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**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FORUM**

**ZOOM MEETING MINUTES**

**22ND October 2020**

**10:00-12:30**

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**PRESENT:** Zia Abrahams (Advance Edukos), Bijou Bakole (El Theos),Chris de Beyer (CW), Cheryl Harper (We can Change Our World), Chris Louw (Harambee), Beyonifer McGee (Good Enuf), Nicole (Leap Schools), Wilhelmina )Leap Schools), James Malope (Leap Schools), Christopher Louw (Harambee), Avril Thomas (Living Hope), Aldo Pekeur (CAP), Glenda Kayster (WCSCF), Janice King (WCSCF), Colleen Brookes-Gain (WCSCF),

**APOLOGIES**: Tessa Gardner (Hands & Feet)

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1. **Welcome & Introductions.**

Janice welcomed everyone. Introductions went around the room and thereafter our Guest Speaker was introduced.

1. Guest Speaker:

**Ronald Bownes from DREAMXCHANGE Topic: Self-Employment & Self- Empowerment**

Ronald founded DreamWorker in 2008, an organisation dedicated to helping reduce unemployment in South Africa. Over the past 12 years the organisation has had **over 20 000** unemployed people pass through its doors. Each one has been personally counselled and work supported and potentially connected to to work opportunities.

**This resulted in facilitating over 6 million days of work for these beneficiaries with estimated income generated around R800 million for the previously unemployed.**

However, as the formal economy remained static and jobs dried up more and more people have become unemployed.

To meet this challenge Ronald and his team developed a web portal called DreamXchange to help people empower themselves through self-employment.

Ronald’s vision is to use DreamXchange to help over 10 million people in South Africa to economically empower themselves and also to encourage those who do have work to make a small contribution and help their fellow unemployed brothers and sisters out of poverty.

**Says Ronald,** “**The old ways are destructive and there are to many blocks in the way. Above all creativity is being severely stifled. On the site you will find Seekers & Providers where Seekers actually end up becoming Providers. All you have to do is put your profile on the site as seeking work.”**

Ronald pointed the following out: There are hundreds of placement models in South Africa and thousands all over the worlds that try to place people in the formal economy. These placement models leave people waiting, disempowered and with a sense of entitlement. He stressed the importance of ubuntu, caring, sharing and societies where people are supporting one another. Collaboration and connecting is vital right down to the person next door.

Dreamxchange aims to create an environment where people are inspired and assisted to economically empower themselves. Poverty, entitlement and disempowerment continues despite all the efforts of NGO’s all over the world. Statistics paint a desperate situation regarding unemployment and equality etc. However, this leaves us with an incredible opportunity to create stuff that enables us from within. When we create magic for ourselves, we create magic for others and allow them to create magic for themselves. It is about how to help people to help themselves, empower themselves, educate themselves educate themselves and find out what they really want to do. How to move from having or searching for a job to starting the journey of self-employment.

On the Dreamxchange site, the seeker can be a provider at the same time. Once you put your profile on the site one will be algorithmically linked to an opportunity. There are also the options to promote oneself, trade, request work or request funding or mentorship. To overcome the literacy challenge that could be experienced by some people, one can load a 2minute video clip from one’s phone on the site. An Exchange page was also created for those that want to share their experiences or leave some motivational message for others. Dreamxchange enable people to promote themselves on a wider platform beyond their immediate location where there might be limited opportunities for them. It’s about self-empowerment, doing multiple things, expanding one’s creativity and possibilities and about connecting with people. If one comes across an opportunity that you are not interested in one can post it on the site for someone else that might be interested. The question to ask oneself is not: What’s in it for me? The important question to ask is: What contribution can I make? There are no restrictions relating to age, sex, gender on the site. In future Projects could be run on the back end of the site. Members have the advantage of viewing what is happening in the field of their interest in other provinces as well. It is about initiating and building a people’s economy. Ronald makes himself available to speak at various organisations in different formats and forums. He encourages everyone to get on board by using this free site and start collaborating with people on it. He sees this platform as a stepping stone to inspire people to a new way, a new country and a new humanity.

The key he wants to leave with the listeners is: “We create magic from within.”

At this point Janice Registered WCSCF on the **dreamxchange** website.

**Q & A:**

Avri: We have a branch in East London how can we connect with you?”

Ronald recalled that Avril was at his office a few years back. Ronald pointed out that they are already working with the Harambee team in East London. Christopher expressed his desire for them to now work together in the Western Cape as well. Ronald said that he is looking forward to that.

Glenda: How do one deal with the stumbling block of start-up capital?

Ronald: Although one might have a big dream one has to start small. If possible, create a network of people around them for support in the beginning phase. Unfortunately, micro lending is not that available for people that wants to be self-employed. Ronald aims to address the issue of the need for micro loans for people on their journey of self-empowerment with banks and insurance companies. People are encouraged to be innovative and to somehow find a way to bring their own funding. He mentioned a fisherman that did manage to secure a loan from a bank by putting all his info on an app and using that to qualify for the loan.

Glenda: What Dreamxchange approach to capacity building is?

Ronald stated that They do not train anybody. There is no group skilling and there are no courses for an individual. They look at each unique individual with their individual creativity and specific interest. Training people sometimes leads to people ending up in a job that they leave after a short while. Even people that do have jobs are not all economically empowered. When people multitask, they will still have an income even when they loose one stream of income therefore, the old system where one is skilled for one specific job is riskier than being self-employed. Walking beside people and creating an environment in which they can flourish is the essence of what Dreamxchange is built on. Society must and can bring the change. Ronald emphasised that the work in society must be done without expecting any awards or accolades but simply done because it needs to be done.

Janice mentioned that it reminds her of active citizenship. People should be empowered to advocate on their own behalf. They can become activist for the change they long to see in their own lives or in the country.

Christopher: The importance of a mindset change for NGO’s and young people in general. They need to start looking at entrepreneurship and hustling. The youth have the skills we just need to come alongside them to support them.

Janice mentioned a sixteen-year-old boy at a DIC that was arrested by the police for selling cigarettes. He used the money he made to build a shack for him. Glenda said she was impressed by him and he has potential. His energy just needs to be channelled in the right way. Glenda said that multiple income streams was frowned upon in the past, but that has changed now.

Janice: would Ronald come speak to the social workers at the drop-in centres who are working with the street children as well as vulnerable children in communities who are often school drop-outs. This might give them a different version of how to respond to these kids.

Ronald believes this generation is still stuck in the old model. They need to shift to multitasking, self-employment, and a multi jobbing situation. In the future everyone will be multi-tasking, have multiple income streams and we all will be collaborating. He would prefer that people do it out of a desire to expand their creativity and not out of desperation. There is no such thing as being unemployable. Everybody is employable because you can employ yourself. Everybody can do something that is so uniquely theirs that the world would want it from them.

Kids might be open to a mind shift, but the adults in their live stop them. The minds of the adults need to be shifted as they need to teach the children. She also mentioned the importance of informal traders seeing the significant role they play in carrying the economy.

Ronald mentioned that the younger generation have come to teach us a new way and we need to be open to that. The old way was quite destructive on many people’s lives.

Some kids know their school work but do not do well because of the way they are being tested. These kids may end up falling out of the system. The same could apply for the work environment. Many talented people are excluded from the system as they do not fit in the traditional system and are struggling to navigate their way in it.

Ronald said that informal traders is now seen as inspiring people. Education systems sometimes fail in acknowledging and developing people’s unique abilities and creativity.

Janice mentioned how she enjoyed projects at school, utilising her co-ordinating skills, more than the actual school subjects.

Ronald pointed out that the order used to be education, skills and then work. This has changed to work and then developing the skills necessary or getting someone to assist you to effectively do the work. What’s going on in your mind is stopping you. Most people get the idea and imagination, but it is diminished because there is so many blocks in the way according to the old system.

Janice thanks Ronald for his presentation today and mentions that his contact details is on the chat. She encourages everybody to make use of what Dreamxchange is offering.

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| Contact Details: Ronald Bownes083 327 5553ronald@dreamxchange.co.za[www.dreamxchange.co.za](http://www.dreamxchange.co.za)  |

1. **Upcoming training opportunities**
* Connect Network offers: QIS- Quality improvement system for NGO’s. A two-year course with mentorship. A discount is available if one registers through WCSCF.
* Protective Behaviour’s aim at making children abuse proof. These workshops will be taken to schools throughout the country. New program offered to teens and parents also available now and addresses gender base violence as well. Training will be advertised on weekly email.
1. **Next CNOYO Meeting**: 26th November 2020.

Janice than briefly explains what CYONO is about and quickly gives them a peak at the website.

Janice thanks everybody for attending and encourages them to share invite with anyone they think would benefit from being part of CYONO.