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**ON THE OCCASION OF
ON THE EVENT OF COGTA – SIJULA NGENGXOXO
VIRTUAL DIALOGUE**

ON THE 30TH OF JULY 2021

**“ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN FOSTERING MEN WHO ARE COMMUNITY
BUILDERS”**

Thank you for the opportunity given to us to us to contribute on this very important dialogue

1. DEFINATION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

Means the customary institutions or structures, or customary systems or procedures of governance, recognized, utilized, or practiced by traditional communities.

2. DEFINATION OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

As we understand it, community building is a field of practices directed toward the creation or enhancement of community among individuals within a regional area or with a common need or interest.

It is often included under the fields of community organizing, community organization, community work, and community development.

Internationally, activists and community workers engaged in community building efforts see the apparent loss of community involvement in societies as a key cause of social collapse and the emergence of many harmful behaviors.

3. BRIEF HISTORIC REVIEW OF WHO WE ONCE WERE

It is my feeling that as we discuss today’s topic and focus on the future “Men” it’s important to look at where we came from, in this journey I pray that we find that our forefathers had already developed better ways to foster men who were community builders

Nothing is new, we are the people, and we must avoid recreating what was already created and working powerfully well.

We all know that historically, we are a proud, respectful, rich, culturally strong people and we know that somewhere along the line this changed

In a rather vary unnatural way we were forced into a change we never chose nor understood, our ways of life, systems, culture, and traditions were destroyed, and we were left with nothing but what the oppressor saw as fit for their selfish intent, this has had many horrible consequences for the child that would today become a man, for his community, and his future generations

I have been asked to have input on “the role of traditional leaders in fostering men who are community builders”, in the process I wish that we all agree that there is a lot of work that needs to be done in correcting what the “men” of today has been forced to become if we were to have a better MAN of the future, a community builder

Poverty and systemic marginalization must have been an efficient strategy for the masters of our colonial past to maintain their gains but a devastating action to what African men will become, people my age are a product of the past and what we became is not something we are proud of, as a matter of fact we regret what we became, for an example as a consequence of the colonial and apartheid past;

- Our spirits are broken
- We have lost everything dear to us
- We have very few things to be proud of
- We have very few things to protect
- We have very few things to grow
- Our ways of life have been overtaken by systems and practices that are against our traditions

There are several things that we also need to share the same understanding of, we need to be able to have the same answer when asked;

- What is a man within our traditional context?
- What are our traditions?
- What is traditional leadership within the historical context?
- What is a community builder?
- What does it take to build a community?

I believe that if we can be clear on the above then many positive possibilities emerge

4. PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY BUILDERS

One of the central and long-term jobs of a traditional leader is to develop other leaders, developing leaders is how we build a strong community of individuals that can work together to achieve goals. It is the basis for how a democracy works.

We also need to encourage men of all ages to get involved in all community activities, it is easier to teach by doing than teach by talking

People must feel important, their views taken seriously, and a great effort invested in understanding them and being patient with them

As traditional leaders we understand developing leadership is a way that we can have a legacy behind us and leave people who will continue to advance our powerful cause and our goals after we have left the scene.

Community leaders should spend a good amount of their time recruiting, encouraging, training, mentoring, and supporting others to become leaders.

Here are some steps that we follow at Emadungeni:

- **Find people who have leadership potential.**

There are people all around you who would love to be invited to lead something.

- **Help people view themselves as leaders.**

You can do this by helping them notice the informal leadership they have already taken in their lives. Are they parents? – that is certainly a leadership position.

- **Help people identify the reasons they want to lead.**

Listen to people talk about what is important to them and what they wish they could change.

- Assist people to choose leadership goals that are attainable and that will help them build their confidence. Nothing succeeds like success.

- **Support people while they work to reach their goals.**

Listen to them talk about their successes and their feelings of discouragement; appreciate them and encourage them to keep going.

- Support people when they make mistakes.

Everybody needs help when they make mistakes. Help them get on the right track and encourage them to stick with it.

- Challenge people to take the next step.

Leadership development is a long-term investment. Often community leaders must put the development of other leaders ahead of achieving short-term goals. For example, it may be more important to take the risk of letting a relatively inexperienced person chair a small meeting and acquire new skills. If the meeting gets messy, perhaps that is not so bad. Leadership development is not a tidy endeavor.

5. WHAT ARE SOME QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY LEADERS THAT WE LOOK FOR?

We understand that one does not have to be a perfect human being to be a community leader, either. That's good, since none of us are. But we have learnt that it is helpful to know a few of the characteristics that successful community leaders often have:

Integrity:

To trust you, people must know that you say what you believe and act accordingly. If people trust you, they may follow you to the ends of the earth.

Courage:

It's okay to shake in your boots, but someone must go slay that dragon, and it might as well be you. Leadership means that you show others the way through the dark, scary, forest. Go ahead and speak the truth--even when it's not popular.

Commitment:

You must stick with a task through the good times and the bad. Your commitment will serve as a model.

Ability to care about others:

People will follow you if they know you care about them and about others. The greater your ability to care about all types of people, the more confidence they will have in you.

Creativity and flexibility:

Every situation will call for a different response. Be ready to change and come up with new solutions.

6. CONCLUSION

It is our hope that this contribution can forester a new way of life in our communities and forester a stronger working relationship with government and communities

Siyabonga,

Thank you