

Anand Murthy speaks on radical affordable housing

These are the highlights of Anand Murthy's talk at the SingularityU South Africa 2020 Summit.



Anand Murthy, founder of BridgePort Developments.

Anand Murthy, founder of BridgePort Developments, opened by saying that the task at hand is to transform Africa from poverty into prosperity. Innovative radical housing is needed so that Africa can be positioned a beacon of the world.

In South Africa, of the 55 million people, about 66% are in the prime age group of 15-65. More alarmingly, however, is that 30 million are above the upper poverty line and of these, 14 million still face food poverty or extreme poverty. By 2050, with the population estimated to reach 80 million, we will still have 20 million people below the poverty line.

Set a high goal

Murthy believes that our opportunity is to set a high goal. He suggests a goal of at least 50% by 2050 and 100% housing by 2100.

Have other countries done this? Murthy suggested that we consider Singapore. This country went from being a mosquito infested swamp land [sic] to the country with highest per capita instance of PhDs per person, the highest GDP in Asia and

the third highest GDP in the world in less than one generation.

Murthy explained that amongst the things Singapore did was the creation of an agency that would handle all aspects of residential property covering everything from buying, selling, renting to e-services. The mandate of the housing development board was to ensure that every Singaporean had housing. A board like this could help achieve these goals in South Africa.

Building 10 million homes in South Africa may seem a lot, but just think... 70 million cars are produced in the world every year. Assembly line housing can be produced in a similar way, on a production line, using the same efficiency.

Embrace the language of success

Murthy believes that we need the willpower and the intention. The key is people, policies and incentives. Next is banking and finance. The third element that is needed is to embrace the language of success. Create an innovation ecosystem and hubs of innovation. This produces rapid prototyping.

Using solar, wind or geothermal power, every community can be a power plant, creating almost double the energy it consumes.

Murthy concluded saying that: "Today should mark the beginning of a new benchmark. Our greatest danger is not setting goals too high and fail. It is setting our goals too low and succeed. Don't create refugee camps or barracks. Let's create the intentional vibrant communities that uplift people at scale."

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