

Embarking on transformative journeys in communities: Making *ubuntu* a reality

The primary focus of the Tutu Foundation UK in its early years is that around gang related issues in the UK. This area is very complex and involves deep seated issues and fractured relationships within and between generations and between people from different ethnic, cultural, religious and other backgrounds.

The Tutu Foundation UK is aware of the importance of not entering lightly into processes which seek to bring resolution and healing to long standing areas of conflict.

The role of the Tutu Foundation UK

The Foundation's role is to facilitate groups who wish to bring about sustainable and transforming solutions to conflict situations. In performing its role, the Foundation will draw upon and involve people who have experienced personally the power of transformation in their circumstances and attitudes towards other people. Stories will be told; ideas will be exchanged and tried out. Members of groups will submit themselves to embarking on journeys of reconciliation and liberation from past pain and hurt.

The issues are not susceptible to 'quick fixes'. It is important to recognise that sustainable solutions involve creating and recreating relationships within and between communities that have often been broken for a long time. Communities can find within themselves the ability to make positive and sustainable changes rather than simply expecting the Council, the Government, the school or the Police to sort out the problems.

Points to consider

Groups embarking on this type of journey need to be aware of the following considerations:

1. The process of healing and transformation is a long haul which requires long term commitment.
2. Groups need to go into the process with their eyes open to the need for persistence, forbearance and risk taking.
3. The process needs to involve all the groups of people directly affected by the problem.
4. Some groups might not be ready to embark on the process and will need to be brought in when they are ready.
5. The process will involve the need for groups to listen and reach out across longstanding barriers which have kept groups, households and communities apart.
6. Specific workshops and other facilitated events will be involved, but they need to be backed up with self-help and support groups formed within and across the communities involved.
7. Workshops will always have clear ground rules that ensure that the participants can share their stories openly and safely without the fear of being ostracised or put at risk of physical violence or emotional manipulation.
8. Workshops will use tools and approaches which will demand significant emotional investment, the recalling of what may be for some painful memories, a level of personal disclosure and the willingness to listen to other people's stories.
9. The process will generate opportunities for new friendships to form as well as the likelihood that those friendships will be put under some strain from time to time. The same friendships will also need to be depended upon when difficult issues are raised.
10. The prize of transformed relationships, less tension within families and across communities, greater tolerance and the celebration of diversity makes the process worthwhile.

We can be human only together