

In search of a New Dawn

***Vision for the Mandhata
Community***

***Road Map to a stronger national
Mandhata and better service oriented
local Mandhata towns***

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1. *What are our objectives?*

Review the Past

We can review the past, learn from our history, ask what we did right and identify where we failed. It is only by examining the past can we move forward confidently.

The humble opinion of the author is that we do not need a divisive examination of the past. We do not need to re-ignite a blame-culture. We need to move forward jointly and allocation of any form of criticism of the personalities will necessarily be counter-productive as it will generate ill-feeling.

We need to move forward jointly. We can only move forward if we are united.

The reason for the existence of AMSUK

Amsuk exists to serve our local community from a national level:

1. To provide leadership at a national level and provide guidance to the local community
2. To act as a forum for discussion of local issues
3. To carry out the ground work or build a foundation for local projects
4. To provide expertise from a national pool that may not be available at the local level.

The success and failure of AMSUK

1. Amsuk has had many successes in the past four decades:
 - a. Provided leadership and forum for the discussion of issues

- b. Helped to promote unity within the community by organising the Sannelan, Youth Festival, matrimonial and many other activities.
5. The problem has been that Amsuk has lost direction and needs to refocus on its core objectives. Hence you cannot provide effective leadership to the local community if you are not relevant to them. The national executive committee is a huge national resource and it should be more focussed on identifying local problems and developing solutions to overcome the problems. One of the finest examples of help to the local communities was the fund raising workshop presented by Bolton Mandhata Youth in conjunction with Amsuk Youth.
6. Most local towns are currently examining the constitution or have done so recently. How much better it would be if ALP (Amsuk and its Local Partners) were to provide leadership in developing a new constitution which would be acceptable to all the local towns and at the same time fulfil other requirements like being good enough to satisfy the Charity Commission and fund raising needs.
7. The ALP can identify best practice in the way Mandhata serves the community at large. This best practice then serves as a beacon for all the local towns to improve their service delivery and identify more ways to better serve the community.
8. Amsuk can act as the final arbiter of complaints within the community.
9. The ALP has to identify all the work that the community undertakes. Hence it has to promote its international work within the template book. This issue will be discussed later.
10. With the ALP identifying and implementing best practice within the community Amsuk can lead our community to new heights in terms of the best performing community nationally and internationally.

The objectives of the local community

The local community objectives are:

1. To create unity within the local community.

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- a. It is an accepted fact that we will go forward quicker as a united community than individuals working on their own.
2. The basic purpose of the local organisation is to provide services to the local members of the community.

2. The Vision

What can be achieved at the national level?

The question arises what can be done and what should be done. Amsuk can provide leadership in facilitating the change. The current organisation and participation is not conducive to creating change to the local community. The local communities must be invited specifically for debate and discussion as to how to take the local organisations forward. These meetings must be attended by, and command the confidence of, all the local office bearers and other influential local visionaries. It is only by their presence, their guidance and their support will they promote the strategy to the local towns. Only the local teams can carry out this discussion and implement it at local level. Amsuk must facilitate these discussions and offer professionally informed guidance.

1. Create a community business model of operating the organisation

Amsuk, *in partnership with the local towns*, can identify a specific standard of operation which the local towns can emulate and in time rise above it.

This requires developing a community business model which the local community will adopt. The adoption of the model will raise the standards of operation of the local community.

In implementing the identified standard the local communities will move forward at a much faster level.

The adoption of the standards will be much more readily acceptable to the local community because they will have been developed with their full participation.

2. The Mandhata Manual

Amsuk has to develop in partnership with the local community the Mandhata Manual which will have templates for everything from developing a new constitution to obtaining charity status, from accounting spreadsheets to a fully worked-out model of how to deliver a specific service to the community.

This Manual would become the bible of how the local community operates and serves the community.

The Manual will be a developing book. It will grow as the community identifies more and better way of doing things.

3. Organisation of the Mandhata Manual

Amsuk and its local partners (ALP) need to identify how the Manual will work, who will look after it and how it will develop.

One option is to divide the Manual into four parts, presented in which ever order the local committee chooses:

- a. The Local Organisation:
 - a. Local and national level constitution
 - b. Local organisation
 - c. Objectives
 - d. Working Committees
 - e. Identify all local services and activities provided by the local town
 - f. Fundraising: the many ways that the local public can donate including online, standing order and the normal route through the Treasurer.
 - g. Vision for the future and any related projects
- b. Book of Templates to include:



- a. Templates identifying how each service to the community can be organised
- b. Templates to explain how best to organises the community including all documents relating to governance
- c. International programmes including NAP and all on-going village projects by the Gam committees. All project leaders will be encouraged to send updates to all the local towns.
- d. Provide local and national history of the community and any other information relating to the samaj.

4. Development of the Mandhata Manual

We should not make the mistake that Amsuk alone can prepare and implement such a huge project. This is precisely why we need full co-operation from the local town leaders and their team. Only the involvement of the local town leaders and their team will ensure that the project is given the respect it deserves and the huge amount of time that it requires to develop it and only then will it be finally implemented locally.

5. Recognition for organisations that develop to a high standard

The ALP has to find a way of recognising organisations that achieve a high standard as identified in the manual. This recognition will then be advertised by the ALP. The local community will carry this recognition of achievement with specific icons in their letterhead.

The ALP must be very careful not to create a two tier system which alienates small towns. In the current situation there is already a two tier operation where the small towns operate differently to those of the large ones. A key objective of the Manual will be to enable small towns to become proficient in the delivery of services and their own administration.

The ALP can identify what would constitute a gold standard and a silver standard. The samaj applying for this standard would do so formally and the ALP can request an independent audit of that samaj. If the independent audit reports sufficient compliance then the award can be made by a certificate. The award can then be publicly acknowledged at appropriate venues like the Sammelan.

3. Implementation

Learning from the past

1. Amsuk has not been very successful in:
 - a. consulting the local community
 - b. identifying their needs
 - c. delivering projects to meet their needs
2. Amsuk in cooperation with the local towns needs to organise a new model for delivering local objectives:
 - a. An appointment of a new body is required.
 - b. This new body can be appointed after consultation with all the local town members.
 - c. The consultation should take place in the form of a specially convened formal meeting of the local towns and Amsuk representatives.

Appointment of an ALP committee

1. This committee will be populated primarily by local representatives. Only the local representatives can deliver the objectives of this project:
 - a. The participation of the local town representatives is critical

The local committees will be delivering the project at local level. The local executive committee must be fully on board. They must discuss the project at considerable depth and understand what is involved.

If there appears to be local towns who wish to stay out of the implementation of this project their wishes must be respected. As we know from experience not all member towns exercise their right to frequent Amsuk meetings and therefore those towns who wish to operate on the fringes of the Mandhata movement will remain entitled to do so. This would be known as the Mandhata opt-out clause. This clause should not be given prominence but is included to give the local community assurance that they are the masters of their own destiny.

Comprehensive discussions at local level

This project is for the local community. It will identify and guide them in serving the community better. This is therefore a community project. They must be allowed time to discuss the project fully and comprehend the consequences. This will take time. Local consultation always takes a long time. Amsuk should give them time to complete the consultation process. If they are happy they can instruct Amsuk to start the ball rolling.

Preparation of a newsletter

Before the project is undertaken and as part of the consultation process it would be invaluable to involve the local community members. A newsletter in the form of a magazine with the label “taking the community forward” can be printed and distributed to all households. The cost factor means that to produce the newsletter fund-raising will be necessary and printing may need to take place in India to save costs.

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4. *Developing Templates for the Mandhata Manual*

Each template will be prepared by those who currently have the highest standard in service of that area. Hence:

1. The Gujarati school template would be best developed by the Wembley Samaj, as their experience is by far the most successful.
2. On a similar footing the fund-raising templates might be led by Bolton.
3. Constitution would necessarily be developed by all local and national representatives working together with Amsuk Policy and Procedure sub-committee.
4. Obtaining a charity status could be a joint effort by those who have successfully implemented it.
5. Financial reporting and development of spreadsheets can be best undertaken by the Amsuk Treasury officials working jointly with local representatives.
6. Every religious event can have a separate template devoted to it, these can be given to those who are ready to prepare them.
7. A key template can be the comprehensive preparation and delivery of the Sammelan and the Sports Festival. These two key templates would serve to lessen the steep learning curve associated in delivering such large projects.
8. A template of serving the senior members of the community can be prepared by Leicester.
9. Travel template can be prepared by Leicester, with their incomparable record of travelling with the senior members of the community.
10. Legal and welfare advice. This is a vital service that we must learn to provide. It is primarily the older generation who need this service and it is they who are not familiar with the local CABs and Law Centres.
 - a. There are professionals in and outside our community who can and will serve our community if asked and given the opportunity to serve.

- b. The local CABs are happy to train people to serve their community unless they happen to be short of funding.
- c. The local towns should be encouraged to facilitate local surgeries by MPs and councillors to be held at their venue. This would provide invaluable service to our community.

11. Bhagwat Katha. We need templates for these hugely important week long events. Bolton is well experienced in this event. They have held many events and are well capable of developing a robust organisational template:

- a. These events can be financially very rewarding, Bolton has managed to generate funds through these events.
- b. These events if organised properly with full local commitment can be easily replicated in other local towns.
- c. Amsuk can organise and take these events to major population centres if there is local support.

12. Banking and investment is a critical template, but before preparing it we need to discuss and identify what objectives can be achieved individually and nationally by all local towns and Amsuk:

- a. Creating a single named account in a single bank but each local account controlled by the local branch:
 - i. The way this would work is that all local towns and Amsuk would use one bank, which ever appears to serve charities the best.
 - ii. Account would be opened in one name e.g. The Mandhata
 - iii. Each local town would have a separate account in their local town under "The Mandhata" name
 - iv. Each local town would run their account independently
 - v. The advantage would be that the chosen bank would be able to see the financial strength of our community
 - vi. If we as Amsuk and local towns then jointly approve a project this project can be presented to the bank and other financial institutions with a demonstrable financial strength.



- vii. This level of joint commitment by our community would result in our community becoming very advanced and organised.
- viii. It would facilitate the financing of small and large projects that the community agrees to implement
- ix. With this level of cooperation we can take advantage of fund raising strength:
 - 1. We can set up online fund raising on our web-site, the whole community would bear the cost:
 - a. This would enable fund-raising on a global scale. Mandhata communities from all over the world would be able to donate to specific projects. Donations can be collected from mastercard, visa and debit cards.
 - b. Local towns can set up their accounts to receive benefit. The local people can donate to their local communities and projects.
 - c. The local people can be encouraged to set up direct debit or standing order for donations to specific projects or local town funding.

13. The provision of professional assistance. The central body, Amsuk, can organise the delivery of professional services which the local towns may have problems in accessing. E.g.:

- a. consultants to deliver projects
- b. financiers to advise on large projects
- c. find and provide national speakers
- d. provide conferences on topics which are very dear to the local community like developing and implementing local projects

5. Delivering New Services

I believe that local town venues should become a centre of excellence in the delivery of services to the community. Our local organisations exist to provide services to the community. As the message from the Mandhata Manual spreads the local towns will see the ease with which the provision of new services can be developed:

1. Our community is famous for the respect we give to the elders in our community. It is time to translate this respect into offering specific services to the seniors. They need a variety of help and most of it is simple paperwork or advice as to their welfare rights. If we cannot offer such assistance we should be ashamed of ourselves.
2. Young people need help. Many need motivating with their job search. The local towns can and should arrange a variety of workshops targeting young people. Bolton recently had a very successful evening event: they invited a guest speaker to motivate young people. Bolton holds various classes, but the one that impressed me the most was GCSE maths revision.

Urge the local communities to be open minded and receptive to new ideas

It is important the local communities remain relevant to the people they serve otherwise the venues will remain unused and in time will fall into disuse. The local towns must remain open minded to progress. Sometimes it will seem a bridge too far but that is the whole objective of developing the Mandhata Manual. We can as a community share our experience with each other.

Knowledge Management

One of the most important discipline the larger corporations are falling over backward to implement is knowledge management. They realise that the employees they have are their most valuable assets. When they lose an

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employee the knowledge of that employee is lost. Further, if the existing employees are not working together then they will constantly need to re-invent the wheel to move forward.

Consequently, what is implemented is a system whereby their knowledge is stored to the extent that it is possible. Further, the system is developed in such a way that the employees are encouraged to inter-act with each other with the specific hope to take the corporation forward. This co-operation takes place in secret to the extent that the computer systems are not confidential: the objective is to preserve proprietary knowledge leaking to the wider world. In our case we do not need to be concerned with other people, all we need to do is ensure the systems are not deliberately attacked. We must ensure the outside world does not deliberately sabotage the documents with the intention to endanger the community.

Imagine the real size of our community. Our members form a vast community. We have one of the largest proportions of graduates per family. Many of our members are well qualified professionals. We do not make use of this invaluable resource and we do not facilitate their contribution.

Knowledge management will involve the following:

1. Repository of Knowledge
 - a. Manual of Templates
 - b. Working sub-committee documents
 - c. Mandhata communities on our net
2. Enable their use
 - a. We need to make available to our community much of the material we have through our net. The Manual of Templates will include everything from the constitution to all the organisational templates.
 - b. The availability of these documents will generate discussions via the net and committee meetings.
3. Enable members to discuss the issues
4. Enable constant monitoring of the discussions so that ideas can be taken forward, discussed and implemented.

6. Origins of the Project

While I was delivering my presentations on international cooperation and the development of the website in 2008-09, Krishnaben of Wembley suggested in committee that I should exercise my energy in developing a project to help the local rather than the international community. This project is my answer. I began with a private consultation of local town Presidents and then began writing this paper 2009-10. The paper has been updated to take account of some recent developments.

I would like to thank Parbhubhai U Patel (Wolverhampton), Dahyabhai D Patel (Wembley), Dahyabhai K Patel (Dudley), Rekhaben Shivam (Wolverhampton) and all the town Presidents who helped me.