

Jean Mathews Wildervanck Consulting

B Soc Sc (SW) (UFS) | MA (SS) Mental Health (UNISA) | ISCA* member

Land and Community Constellations: A Systemic Approach to Complex Challenges such as Race, EWC and Social distress

The intention of land and community constellations is to bring relief to what is the quagmire of South African politics given our history and deeply felt relationship to the soil, the land and our sense of place on the African continent. Right now our country is at crossroads. Old hurts fester even as well-intended initiatives to address urgently needed services, falter and fail. Race issues and gender-based violence continue to plague many societies, even as wealth disparity and land claims affect everyone deeply. Each grouping experiences emotional discord as some level and expresses it culturally, often dogmatically so. This often makes it very difficult for the different sides to hear each other.

The How of Community and Land Constellation

It starts with a pre-constellations interview at which you tell the story of your community. It may be that you tell this story just to the facilitating constellator or to a group of people who hear the story without judgement. It is what it is. Together we then decide what would be the most appropriate question to ask when setting the constellation and also who to include; community constellations can quickly become over-run with too many stakeholders each with their own agenda. Indeed, many groups have stakes in a community so correctly phrasing what it is one wants to know is very important.

During the constellation there is never just one representative for a particular part of the community but several, allowing the many different voices in a community to be heard. Elements from the natural environment (e.g. a river or park) may also be set as are institutions such as a school, the municipality, the police, etc.

Such community and land constellations are very revealing helping leaders and community members to appreciate the many dynamics at play in a constituency. In constellations there is no attribution of blame. Rather, it is about seeing the bigger picture and how different events and aspects come together to present certain scenarios and what the solutions might be.

Understanding the disturbances in the "Orders of Engagement" opens up the system to new possibilities. The process releases pent up energy in the system allowing things to be seen in a new light and for relationships to be set anew.

Format: in person in a community or where the leader / stakeholder requests that the constellation be done neutrally and at a distance.