



### Halley Movement's Statement on:

## **Intergeneration & Reviving History and Oral Traditions in Mauritius**

**On the occasion of Africa Day 2021.**

To commemorate **Africa Day 2021**, Halley Movement wishes to issue our CSO statement to endorse the importance on how Intergenerational integration and collaboration delivers a culturally diverse and progressive society in Mauritius.

We all agree that the Mauritian culture, like any other culture in the World, makes a country and its people unique. The culture in Mauritius is based on the diversity of the population and is expressed through literature, dance, music, local crafts, religion, and tradition, which have all been passed down from generation to generation thus strengthening the intergenerational gap between the elderly people and the next generation including the youth.

**Halley Movement Coalition**, which has started its social agenda in Mauritius with a national awareness campaign on 'Child Battering' in 1990, has witnessed the strong family solidarity through the generations. Mauritians are very family-oriented and will often put the needs of their family before themselves. Traditionally, it was common for extended families such as aunts, uncles, and other relatives to live together. Today, people still tend to build houses in proximity to other family members. Young couples

still continue to live in an extension of their husband's parents' house until they are financially independent.

Other than that, music plays a big part in Mauritian culture and the most listened to style is **Sega**. Sega is a musical expression of the way of life in Mauritius. Originally Sega used to express the pain and sensuality of African slaves torn from their land as well as teach important lessons to the people in the community especially the young. This style of music, which has been underlined many times, still carries on and it is now a festive tropical dance, where women wear large, coloured skirts and men a baggy shirt and wide pants. Traditionally, it is accompanied by a cylindrical drum, the 'ravanne', a triangle and a box filled with seeds. Nowadays, it is played with modern instruments such as bass, guitar, or drums. The music has been passed on from generation to generation and is appreciated by all members of the community regardless of age.

We all agree that access to culture & heritage has several benefits, such as improving our wellbeing, providing human education, and contributing to the local identity of the Mauritian people. This also helps people with a deeper understanding of their roots and where they came from as traditions such as respect for the family is emphasised as early as in childhood. Children are brought up to demonstrate respect for their parents and grandparents. Parents and grandparents have a lot of influence throughout the child's life. For example, important life decisions, particularly marriage choices, require consultation with one's parents. This respect continues throughout the life cycle, whereby children are expected to take care of their ageing parent.

**Halley Movement Coalition** has been instrumental in advancing this agenda of inter-generational integration by ensuring that traditions, culture and arts have been incorporated in this generation and generations to come. An example of a platform provided by Halley Movement is the **BETA program** which started in 1992, which provides a second chance for the "Out of School Youths" to learn to read and write

and acquire some essential skills which can be useful in their life. The curriculum has been designed in such a way as to include, other than the learning, writing, mathematics & Computer skills, opportunities where the youths are able to learn also about culture, traditions, values, and skills passed from older generations so that they can integrate them into their lives where necessary and beneficial. This important aspect is emphasised by inputs from learned resource persons from the older generation. These volunteers identified by the NGO, provide classes and lessons to these youths. The specific lessons include moral values, traditions, and basic life skills.

Submitted by:

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