



## Summary of the Social Harmony National Effort (SHiNE)

### 1. Introduction

The levels of disharmony, poverty and polarization in the country is a growing and deeply concerning phenomenon. As South Africans, we live with many stresses including the ever-present threat of violence and lawlessness. We have lost the ability to dialogue through our differences - we all want change and change as we know, begins with ourselves.

Since the unrest in Kwa-Zulu Natal and parts of Gauteng in lieu 2021, the South African Human Rights Commission (Commission) has been consulting widely on how we might deal with the various challenges facing the nation, all of which contribute to the state of disharmony in the country. These consultations led to the development of the Social Harmony National Effort (SHiNE). By right, SHiNE is a product of wise advice and deep thinking drawn from various people in the country. And as such, it is at its inception a product of all of us. The Commission is merely an initiator of the process, which aims to progressively enable us to heal and find positive change through individual urgency and effort.

### 2. SHiNE in Brief

#### A National Effort

The Social Harmony through National Effort is not a campaign, it is a *national effort*. As such it requires participation and *action* from all of us.

#### Self-reflection

We are each agents of positive change and merely require attending to our own contribution in sustaining and sowing disharmony. Self-reflection is key to positive change. SHiNE aims to encourage us all to be reflective of our own negative attitudes. Our own relationship to violence, addictions and other negative behaviour.

## **Positive Dialogue**

As a country mired in violence carried forward into our democratic dispensation from the Apartheid era, we need to cultivate the habit of dialogue. Speaking through our differences in a positive way is an important way of cultivating and actively taking responsibility for our own state of harmony, especially in our homes, where levels of domestic violence are far too prevalent. Holding family meetings to discuss reducing sources of disharmony in the home is a wonderful way to teach our children how to identify, positively deal with potential and actual conflict.

## **Finding Platforms**

Opportunities to interact between diverse groupings whether racial, ethnic, or religious, are limited in our country. SHiNE calls for us to find platforms where we can meaningfully interact with each other, and where we can share our stories, and learn from each other. One such obvious platform is the workplace.

## **Respect /Compassion**

In its essence SHiNE aims to create a more harmonious country through efforts being made by South Africans everywhere. It encourages us to cross our divides and by so doing begin to build bonds cemented in compassion and mutual respect. This entails actively and consciously learning from and understanding the other. It also entails the sharing of beliefs and practices. We cannot respect what we do not understand.

## **Ubuntu**

The SHiNE brings the wisdom of the ages together with modern scientific endeavour which tells us that to be a successful nation, we must craft and cross bridges to form and nurture bonds of understanding, compassion, and respect. That in showing compassion for others we may be healed, and harmony may prevail. That human beings can only thrive in a state of social harmony.

### **3. Where do we begin?**

SHiNE is a process which aims to take the nation on a journey from now until the end of 2023. Let us begin with a greeting. According to some studies, it takes on average 66 days for new behaviours to become automatic. This presupposes an important realization - that human beings can and do change.

The wisdom of heartily greeting has been known for ages in ancient cultures, especially on the African continent. We all experience this wonderful sense of being welcomed when we travel to rural communities in the country. Strangers are greeted warmly and genuinely. This practice of greeting lies at the essence of Ubuntu, which teaches that we are human beings, all bound up together.

#### **4. Planning for next year**

Most organisations are already planning their activities for next year. Organisations should consider how they will be involved in the National Effort by considering:

- Existing Activities

Consider whether any existing programs can be adapted to be held in part or wholly under the banner of the SHiNE.

- My Story Break

The workplace is where people of all races and beliefs come together. Sharing our personal stories with each other allows us to learn from each other, about each other. We suggest a two-hour session with no more than six people in each group. These sharing sessions at the workplace is meant to enhance our understanding of the differences among us and enhance workplace harmony. We suggest a two-hour session once a month during 2023. This can be an extended lunch or a tea break. It is important that groups consist of diverse people who can learn about each other's cultural practices and belief systems. Don't forget to send us your pictures or advise us of your experiences on social media.

- Family Meetings

South Africans will be holding family meetings once a month in 2023 and discussing ways of cultivating more harmony in the home. Don't forget to send us your pictures and tell us how the home environment and relationships have developed.

Be part of the National Effort! SHiNE South Africa!

Finally, you may order your SHiNE banners or posters from the Commission, or you may simply request the SHiNE identity guide from us and produce your own material.

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