

Continuing Indaba a Priority says ACC-15ⁱ

The ACC gave a strong endorsement of *Continuing Indaba* with almost all respondents identifying great potential for its use in their provinces and dioceses as well as in the Communion.

“Engaging in Indaba within the Communion should be a priority to keep issues and conversations active and to build relationships.”

Revd Dr Ashish Amon - North India

There was a strong desire to build relationships with an emphasis on the need for face to face meetings backed up by the use of new technology such as Skype. Many used the word ‘fellowship’ as a vital stepping stone to a greater goal.

“Continuing Indaba is more than just fellowship, it can be used to overcome communication gaps, but more than that it can lead to the solution of protracted problems that other methods cannot. It does take time – it is not a quick fix – but used properly it will bring a solution.”

Ven Dr Abraham C Okorie (JP) Nigeria

Archdeacon Okorie was one of many who identified that *Continuing Indaba* offered a process to handle very significant issues within the Communion.

“The process of Indaba, in the sense of encouraging dialogue within a church or community is necessary to deal with issues affecting our faith as Anglicans, such as same sex marriage and blessings.”

Bishop Enoch Tombe – Sudan

It was recognised that if we are to handle difficult issues we need to understand one another and actively cross barriers of culture, language and economic imbalance. There is a need for common understanding. It was seen as having the potential to include those who wanted to avoid controversial questions. Many identified specific areas of intense conflict that could be handled by *Continuing Indaba*.

Respect was a word that many used in relationship to *Continuing Indaba*. They identified that it requires us to have respect for one another and to have respectful conversations.

Some respondents called for the use of Indaba at Primates’ Meetings and at the next ACC.

“Primates and bishops own the idea/principal of Continuing Indaba by the ACO”

Revd Jean Baptiste Ndayambaje – Rwanda

“It is important to have both an efficient decision making process and an Indaba type process which enables us to reach a common mind on deeper issues, perhaps more contentious issues. Both processes must enable us to discern the will of God, which is the way for the Church.”

Bishop Bill Godfrey, Cono Sur de America

The need for relational process was seen as complimentary to formal decision-making processes. The one without the other was seen as being ineffective.

Almost all who responded expressed a desire to see *Continuing Indaba* applied to their dioceses and provinces. While many African and Asian respondents commented that the methodology was already used in their dioceses and provinces.

Comments such as 'we use it all the time' were common from Nigeria, Canada, Japan, Southern Africa and elsewhere. One example was from Sudan:

"In own diocese, we can use the existing structures to deal with current issues facing the church. We also make us of our traditional methods derived from our own local communities when the church forum fails to address an issue that particularly relates to local culture."

Bishop Enoch Tombe – Sudan

From Nigeria a comment came that it was always used in the dioceses and this was supported by a respondent from Central Africa:

"It is not a potential but a necessity to resolve some of the thorny issues I have at the moment."

Bishop David Njovu – Central Africa

"I can see it could be helpful both in parishes and within the Diocese to help break down the formal adversarial decision making process."

Revd Dr Sarah Macneil – Australia

Many identified the relational approach offered potential for finding a way to break deadlocks over a number of issues that were specific to their context.

Several respondents stressed the need to cross boundaries of culture, economics and language in order to enable genuine understanding of one another in their own Provinces.

A common theme among the responses was the applicability of the method in relation to their local pressing issues. These ranged from mine disputes in Southern Africa to post conflict situations in Sri Lanka and reconciliation in Burundi and women bishops in England. Potential was seen for its use in interfaith dialogue.

"It is certainly a matter for further discernment. The SE Asian Province comprises many communities that are diverse, disparate and non-homogenous. The Continuing Indaba project could prove to be a good tool to build relations and bridges between various communities."

Stanley Lai – South East Asia

The lay people were keen to stress the significance for them. There was an appreciation of the participatory nature of the model so the voice of the laity was heard loud and clear.

A desire for young people to be involved and engaged was expressed by one of the two youth representatives.

Only one negative comment was received and this concerned a lack of clarity with the term Indaba. This respondent noted the use of the term Baraza in Kenya when the Archbishop partnered with *Continuing Indaba* and the House of Bishops to address issues of ethnicity and sought clarity as to the term.

Challenges were recognised. The most prominent of these was the need for a sound financial base for *Continuing Indaba*. Respondents expressed a desire to see funding in place.

Some identified the need to promote it within the theological colleges of the Communion and need for training facilitators was noted.

Introduce it in our Theological College.

Revd Jean Baptiste Ndayambaje – Rwanda

Conclusion

The individual representatives of the ACC did more than support a resolution on *Continuing Indaba*, they expressed a deep desire to see the process applied in their own dioceses and provinces as well as in meetings of the Communion. They hoped that 'in an atmosphere of prayer it will propel us to do something.'

The guidance of the ACC is especially helpful to ensure we remain faithful to the mandate set before us.

The message from ACC 15 was that the Council 'understands Indaba to be a process of honest conversation that seeks to build community, energize mission, and provide a context in which conflict can be resolved.'

They wanted it to be used effectively in the Anglican Communion and where appropriate for it to be applied in provinces and dioceses.

In order for this to happen we must listen carefully to those who are successfully using such models, to offer insights and construct models for contextualisation. We must be effective in the communication of the model, ensure there are trained facilitators and maintain the commitment to evaluation.

ⁱ During ACC 15 the representatives were asked to guide the future of Continuing Indaba in the Anglican Communion.

They were first asked to discuss the potential for Continuing Indaba in their small groups. This was followed by them reporting back to us by filling in a simple A4 page asking them to reflect on the potential for Continuing Indaba in the Communion, in their province and in their diocese.

53 responses were received. Of these 51 were from individual representatives, one was jointly submitted by a table and one by an ecumenical observer.

This paper is intended to identify themes and significant points made by the ACC in order to ensure direction in how we move forwards in line with the wish of ACC 15.

The individuals quoted have given permission and care has been taken to ensure that they are not quoted out of context or against their will.