The church uses these collections to sustain its programmes and in some instances assist alarmingly poor local communities, families and individuals. The church's sources of funding are of

various forms, such as property, cash, bequests, voluntary service and expertise.

From the lessons of the church, Community Foundations should be able to obtain funding from almost all sectors of society: government, the business sector, civil society organisations, other foundations and individual citizens, to develop funds that would sustain and enable a Community Foundation to issue grants, develop local communities through properly structured monitoring and evaluation systems. In short, no individual and indeed no sector of society, should fail to donate to a Community Foundation, for the good of all, particularly to effectively deal with the socio-economic evils of poverty, unemployment, hunger, starvation and crime.

Why are Community Foundations better than other development agencies in the process of developing local communities? The answer lies in the fact that these Foundations are governed by a diverse board of local trustees and, for this reason, assist in a more transparent, efficient, professional and effective manner in the process of implementing public policy. In this symbiotic relationship, public policy makers can: (1) provide seed funding from the public budget of central, provincial or local governments for restart-up of Community Foundations in every municipality/county; (2) match private donations with public funding to capitalise the assets of Community Foundations; (3) lever remittance sent to Community Foundations from nationals working abroad by matching them with public funds; (4) provide tax incentives for corporate and private parties donating to non-profit organisations and foundations; (5) create opportunities for people to learn more about the work of Community Foundations through knowledge exchange and learning opportunities; and (6) partner with international and local organisations experienced in Community Foundation development, to tap their experience and technical assistance.

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