ARC helps to export SA's gated estate management expertise

Global best practice in gated residential estate management in South Africa is now being exported to other countries in the southern African region - with Seychelles as the first step in the process. Mozambique, Mauritius, Botswana, Namibia, and Angola are among the other countries that feature in the planned roll-out.

The organisation behind this initiative is the Association of Residential Communities (ARC), which assists Home Owners Associations (HOAs) to manage their estates more efficiently in order to protect and grow the value of the homes within them.

HOAs on ARC's 140 member estates have assets of close to R400 billion under their management, and pay, annually, around R4 billion in levies and R2 billion in municipal rates and service tariffs.

"Our first port of call outside South Africa was the prestige Eden Island residential marina in the Seychelles, which came on board as a member a year ago," said ARC's president, Jeff Gilmour.

"While the basics remain the same, management of estates in other regional countries presents different, and often unique, challenges and complexities - not least in terms of logistics, procurement, language, culture, employment policy and local legislation," Gilmour expanded.

"ARC's experience at Eden Island over the past year has formed the basis of a management template that we will now roll out into gated estates in other SADC countries - before raising our sights even further afield in Africa," he added.

Second homes or holiday destinations

"Language poses some difficulties in a multicultural development like Eden Island," said Terry Keller, GM of the Village Management Association.

"Approximately 48% of the properties are South African owned, with the balance made up of French, Italian, Russian, Middle Eastern and other foreign owners. Most of them use their apartments, duplex maisons and luxury villas either as second homes or holiday destinations," said Keller, who previously managed the Arabella Country Estate (also an ARC member) near Hermanus in the Western Cape.

"With Eden Island being predominantly a resort and holiday destination, the short-term visitor is not always familiar with the rules governing community living, and management has to be vigilant for rule violations," continued Keller.

"Furthermore, security services and personnel present major challenges in the Seychelles. It is an industry that is in its infancy, with scarce resources and little depth of training. So much so that Nepalese Gurkhas are being increasingly widely used as security guards in both the public and private sectors," Keller added.

Extensive research into best practice methods

The Association of Residential Communities (ARC) was established in 2008 as a professional organisation solely dedicated to improving the quality, financial management and effectiveness of residential estates in South Africa - based on extensive research into best practice methods applied on estates and residential communities worldwide.

The research was conducted across a wide spectrum of international gated community living, including golf, leisure and other estates managed by Home Owners Associations (HOAs), as well as sectional title complexes run by bodies corporate.

Against that background, ARC has developed and sourced over 400 best practice resources, which cover all disciplines of residential community management and leadership.

As a result, ARC provides extensive support services to help ensure effective leadership of estates - not only by sharing best practice but also by providing resources and expertise to enhance lifestyles and add value to home owner investments in these communities.

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