



## **URI Southern African Regional Assembly**

**7-10th November 2023**

**Valverde Eco Hotel, Johannesburg**



**Report by Nyasha Mukaratirwa- Regional Coordinator Southern Africa.**

## Table of Contents

<b>URI Southern African Regional Assembly</b> .....	1
<b>7-10th November 2023</b> .....	1
<b>Valverde Eco Hotel, Johannesburg</b> .....	1
<b>Day 1:</b> .....	3
<b>Day 2:</b> .....	3
Introduction Session.....	3
Reading of PPPs.....	3
Video from Jerry.....	4
Energizer & Introductions.....	4
Appreciative Interviews.....	4
Ground Rules & Code of Conduct.....	5
Presentation on URI and Engaging with the Network.....	5
<b>Collaborations</b> .....	5
CC Presentations.....	6
End of Day Reflections.....	6
<b>Team Building Exercise</b> .....	7
<b>Day 3</b> .....	8
<b>Opening with communal prayer time</b> .....	8
Video message from Alice.....	8
Fundraising Discussion.....	8
Group discussions:.....	9
CC Presentations.....	10
Workshop on Mindfulness from Promote Balance.....	10
Closing Circle of Appreciation.....	11
<b>Day 4</b> .....	12
Conclusion.....	12
Appendix.....	12
The Program.....	13

## Day 1:

The URI Southern Africa region commenced on a positive note, with the first day marking the arrival on November 7, 2023. The majority of participants reached in the morning, allowing ample time for settling in and refreshing. Registration took place at 4 PM in the restaurant area, where participants gathered to formally register their presence. The Regional Coordinator extended an informal welcome, urging everyone to introduce themselves and foster familiarity within the group. In this brief session, the RC ensured everyone's well-being, and participants expressed contentment. The RC shared a link to the Pre-assembly survey, emphasizing its completion. Additionally, the workshop pack was distributed during the session it included key components such as the Assembly program, PPs, Code of Conduct, and a URI branded t-shirt and badges. The day concluded with participants adjourning for a communal dinner.

## Day 2:

### Introduction Session

- *Welcome, goals/purpose of gathering and Housekeeping.*  
The Regional Coordinator extended a formal welcome to all participants at the assembly, introducing herself along with the accompanying URI team members, Sarah and Geoffrey. To commence the proceedings, she invited Rev Dennis Milanzi from Zambia to deliver the opening prayer.



### Reading of PPPs

Geoffrey introduced the PPPs and requested every member to recite a PPPs.

## Video from Jerry.

A video message from Jerry warmly welcomed all participants, providing insights into URI's purpose. Regrettably, technical issues impeded the timely playback of the second video from Alice. However, the video was eventually screened later in the program, ensuring that participants had the opportunity to receive the intended message.



## Energizer & Introductions

Sarah took charge of the introductions, orchestrating an energizing icebreaker where CC members creatively mimed an activity representative of their respective CCs, prompting others to guess. This dynamic and interactive activity not only added an element of fun but also fostered an engaging atmosphere among the participants, setting a positive tone for the assembly.

## Appreciative Interviews.

Following the introductions, participants were paired up for Appreciative Interviews. They were encouraged to choose a location where they felt most at ease for these discussions, and notably, a majority of participants opted to enjoy the interviews outdoors. This flexible and personalized approach allowed for a comfortable and open environment, enhancing the richness of the interview experience. The AI questions are found on the link below:

[Appreciative Inquiry Interview Questions - URI Southern African Regional Assembly 2023](#)

After the Interviews participants shared their discussions and things that stood out from these conversations were:

- The kindness of each other
- Our own inner wealth
- Develop your own goals
- Wisdom does not have an age limit

- This work comes from the heart, spirit, place of passion
- Youth also acknowledging wisdom of elders



## Ground Rules & Code of Conduct

During the assembly, participants collaboratively established a set of ground rules to guide their conduct throughout the duration of the event. Nyasha took the opportunity to provide a detailed explanation of the Code of Conduct document included in the Workshop Pack. Participants were encouraged to thoroughly read the document and subsequently affix their signatures, signifying their commitment to adhere to the outlined principles and guidelines. This proactive approach aimed to foster a respectful and inclusive environment, ensuring a harmonious and productive assembly for all attendees.

## Presentation on URI and Engaging with the Network

In the afternoon session after lunch Sarah presented on URI and Engaging with the Network. Her presentation is in the link below:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1knPtNNcXkRJ7VV1PMbr4fgeG7vGVgVqT/edit#slide=id.g293aabf2f22\\_0\\_0](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1knPtNNcXkRJ7VV1PMbr4fgeG7vGVgVqT/edit#slide=id.g293aabf2f22_0_0)

## Collaborations.

Following the presentation, a discussion unfolded around collaborative opportunities and shared interests within the region. The dialogue yielded the following key points:

1. **Mindset Transformation through CC Work:** There is a shared interest in understanding how the efforts of CCs contribute to changing mindsets. Collaborative projects on peace-

building emerged as a means to achieve this, emphasizing the potential for mutual learning and sharing of experiences among CCs.

2. **Resource Sharing:** The group delved into the concept of resource sharing, acknowledging that while financial resources are often emphasized, non-financial resources are equally valuable and can pave the way for financial support. The Asset Pentagon was introduced as a tool to comprehend different forms of capital.
3. **Training Collaboration, Especially with Young People:** Participants expressed interest in collaborating on training initiatives, with a particular focus on involving young people.
4. **Common Areas of Interest:** Across the region, themes of interest included girls' education, women empowerment, environmental projects benefiting both the Earth and its inhabitants, community gardens for food security and Resource Mobilisation.
5. **Research and Collaboration Strengths:** Emphasis was placed on the importance of researching existing initiatives, understanding ongoing efforts by CCs, and leveraging collective strengths.

## CC Presentations

Noteworthy presentations were delivered by The Justice Desk, Faith Hope Love Communities, and Wildlife CC, providing insights into their respective initiatives.



## End of Day Reflections

Participants were invited to share reflections on their Day 1 experience, resulting in a diverse array of sentiments:

- "Interested to learn more about software and food waste from [another participant]."
- "Lots of potential for collaborations."
- "It's never too late."
- "Grassroots involvement of URI."

- "The sky's the limit."
- "Grateful to meet new people."
- "How to raise money."
- "Good network."
- "Honoured to be part of this group."
- "Eye-opening."
- "Inspired."



## **Team Building Exercise.**

The day concluded with a dynamic team-building exercise, wherein participants, alongside facilitators, were divided into three teams. Their task was to craft a pizza using a variety of provided ingredients. Two chefs from the hotel served as judges for the event. Each of the three teams successfully created their pizzas, and then had the opportunity to articulate the reasoning behind their design choices and ingredient selections. This exercise proved to be immensely valuable as it not only fostered active participation among all members but also promoted camaraderie and teamwork. During their presentations to the judges, team members seamlessly integrated URI values and ethos, turning the exercise into a delightful and educational experience.



---

## Day 3

### **Opening with communal prayer time.**

The opening prayer, led by Rev. James, initiated a touching moment as participants formed a prayer chain, standing in a circle and voicing their prayers. Following this, Geoffrey provided insight into the symbolism of two lit candles—one honoring the late Belinda, a dedicated supporter of CCs in Malawi, and another symbolizing a collective prayer for peace in Gaza. The session was emotionally charged, particularly for CC members in Malawi who had greatly benefited from Belinda's fundraising endeavors.

### **Video message from Alice**

Alice, through a video message, extended a warm welcome and expressed appreciation to all participants.

### **Fundraising Discussion**

The subsequent fundraising discussion featured a presentation by Rev. Dennis from Zambia, sharing successful resource mobilization strategies. His testimony, rooted in personal experience,



resonated with participants, creating a positive and empowered mindset. Rev. Dennis also proposed a regional collaboration on resource mobilization for a specific program, a topic to be further discussed.

Nyasha followed with a presentation on resource mobilization, exploring diverse fundraising avenues for CCs. She emphasized the advantages of online fundraising and invited Alexander from the Wildlife Rehabilitation Trust to share the success story of his online campaign, facilitated by Lauren and Nyasha. This presentation not only enlightened CCs but also demonstrated the tangible feasibility of these methods.

Subsequently, CCs divided into two groups for in-depth discussions on their resource mobilization strategies for 2024. The group outputs were as follows:

## Group discussions:

Fundraising discussion - ideas generated by the group

### *Group 1:*

- Invite people to donate
- Crowd funding
- Drama and theatre to invite people to donate
- Selling of farm produce
- Building a team of fundraisers who can make proposals
- URI Southern African account that CCs can access
- Fundraising, sporting events, vendors, sports players in the community can be sponsored
- Community camps where community members participate

### *Group 2:*

- Proposal applications, CCs need to be officially registered
- Selling of different merchandise in the CC, selling of items of stickers, clothing
- Promoting youth events, exhibitions, talent shows, and charge a small fee for entrance
- Informal publicity of CC activities, eg. Social media, fliers
- Launching internet fundraising campaigns eg. GoGetFunding
- Utilising local donors, spaces for CCs to interact with donors

This collaborative session provided a platform for CCs to brainstorm and chart out their fundraising approaches for the upcoming year.

Websites shared from Rev Dennis:

<https://www.terravivagrants.info/>

<https://www.terravivagrants.org/>

<https://www.fundsforngos.org/>

<https://www.advance-africa.com/Grants-for-NGOs-and-Organisations.html>

<https://ngoconnectsa.org/get-funding-unlock-funding-opportunities/>  
<https://www.newafricafund.org/>

## CC Presentations.

Nthora Cooperation Circle, Nkhudzi Bay Utale Club, Parliament of the People, Blantyre CC, & Cape Town Interfaith Initiative

## Workshop on Mindfulness from Promote Balance

### Introduction:

The stress management workshop aimed to equip participants with valuable insights and tools to understand and manage stress effectively in their personal and professional lives.

Recognizing the growing importance of mental well-being, the workshop focused on practical strategies and included a mindful exercise for experiential learning.

### Workshop Content:

The workshop began with an in-depth exploration of common stressors and their impact on mental health. Strategies such as time management, deep breathing, and positive reframing were discussed. The session also introduced the innovative use of art for stress management as an additional tool for self-reflection.

### Mindful Exercise:

A key component of the workshop was the mindfulness exercise, emphasizing deep breathing and present-moment awareness. Participants reported heightened awareness of their emotions and a sense of calm during the exercise. The incorporation of mindfulness was well-received and provided a tangible experience of stress reduction.

### Participant Interaction:

While the format was primarily a presentation, participants expressed their intent to apply the learned techniques, including the mindfulness exercise, in their professional settings, particularly within their respective CCs. The presentation style facilitated a receptive atmosphere, allowing participants to internalize and consider practical applications.

### Feedback and Evaluation:

Feedback from participants indicated a positive response to the workshop content and format. Many expressed gratitude for the comprehensive understanding of stress and the inclusion of

practical strategies. Constructive feedback included a desire for more interactive activities and further exploration of stress management techniques.

#### Outcomes:

Observations post-workshop revealed increased awareness among participants regarding their stress triggers and a commitment to implementing learned strategies. Several participants expressed an intention to integrate the mindfulness exercise, and even the use of art, into their personal routines for stress relief.

#### Conclusion:

The stress management workshop successfully delivered valuable insights and practical tools for understanding and managing stress. The positive feedback and observed outcomes highlight the importance of continued efforts to promote mental well-being. Gratitude is extended to all participants for their engagement and openness to incorporating these strategies into their lives.



### Closing Circle of Appreciation

As the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. The final day of the 3-day workshop concluded with participants forming a circle, each member expressing the personal benefits derived from the gathering and sharing what they were grateful for. Last remarks were exchanged, creating a poignant moment as some participants, departing on evening flights, bid farewell to the

team before making their way homeward. The circle served as a reflective and appreciative closure to a valuable and enriching workshop experience.

## Day 4

Malawi participants were treated to an excursion on Day 4, led by Sarah, considering their departure scheduled for Day 5. This excursion served as a refreshing break, allowing participants to explore and rejuvenate before concluding their engagement in the assembly.



## Conclusion

The 2023 URI Southern Africa Regional Assembly can be proudly deemed a success. Participant feedback indicates widespread satisfaction, with attendees expressing the assembly's benefit to them. The venue, conferencing facilities, food, and accommodation received commendation for their excellence. A survey has been dispatched to gather more comprehensive feedback, ensuring that participant perspectives are thoroughly considered for future improvements.

One notable area for potential enhancement lies in travel arrangements, particularly for the Malawi team who opted for road travel. The suggestion has been raised to engage a reputable bus company for future events, emphasizing the importance of ensuring participant comfort and convenience. These insights serve as valuable lessons to continually refine and elevate the overall experience for participants in upcoming assemblies.

Appendix

The Program

**Assembly Programme  
Nov 7th - 10th, 2023  
Johannesburg, South Africa**

---

Day 1 - Tues 7th Nov

14h00 - 17h00 Arrivals  
17h30 - 18h00 Introduction Games

*18h00 - 20h00 Dinner*

Day 2 - Wed 8th Nov

*06h30 - 08h30 Breakfast*

09h30 - 10h30 Opening Ceremony  
*10h30 - 10h45 Tea Break*  
10h45 - 13h00 Introductions and Appreciative Inquiry

*13h00 - 14h00 Lunch*

14h00 - 14h15 Getting Started / Ground Rules  
14h15 - 15h00 What is URI / Participating in the Network  
*15h00 - 15h30 Tea Break*  
15h30 - 16h00 Interfaith Dialogue  
16h00 - 16h30 Benefits and Learnings from the URI Network  
16h30 - 17h15 Review of the day / Teambuilding

*18h00 - 20h00 Dinner*

*p*  
Evening Music and Dance

---

Day 3 - Thurs 9th Nov

*06h30 - 08h00 Breakfast*

08h30 - 09h00 Prayers and Welcome