

Stimulating a culture of social capital for transformation

Systemic corruption is like a spider web or network that draws its strength from the self-supporting and mutual-serving behaviour and trust between its corrupt members for the "common decay" of society.

To fight corruption, it is appropriate to adopt the same type of network (based on opposing values) for developing personalised ties of circular trust for the "common good" of society.

For example, Mahatma Gandhi, the moral and transformational leader of Indians in South Africa and India without any official status, rank or title, created motivation and hope, and relied on the social network and public trust of 133 million Indians to expose the injustices of the British colonial system. Gandhi used social capital to take control of the process of gaining independence for the Indians in India (Coetzee). From the Gandhi experience, it is clear that a corrupt system with a strong and wide social network of personalised ties, such as the most powerful economic system at that time, the British Empire can be subverted if the leadership opposing such system is anchored in universal values such as transparency, integrity and accountability.

CITIZENS ACCOUNTABLE FOR LEADERSHIP FAILURE

Despite various ad hoc attempts to reform Namibia, for example the public service, the creation of the Namibian Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), legislation that supports the Namibian ACC investigation unit, a rela-



Johan Coetzee

tively free judicial system, Presidential Commissions of Inquiry into corruption scandals, all attempts to date were inadequate to contain corruption. Our failure to contain corruption happened in the absence of citizen vigilance that could institutionalise social safety nets and national support for subverting corruption. Citizen awareness and activism to influence critical issues are not limited to corruption but extend to all socio-economic challenges such as development and inequality. Such challenges cannot be solved with ad hoc attempts prior to elections such as the New Equitable Economic Empowerment Framework (NEEEF) that are not supported by adequate research. These challenges need accumulation of social capital (social trust in society), citizen accountability (accepting accountability for leadership failure) and interrelated changes of our political and socio-economic systems. The systems of the Land of the Brave are currently controlled by power hunger Namibian political leaders and a greedy business elite that are two sides of the same Namibian Dollar.

References

Coetzee, J.J. (2012). Systemic corruption and corrective change management strategies: A study of the co-producers of systemic corruption and its negative impact on socio-economic development. Unpublished PhD dissertation in Business Management and Administration. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.

jcoetzee@nust.na

Die Republiek 27 Oct 2017