RELIGION & STATE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

*A German-South African dialogue on
historical and current challenges*

Editors
Renier Koegelenberg
Udo Hahn

**KONRAD
ADENAUER
STIFTUNG**

EVANGELISCHE AKADEMIE
TUTZING

EFSA

Tsantsabane Cares – an emergency food security partnership

*Marlene Mahokoto*¹

The Tsantsabane Cares Model was created through conversations that took place during the annual South African Day of Courageous Conversations.² The CEO of Anglo American, Mark Cutifani, in his keynote address at the online Joburg Mining Indaba, alluded to the important role that faith leaders are playing in conjunction with the mining industry as they try to navigate the “turbulent social landscapes” in our country.³ Cutifani acknowledged that faith leaders are part of every community and that they are normally the ones who are the voice of the voiceless.

The implementation of the Tsantsabane Cares Roadmap is a practical and effective example of how faith leaders are mediating partnerships with key stakeholders in their local communities. The Kolomela Iron Ore Mine, which is in the Northern

¹ Dr Marlene Mahokoto is the Programme Manager for the EFSA Institute in Stellenbosch, and coordinator of the Tsantsabane Cares multi-stakeholder partnership in the Tsantsabane district.

² The South African Day of Courageous Conversations had its first gathering on 9 October 2015. This is an interfaith engagement that looks at the future of the mining sector. Its aim is to foster dialogue between mining companies and the local communities that are most affected by the mining activities. The goal is to strengthen partnerships that will improve the quality of life for local communities – with the support of faith communities. It is hosted by the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev Dr Thabo Makgoba.

³ See <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-10-07-seeing-the-light-anglo-ceo-says-industry-is-seeking-guidance-from-faith-leaders-on-social-issues/>

Cape, consulted with the Cape Dialogue Centre Trust (CDDC) and requested facilitation in the faith-based collaboration that they were initiating. This process was an attempt to mobilise religious communities around the Kolomela Mine and to design a shared roadmap for sustainable community development.

Background

Consultations with the local church leaders started on 14 November 2018. A total of 34 local church leaders, from 47 churches in the Tsantsabane Municipality and two church leaders from Daniëlsskui, were present at this initial gathering at the Showgrounds in Postmasburg. This gathering provided a platform for the church leaders to share the challenges they were experiencing in the different communities that they were serving. In many instances the same challenges were experienced in different communities, and it became evident that a holistic approach was needed to address these issues in a sustainable manner. Over the next year several dialogue sessions took place with these church leaders as well as various stakeholders.

The dialogue sessions allowed the church leaders to identify crucial areas of concern in their respective communities. The stakeholders who formed part of these dialogue sessions were able to give a holistic view of challenges experienced in the community at large. Some of these stakeholders included the Community Policing Forum, Love Life, Department of Health, Department of Social Development, South African Police Service, Tsantsabane Alcohol & Drug Services, Tsantsabane Local Arts Council as well as the local school principals.

The Tsantsabane Cares Roadmap is a direct response from the dialogue sessions that were held with these church leaders. Church leaders agreed that to ensure sustainable change in addressing the challenges experienced, a holistic approach would be important. To this end the roadmap was named “Tsantsabane Cares”. This implied that no one single organisation and/or business would be responsible for the success of this roadmap. Everyone would have to take ownership to ensure success. Even though programmes will be rolled out in the faith communities, all stakeholders in the Tsantsabane municipal area would have to be involved to ensure positive and sustainable change.

Elements of the Tsantsabane Cares Roadmap

The faith-initiated projects, as identified by the church leaders, showed an interdependence and cross-cutting links of cooperation with the long-term programmes identified by the Kolomela Mine.

Programmes in the Tsantsabane Cares Roadmap

Phase One

i. Tsantsabane Cares Nutritional Support (COVID-19) Programme

This programme served as an emergency response to the food insecurity that was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial 21-day lockdown in South Africa that came into effect on Friday 26 March 2020 caused great disruption to everyone, especially the most vulnerable. The Nutritional Support Project was launched as a direct result of the state of emergency. The lockdown period created challenges of accessing food and medical supplies for those who could least afford it. The church leaders responded to this crisis by identifying the most vulnerable in their communities. This clearly underlines what Mark Cutifani alluded to in his keynote address when he said that “houses of faith are often the ones that speak for and lend a helping hand to the poor and the needy”.⁴ Several organisations partnered during this programme to ensure support for vulnerable families over the ensuing weeks. These organisations included Kolomela Kumba Mine, the Departments of Social Development and Health, the Tsantsabane Municipality, the South African Police Service and Police Community Forum.

Once the special lockdown measures have been relaxed, the following core programmes will have a special focus on the youth.

- ii. An ***After-School Care Programme*** where pupils are assisted with homework. Nutritional support should also be included. Weekend and holiday programmes, with the focus on youth leadership, should be part of this programme.

⁴ See <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-10-07-seeing-the-light-anglo-ceo-says-industry-is-seeking-guidance-from-faith-leaders-on-social-issues/>

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- iii. **Adopt a Park.** This initiative will give community members the opportunity to take ownership of communal public spaces. This programme needs partnership with the local municipality.
- iv. **Tsantsabane Cares Walking Bus.** This programme will ensure that school children will be escorted to their respective schools under supervision. Partnership with SAPS is needed to ensure that school children can be searched for dangerous weapons and illegal substances before entering the school premises.
- v. **Cleaning of Postmasburg Town.** Faith leaders will mobilise their congregants to assist in the cleaning of the town. Cleaning of the town will show an immediate positive change in the environment. People will learn to take ownership of the health of their environment.
- vi. **Health Programme.** An initial 6-month scoping and design exercise will provide the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Pretoria with the necessary data that they would need to develop a comprehensive community-based primary health and wellness programme.
- vii. **Education and Feeding Programme.** At least one food tunnel (hydroponic farming) at a local school will have a positive effect on the nutritional support of pupils, teaching of science and economic subjects as well as teaching of environmentally-focused subjects.

During phase two of the Tsantsabane Cares Roadmap the focus will continue to fall on the environment, the health programme as well as assistance to the Community Policing Forum.

What makes the Tsantsabane Cares Roadmap a good model for effective partnerships between church, state and business?

The emergency food programme gave different stakeholders the opportunity to work together to provide nutritional support to the most vulnerable families during the lockdown period.

A beneficiary form was developed to capture the profile of families receiving support. This would allow for follow-up and referrals of beneficiaries for further assistance by other government departments, such as the Department of Social Development. Several child-headed households were identified and brought to the attention of the Department of Social Development.

During the identification process priority was given to senior citizens, people with chronic diseases, people living with disabilities, child-headed households, and female-headed households. The Tsantsabane municipal area was mapped and sections grouped together. Church leaders then took responsibility for the different areas that they served. These church leaders worked in close co-operation with the Department of Social Development in identifying the eligible beneficiaries.

The church leaders took responsibility for the distribution of the food parcels to the eligible beneficiaries. The logistical process was closely monitored by the programme co-ordinator. Government regulations for the lockdown period was strictly adhered to. The emergency food parcels included a four-week supply of food for a family of four, as well as hygiene and cleaning products.

The programme enabled the sharing of quality data between church and state. The church provided a crucial service in compiling this data. The programme also encouraged church leaders to become more involved in their communities. They were able to build stronger bonds with local partners to create sustainable solutions for the specific needs of their communities. Church leaders are trusted in their communities and their knowledge can be used to identify needs in households that can be followed up by the respective government departments to provide further care and support.

Lessons learnt during distribution of emergency food parcels and food vouchers

Although the distribution of food vouchers provides eligible beneficiaries with purchasing power, it also comes with practical challenges during implementation. These challenges are sometimes overlooked during the design phase of the process. Some challenges included the following:

1. Experience has taught us that in many instances, especially in the case of the elderly, beneficiaries are making use of other people's cell phones. This increases the chances of beneficiaries not receiving monies intended for them;
2. A whole street in an area can make use of one person's cell phone number. Addresses are also not provided as these beneficiaries are living in the

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informal settlements. Street names and unit numbers are not clearly demarcated, so problems could arise if courier delivery of the food voucher is attempted. Unless another way is found to reach these beneficiaries to deliver food vouchers, a food parcel still seems to be a better option;

3. Network challenges in the Tsantsabane municipal area made it difficult to verify the information of certain eligible beneficiaries;
4. Accidental deletion of the food voucher information also occurred;
5. Phone numbers of eligible beneficiaries were sometimes changed.

Conclusion

The Tsantsabane Cares Roadmap shows that the strength of reliable and transparent execution of this programme is closely linked to the commitment of the church leaders to the development and implementation phase, and the ownership they took of the process. This model can work in any town or region in South Africa as it is based on the principles of a real partnership between government, faith communities and business.