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**BUSINESS  
IN SOCIETY  
HANDBOOK  
2024**

# Connecting more than 40 million South Africans together

HERE'S TO  
THE NEXT

# 30

YEARS OF  
CONNECTIONS



Further together



This year, *The Triologue Business in Society Handbook* focuses on impactful collaboration. We explore trends in responsible business and corporate social investment (CSI), the role of business in sustaining democracy, and models and examples of effective collaboration.



**1**

Chapter one  
**TRENDS IN CORPORATE GIVING**

Findings from Triologue's 2024 research into CSI, followed by the winner of Triologue's Strategic CSI Award 2024, published CSI expenditure of 108 companies, and the role companies play in strengthening democracy.



**2**

Chapter two  
**SPOTLIGHT ON COLLABORATION**

Research findings on collaboration from companies and nonprofit organisations (NPOs), followed by practical guidance on establishing collaborations, the role of business associations in fostering collaboration and case studies showcasing different collaborative models.



**3**

Chapter three  
**DEVELOPMENT SECTORS**

An overview of CSI support in 12 development sectors, together with a collaboration case study in each sector.



**4**

Chapter four  
**COMPANY CASE STUDIES**

In-depth profiles of companies that demonstrate their approach to social investment and the outcomes of notable programmes.



**5**

Chapter five  
**RESEARCH ROUNDUP**

A summary of responsible business and developmental findings and insights from a selection of research reports released by other organisations in 2024.



**6**

Chapter six  
**NONPROFIT INSIGHTS**

An overview of nonprofit income in South Africa, followed by insights of nonprofit collaboration and a link to the NPO Directory, which is available on the Triologue Knowledge Hub.



**VIEWPOINTS** | Expert opinions on topical issues



**INSIGHTS** | Highlights from the Triologue Business in Society Conference 2024 and Triologue webinars hosted in 2024



Scan for the online version of this Handbook.

COVER IMAGE: *Digangeni*, Yannis Davy Guibinga. 2021. Gabon.  
A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.

## The Triologue Business in Society Handbook 2024 (27th edition)

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Cape Town, South Africa

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**PUBLISHER:** Triologue

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**PRODUCTION:** Abdullah Vawda

**ADVERTISING SALES:** Lerato Ramoba

**MARKET RESEARCH:** Janice Lee and Associates

**DESIGN AND LAYOUT:** Garth French

**PRINTED BY:** LawPrint

ISBN 978-0-7961-9790-0

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**Supporting better business**

### ABOUT THE ARTWORK

**Colours of Africa** – a digital exhibition produced by Design Indaba, in partnership with Google Arts & Culture – is a collaborative project featuring the work of 60 unique African creatives chosen by Design Indaba. Each creative was invited to contribute a work that captures the ‘colour’ and character of their home country.

Selected by Design Indaba’s founder Ravi Naidoo, the creatives have showcased the best of African craft, product, industrial design, fashion, film, animation, graphic, food, music, jewellery and architecture. “Africa is known for its bold, unapologetic use of colour. Each country, city and community is identifiable by its unique palette. As Africans, we can tell powerful stories through colour. This project tells a story of a continent through the universally accessible lens,” says Naidoo.

The first artistic undertaking of this scale, the project will allow viewers to discover stories of Africa as told by the African creative community. The artworks will be showcased online where users are invited to spin the kaleidoscope to explore the works in an effort to take users on a journey through Africa, inviting them to view each country through the eyes of a local artist.

The project involves creatives from almost every discipline imaginable, from architecture, illustration, painting and ceramics through to writing, engineering, the performing arts and visual communications. Their creations have been converted into images, videos, texts and illustrations. The multidisciplinary mix of 60 artists includes Algerian photographer Ramzy Bensaadi, fashion designer Bisrat Negassi from Eritrea, filmmaker Archange Kiyindou ‘Yamakasi’ from the Republic of Congo and visual artist Ngadi Smart from Sierra Leone.

For more than 25 years, Design Indaba has been inspiring and empowering people to create a better future through design and creativity. Not simply a think tank, but a do tank, inspired by societal causes tied to the story of Africa, it is a collective of people with real experience of doing real things, having seeded over 200 projects in the public square.



**TIGER BRANDS**



## TIGER BRANDS' PLATES4DAYS

Nourishing Young Talent by transforming lives for a *brighter future*



### Nourish and nurture more lives every day

Tiger Brands' **Plates4Days** represents Tiger Brands' commitment to combating food insecurity among South Africa's university students. The programme nourishes minds and bodies, and shapes futures. Launched in 2017 to address the pressing issue of food insecurity among university students in South Africa, the programme is a fundamental part of Tiger Brands' corporate social responsibility initiatives, aligning with Tiger Brands' purpose to **nourish and nurture more lives every day**.



\* Up to 74% students, from a UFS Food Security Survey published in 2020.

### Access to good nutrition to support academic success

Food insecurity affected an estimated 8.9% to 9.4% of the global population in 2023, as highlighted in the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* report of July 2024. This issue extends to student hunger as a growing global crisis including high-income countries like Australia, the United States and Canada where national food stocks are relatively high. Sabie et al. (2018) listed two institutions that were severely impacted, the University of KwaZulu-Natal with 53% of students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and the University of the Free State with 60% of students experiencing food insecurities. Many South African students enter university with existing socioeconomic inequalities. Many are the first in their families to attend universities and rely on self-funding or the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Most bursaries cover only fees and textbooks, leaving students in dire straits when it comes to their basic needs. Consequently, food-insecure students are at a greater risk of dropping out. Tiger Brands' **Plates4Days** aims to bridge the basic needs gap by providing monthly food hampers that ensure students have access to nutritious meals and can spend more time on their studies and less on where their next meal will come from.

**Each month, Tiger Brands' Plates4Days delivers approximately 4 616 food hampers to students identified as 'at risk' due to financial constraints at seven universities across the country. The impact of the programme is enhanced with the provision of meals to additional students through university-run meal distribution centres. Around 31 000 indirect and direct beneficiaries were supported in 2023.**

Tiger Brands' **Plates4Days** is working to expand through partnerships to maximise its reach to ensure students are supported with meals, as tertiary education plays a central role in poverty alleviation, job creation and reducing inequality.

**Together, we can build a brighter, more equitable future – one nourished mind at a time.**

For more information on our work, visit <https://www.tigerbrands.com/sustainability/social>

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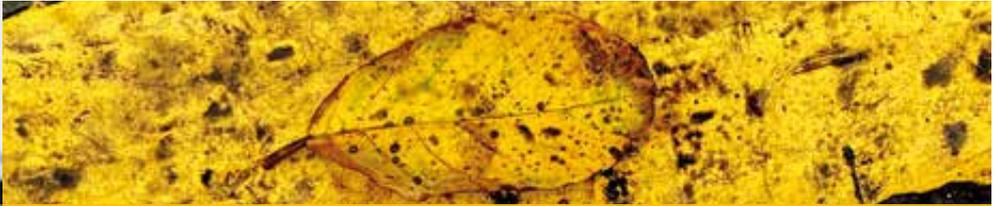
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**Bicycling Empowerment Network** | Page 251



**Breadline Africa** | Pages 137, 173



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## COLLABORATING FOR CHANGE

**As we present the 27th edition of *The Triologue Business in Society Handbook*, we are navigating a world of persistent challenges and emerging hope. This year's theme, 'Collaborating for Change', emphasises the crucial role of partnerships in addressing South Africa's most pressing social challenges. While individual corporate efforts have achieved much, we believe it is through collaboration – across sectors and with diverse stakeholders – that transformative impact can truly be achieved.**

Our world has shifted dramatically in recent years, and the journey to recovery is ongoing, with several indicators pointing to cautious optimism. Domestically, South Africa has experienced seven months without load-shedding – something we could only imagine a year ago. However, new challenges, such as water security, have surfaced, underscoring the need for coordinated action.

This year has seen an unprecedented number of elections around the world. South Africans went to the polls in May amid heightened uncertainty and anxiety. Remarkably, our democracy was offered new hope, with political parties forced to collaborate in a so-called Government of National Unity.

One of our feature articles in Chapter 1, 'Strengthening democracy: what role companies can play?' on page 68, explores how businesses can reinforce democratic principles in a time when faith in democratic systems is eroding globally. While most business leaders are aware that threats to democracy pose a risk to their corporations, our research indicates that over two-thirds of businesses and nonprofit organisations (NPOs) did not support or fund election-related initiatives.

### South Africa's evolving CSI landscape

*The Triologue Business in Society Handbook* remains the country's authoritative guide on corporate social investment (CSI). As always, our analysis is grounded in rigorous primary research, which includes contributions from corporate and nonprofit leaders, alongside insights from global and local research partners. Our research shows that total estimated CSI expenditure for 2024 reached R12.7 billion, reflecting a 7.5% increase from 2023. This growth highlights a strong commitment by South African businesses to address social challenges despite economic constraints.

You can read more about our research findings in Chapter 1 ('Trends in corporate giving') and Chapter 6 ('Nonprofit insights').

### The importance of collaboration

For many companies, collaboration has become a strategic choice to extend their reach and deepen their impact. Our findings this year reinforce that effective collaboration is a powerful tool for tackling the 'wicked problems' that no single entity can solve alone.

In Chapter 2 ('Spotlight on collaboration'), we offer practical insights on how organisations can build and sustain collaborative partnerships. This chapter showcases how companies, nonprofits and others can co-create solutions that are innovative and tailored to address South Africa's unique challenges. In 'Collective vision restores the lustre to the City of Gold' on page 114, we look at the Jozi My Jozi place-based collaborative that is driving the rejuvenation of the Johannesburg inner city. On page 110, we delve into a different collaborative model in the article 'Social impact bonds combine good with gain'. The article highlights how social impact bonds bring stakeholders with different risk appetites together in pursuit of a common goal.

Interestingly, Chapter 2's feature article, 'Co-creating the future: Collaborating to amplify change', notes that while over 90% of companies collaborate with NPOs and 75% collaborate with universities or other research organisations, partnerships with regional or international multilateral organisations remain minimal. This represents an opportunity, as cross-border partnerships can bring reach, research, scale and valuable skills.

Chapter 3, 'Support for development sectors', includes brief case studies showcasing how strategic partnerships are transforming 12 development sectors, from education and food security to social justice and environment. For instance, on page 133 we



profile the National Education Collaboration Trust as a multistakeholder approach to improving education quality in South Africa. Additionally, the Southern Africa Food Lab (featured on page 147) stands out as a beacon of innovation in tackling food security issues through multistakeholder dialogue and action.

### Envisioning a collaborative future for South Africa

As we move forward, the path to a resilient, equitable society will require sustained collaboration across all sectors. This will mean not only shared resources but also a shared vision for a better future.

Our findings point to a significant gap between the frequent discussions around collaboration in CSI and its actual implementation. Although 79% of companies report communicating their CSI work to encourage partnerships, and 93% are already collaborating with NPOs, examples of companies leading or participating in complex, multistakeholder partnerships and working with other companies remain limited. Most collaborative efforts still focus on basic partnership forms.

Our call to action is clear: companies must be brave and commit to a more intensive form of collaboration, one that goes beyond transactional relationships to address the pressing issues facing our society. This means overcoming traditional competitive mindsets and investing in genuine, resource-heavy partnerships that require navigating complex power dynamics and aligning diverse interests. The rewards of a deeply collaborative approach are transformative for both business and society, making the journey well worth the investment and patience.

To our readers, contributors and partners, thank you for your ongoing support and engagement. In this challenging yet hopeful time, may this Handbook serve as a guide and a call to action for all of us to embrace collaboration as a catalyst for meaningful, lasting change.

### Sheldon Morais

Thought Leadership Manager: Triologue



## COLLABORATION: A CATALYST FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

South Africa has been in 'polycrisis' mode for some time. We are all acutely aware of the inequality, corruption, unemployment and infrastructure challenges that have undermined our progress as a nation 30 years after liberation. As a resilient country, we have repeatedly pulled ourselves back from the brink of crisis, but we should be using our enormous potential to resolve the issues from which these crises arose in the first place.

We know that no single organisation can fix the country alone, but to do so we all need to get better at collaborating. We caught a glimpse of what this might look like during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the government, business and civil society joined forces to roll out vaccines, procure personal protective equipment and assist with food security. Although reactive, these examples of cooperation showed our collective capacity to rally around shared objectives. Collaboration has been tested in various forms over the past few years – more successfully in certain sectors than in others – but what has changed is that there is a greater acceptance of the fact that we need to make partnerships work.

There are two examples of collaboration from which we can derive inspiration.

The first is the Business for South Africa (B4SA) alliance, which is working closely with the government on pressing issues such as energy, transport and logistics, and crime and corruption. Building on the work begun during the pandemic, B4SA is engaging with the Presidency to help restore trust in institutions and grow the economy – a positive development, given that the relationship between the government and private sector has been openly challenging for many years.

Another encouraging collaborative effort is our newly formed Government of National Unity (GNU), which was formed within just two weeks after our national election in May. Finding common ground despite opposing ideals was never going to be easy, and we will be tested over the next five years, but such collaboration has required all of us to bring our best selves to the table. We should all embody the GNU's spirit of goodwill and push for national unity, trust and accountability in all spheres. Unity comes from little everyday interactions and decisions which prize the advancement of the greater good over simply the focus on oneself or a particular entity or institution.

### The critical role of leadership

Effective collaboration doesn't happen by chance – it requires visionary leadership across all sectors. Leaders who can successfully promote and sustain collaborative initiatives share key qualities:

- 1 **Credibility:** They have a track record of acting in the best interests of society.
- 2 **A whole-of-society perspective:** They understand the complex, interconnected nature of social, economic and environmental challenges.
- 3 **Openness:** They actively listen to diverse viewpoints and are willing to find common ground.
- 4 **Accountability:** They hold themselves and others to high standards of ethical behaviour.

These leaders must foster a culture of collaboration within their organisations and sectors by creating safe spaces for open dialogue, ensuring diverse voices are heard and respected, and modelling the collaborative behaviour they want to see.

At the National Business Initiative (NBI), we have had some success with bringing leaders together to achieve practical outcomes. Partnering with Business Unity South Africa and the Boston Consulting Group, we launched a project to collectively model if net zero was possible for South Africa and then develop pathways for the key sectors in South Africa. Our Climate Pathways project for a Just Transition in South Africa convened around 400 stakeholders from the government, business associations, companies and civil society to engage with research, participate in working groups for each priority sector and formulate potential pathways per sector. This work also helped the government to develop more ambitious nationally determined contributions that led the way at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26).

### Practical steps for effective collaboration

To move from aspiration to action we need concrete strategies to foster collaboration:

- 1 **Align on shared objectives:** Use frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals or the National Development Plan as well as multilateral agreements such as the Paris Agreement, as a starting point to define common goals.
- 2 **Build trust through transparency and consistent action:** Deliver on commitments and communicate openly about successes and challenges.
- 3 **Invest in or engage with platforms that foster ongoing dialogue:** Regular forums for cross-sector engagement make it easier to collaborate on an ongoing basis, not just in times of crisis.
- 4 **Promote skills transfer and capacity building:** Initiatives like the Technical Assistance Mentorship Development programme, which is managed by the NBI and supported by Business Leadership South Africa, demonstrate how business expertise can strengthen government capacity.
- 5 **Measure and communicate impact:** Develop shared metrics for success and regularly report on progress to all stakeholders.

Rebuilding our country will call for sustained collaboration, requiring patience, overcoming mistrust and a willingness to move beyond our comfort zone. By working together we can create a South Africa that not only overcomes its current challenges, but emerges as a model of inclusive growth and social cohesion.

Our future depends on our ability to collaborate effectively, leveraging the unique strengths of each sector to build a better South Africa for everyone. We should embrace the challenge with optimism, determination and a shared commitment to the collective good. After all, the alternate scenario of perpetuating the status quo is simply not an option.

#### Shameela Soobramoney

Chief Executive Officer: National Business Initiative

# WASH Plus Impact Driven Strategy

As a result of lack of clean and safe drinking water including inadequate sanitation in vulnerable communities, the Rand Water Foundation has devised a strategy offering sustainable water supply and adequate sanitation solutions to address these challenges. These solutions are driven through social investments in Capacity Building of SMMEs and the NGOs' sector for WASH Service Delivery on the ground. Water Sanitation Hygiene interventions are in the main primary activities of the strategy.



In addition to WASH primary activities secondary activities are undertaken to further address societal challenges such as unemployment, education, and health related challenges. Solutions are aimed at Jobs Creation Optimisation, as well as philanthropic interventions aimed at position Rand Water as good corporate citizen; Rand Water Cares. Jobs Creation Optimisation interventions take the form of Expanded Public Work Programme (EPWP) and Food Security Optimisation through Cooperatives Development model to promote sharing and collective management of resources. Activities are aimed at promoting water security through environmental conservation, land care, and protection of Rand Water Infrastructure.

Rand Water Cares activities include Corporate Staff Involvement Programme, Early Childhood Development Support, Adopt-A-Learner Scholarship Programme, and Youth Development Centres Infrastructure Support, benefiting communities within RW's areas of supply.

Rand Water Foundation will through its Social Enterprise pillar, ensure revenue diversification for growth and maximum social impact.

Rand Water Foundation remains agile delivering developmental service through these safe and innovative solutions for sustainable livelihoods.

## WASH PLUS STRATEGIC SECONDARY ACTIVITIES



JOB CREATION  
OPTIMISATION



RAND WATER  
CARES



SOCIAL  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

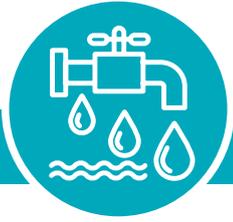
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**RAND WATER  
FOUNDATION**



# Communities

## water supply



As it is well known that South Africa is one of the water-stressed countries in the world, ranked as the 30th driest country globally, water scarcity remains a major threat to poverty, hunger alleviation, health as well as sustainable development.

The situation is further exacerbated by increasing vulnerability to climate change, with rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and prolonged droughts. These conditions reduce the availability of water resources. Periods of drought

result in water scarcity, reduced reservoir levels, and increased reliance on alternative water sources.

A base line study was conducted to assess the needs of communities requiring assistance regarding water supply services, and it was evident from the baseline study that most rural communities as well



*Since Rand Water Foundation's intervention, Moidraai community has an increased access to clean safe drinking water.*



as informal settlement residents in urban areas still rely on water tankers, river streams (that are often polluted). Following the request by Metsimaholo Local Municipality within Fezile Dabi District Municipality in the Free State, for the Rand Water Foundation to intervene in the plight of the Moidraai community through water supply, the Foundation did not waste time. Key to the challenges faced by the Moidraai community is lack of centralised water reticulation system and reduced water availability for households use. The community was dependent on rivers streams and water tankers for water supply. Since Rand Water Foundation's intervention, Moidraai community has an increased access to clean safe drinking water. Rand Water Foundation has drilled and equipped ten (10) boreholes with 20x10 000l storage tanks, solar powered energy generation, magnificent stand tanks, razor wired fencing, sixteen (16) extended communal taps and most significantly, water purification units to ensure that water is clean and safer for drinking.



The project created a total number of forty (40) jobs for local community members, further supporting four (04) Non-Governmental Organisations and two (02) SMMEs through service delivery partnership. In appreciating this investment by Rand Water in Moodraai, the community represented by Ms. Motloung said "previously we used to fetch water in the river streams and in most instances, drinking with animals in these streams, and now that has come to an end. We appreciate purified water supply resulting from Rand Water Foundation intervention. Moreover, we appreciate employment opportunities that came with the project".



**RAND WATER  
FOUNDATION**

Triologue thanks the following companies for their participation in the 2024 primary research.

Absa Group	Imperial	Standard Chartered
Adcock Ingram	Independent Media	Ster-Kinekor
ADvTECH Group	IDC	Sun International
AECI	Investec	Telkom
African Bank	Invicta Bearing Man Group	Tiger Brands
Afrimat	Italtile and Ceramic Foundation	TotalEnergies South Africa
AfriSam South Africa	Jasco Group	Transnet Foundation
Airports Company South Africa	Johannesburg Stock Exchange	Umgeni Water
Alexforbes	Kagiso Trust	Vodacom Foundation
Anglo American Foundation	KFC	Volkswagen South Africa
AngloGold Ashanti	Liberty	Woolworths
Assore Group	Massmart	
Assupol Trust	Momentum Metropolitan Foundation	
Barloworld	Mr Price Group	
Bowmans	MTN SA Foundation	
Capitec Bank	Nashua Foundation	
Cashbuild	Nedbank	
Clicks Group	Netcare	
Clientèle	Oceana Group	
Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa	Old Mutual	
Coronation Fund Managers	PepsiCo South Africa	
Datatec	PPC Cement	
Deutsche Bank South Africa	Primedia	
Development Bank of Southern Africa	RCL	
Dimension Data	Redefine Properties	
Discovery	Sappi	
Exemplar REITail	Sasol	
FirstRand	Sea Harvest	
Futuregrowth Asset Management	Shoprite Holdings	
Gold Fields	Sibanye-Stillwater	
HCI Foundation	South African Broadcasting Corporation	
Heineken Beverages	Standard Bank	

### LUCKY DRAW WINNER

All companies that completed the survey were entered into a lucky draw for the chance to win a single page in the Handbook. Congratulations to the winner, **Futuregrowth Asset Management**.

📖 Read more about this company in their complimentary feature on the opposite page.

**FUTUREGROWTH**  
/ ASSET MANAGEMENT

**Investing in  
9 provinces  
for one future.**

Our main point of investment  
is putting South Africa first.

**That's our circle  
of impact.**

Triologue thanks the following nonprofit organisations for their participation in the 2024 primary research.

Abraham Kriel Bambanani Childcare	Joyce Chevalier Centre-Protective Workshop	The Florence and Fabian Ribeiro Foundation
ACFS Community Education and Feeding Scheme	Jozi Trails NPO	The Grail Centre Trust
Advance Edukos Foundation	JP21 Foundation	The Order of St John
African Institute for Entrepreneurship (AIFE)	Kamva Elitsha Vosloorus Community Based Service	The Parent Centre
Afrika Youth Centre	Kgatlo Foundation	The Seed Fund
Alexandra Education Committee	Kids Haven	The Siyazisiza Trust
Alliance Against HIV and AIDS	Knoop Academy NPC	The SocialCauses Foundation
Amathuba Collective	Kuier Met Liezl NPC	The Soul Provider Trust
Angels Baby Sanctuary	LEAP Science and Maths School	The Ultimate Gift NPO
Asavela Peko Foundation	Lesedi Larona Home of Trust	The Wot-if? Trust
Association for Educational Transformation	Life Choices Youth Academy	Tholulwazi Youth Centre
Batho Pele	Little Eden Society	Thuma Mina Teaching!
Beulah Africa	Little Lions Child Coaching	TimiaAfrica
Bless a Baby	Living Through Learning	Tomorrow Trust
Bonamelo Melisizwe Foundation	Manenzhe Foundation	Tshala Community Development
Bright Education & Training	Marishane Youth Hub	Tshepong centre for persons with disabilities
Bubchu United Sports Academy	Masicorp	Tshiamelo le kagiso
Community Action Partnership	Masithobelane Support Group	Turfhall Cheshire Home
Careerlinx Empowerment Solutions	Melkbos Care Centre	Ubuntu Pathways
Carel du Toit Centre for Deaf Children	Midrand SPCA	Umhlathuze Homebased CARE NPO
Community Environmental Educational Program (CEEP)	Mmakau Children's Centre	Unako Single Mothers Organization
Centre for Early Childhood Development	Mogaleadi Community Foundation	United Through Sport
Childline Gauteng	Mould Empower Serve MES NPC	Upskill Africa Initiative
Childline South Africa	Mpumelelo Day Care Centre	Urban Seed Farms
CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa	Msunduzi Association of Residents Ratepayers and Civics	Value Ahead of Competition
Chuba Foundation	National Mentorship Movement	Viva Foundation
Community Chest Durban	NGOConnectSA	Vrolike Vinkies Enrichment and Development Centre
Community Keepers	NID-National Institute for the Deaf	Western Cape Forum for Intellectual Disability
Community of HOPE Multi-Purpose Centre	Nokwe Creative Development Foundation	Wings of Grace Care Center
Community Wellness Project	NOSH Food Rescue NPC	youth@WORK
d-lab Skills Development Centre	Nyara Youth Development	Zikhali Media Facilitation
DAKTARI Bush School and Wildlife Orphanage	OneVoice South Africa	
Dinaledi Leadership for Education	ORT South Africa	
Do4SA NPC	People Against Substance Abuse (PASA)	
Door of Hope Children's Mission	PND Centre for homework and study in informal settlements	
Dream Factory Foundation	Programme for Technological Careers (PROTEC)	
Eastern Province Child and Youth Care Centre	Progress Playgroup and Preschool	
Endangered Wildlife Trust	Project Literacy	
enke Make Your Mark	ReStory Foundation	
Epilepsy South Africa	SA Children's Home	
Feed SA NPO	SA Federation for Mental Health	
The Feenix Trust	SA Guide-Dogs Association for the Blind	
Fisantekraal Centre for Development	SA Riding for the Disabled Association Cape Town	
For The Youth By The Youth	Santa Shoebox Project	
Funanani Trust	Siyamthanda Care Projects	
Funda Wandé	Siyavula Foundation	
Greensleeves Children's Trust	South Africa Volunteer Work Camp Association	
Help2read RF NPC	South African Mathematics Foundation	
Hlasemphe Community Development Projects	South African National Council for the Blind	
Hope of the Valley Schools	Spirit Education Foundation	
Ikamva Labantu	Spoken and Unspoken Word	
Ikamva Lisezandleni Zethu (IkamvaYouth)	St. Josephs Intermediate Paediatric Care	
Impilo Child Protection and Adoption Services	Taking Care of Business	
Ingqayi Foundation	TEARS (The Emma Animal Rescue Society)	
iSchoolAfrica Education Trust	Thandulwazi Maths and Science Academy	
iThemba Projects	Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA)	
Jane Goodall Institute South Africa	The Character Company	
JET Education Services	The Cross Corporation	
JNF Walter Sisulu Environmental Centre	The Fetola Foundation	

### LUCKY DRAW WINNER

All nonprofits that completed the survey were entered into a lucky draw for the chance to win a single page in the Handbook. Congratulations to the winner, **Careerlinx Empowerment Solutions**.

Read more about this organisation in their complimentary feature on the opposite page.





# INVESTING IN YOUTH INVESTING IN SOUTH AFRICA'S FUTURE



## How Careerlinx is Bridging the Gap to Opportunity

At Careerlinx, we believe the greatest investment is empowering South Africa's youth. For over 11 years, we've tackled barriers faced by young people – from limited education and digital skills to transportation – through impactful, youth-centered programs and strategic partnerships.

Take Carmen's story: after two years of unemployment with few skills, Carmen found hope through Careerlinx. After completing our training, she secured an office job, gained valuable skills, and began supporting her family. Carmen's success is a reflection of our mission to transform the lives of young South Africans.



What began with a focus on job placement has expanded into comprehensive programs offering literacy training, accredited learnerships, career readiness, and vocational skills development. In partnership with **Career Connect Group**, we've reached over **24,000 students across 35 schools**, helping them make informed career choices.

In 2021, with support from **Konica Minolta (South Africa)** and **Container World Pty (Ltd)**, Careerlinx launched digital skills training and vocational courses in fields like welding, woodworking, and sewing. Through our Work Integrated Learning Lab (W.I.L.L.), we prepare youth for the workforce while our e-learning platform identifies post-school opportunities and entrepreneurial talent.



Through Careerlinx Business Services, a **100% female-owned enterprise**, we also foster youth entrepreneurship and enterprise growth.

Join us in building a more inclusive, equitable future for South Africa's youth. By investing in their education and skills, we're driving innovation, economic growth, and lasting change. There is no greater investment.

**We need you! Visit [www.careerlinx.co.za](http://www.careerlinx.co.za).**

“ I have acquired more knowledge and skills here at Careerlinx in such a short space of time.”  
Sphamandla Zondi

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tel: +2772 400 7142

@careerlinxsa | [www.careerlinx.co.za](http://www.careerlinx.co.za)

[fundraising@careerlinx.co.za](mailto:fundraising@careerlinx.co.za)

# Nedbank's Green Economy CSI strategy: Cultivating a sustainable future for South Africa's youth

In a world grappling with climate change and growing economic challenges, Nedbank Group is taking bold steps to help address both. Through its innovative Green Economy Corporate Social Investment (CSI) strategy, the bank is not only tackling pressing environmental concerns but also creating valuable opportunities for South Africa's youth in the emerging green economy.

Launched in 2021, the Green Economy strategy represents a significant shift in corporate social investment, going beyond just traditional environmental initiatives and aiming to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and foster sustainable development, all while safeguarding natural resources.



According to Poovi Pillay, Executive Head of Corporate Social Investment at Nedbank, the strategy aligns perfectly with Nedbank's purpose of using its financial expertise to do good for society. As such, it isn't just about protecting the environment; it's about creating a new economic paradigm. 'Our Green Economy strategy focuses on the 4 key sectors of agriculture, water, energy, and waste because we believe these are the cornerstones of a truly sustainable economy', Pillay explains. 'It's a comprehensive approach to building a more equitable, resilient and sustainable South Africa.'

A core pillar of the bank's Green Economy strategy is its focus on equipping South Africa's youth with the skills they need to thrive in the emerging green economy.

This effort is exemplified through key partnerships, such as the 1 with GreenMatter, a leadership development initiative that offers bursaries and support to young graduate students pursuing careers in critical environmental fields.



Through its partnership with GreenMatter, Nedbank is supporting hundreds of students, not only through financial aid, but also through leadership training and mentorship. This holistic approach ensures that the next generation of environmental leaders is well-prepared to address South Africa's most pressing sustainability challenges.

The impact of this partnership has been significant. Numerous students have received support for advanced degrees in crucial environmental fields, accompanied by mentorship, leadership training, and networking opportunities. This holistic approach ensures that graduates are not only academically prepared, but also equipped with the practical skills and connections needed to make a real difference in the sector.



**see money differently**



‘By investing in green skills, we’re not just preparing our youth for the jobs of tomorrow’, Pillay explains, ‘we’re also empowering them to become the innovators and leaders who will drive South Africa’s sustainable future.’

Recognising that entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth and job creation, Nedbank’s Green Economy strategy also focuses on nurturing eco-inclusive enterprises. A key way through which it is delivering on this commitment is its partnership with Indalo Inclusive, an organisation that is committed to supporting socially and environmentally responsible businesses. Together, Nedbank and Indalo launched the Nedbank Indalo Fund, a R10 million initiative designed to empower sustainable enterprises in South Africa.



Through the Nedbank Indalo Fund, promising green businesses receive funding to help them transition from grant dependency to investor readiness. Enterprises that meet strict environmental, social, and economic targets are rewarded with additional funding, incentivising financial growth and positive impact.

‘The Nedbank Indalo Fund allows us to support enterprises at a critical stage in their development, ensuring they are positioned to attract further investment while also making significant contributions to job creation and environmental sustainability’, Pillay explains.

Over the next 7 years, the aim of the fund is to generate over half a billion rand in revenue through supported enterprises, create more than 500 jobs, and sustain over 300 social

and green enterprises. Pillay points out that, in this way, the initiative will not only support individual businesses but also contribute to building a robust ecosystem of sustainable enterprises across South Africa.



Nedbank’s Green Economy strategy and the positive outcomes it is achieving demonstrate how purposeful corporate social investment can serve as a powerful catalyst for economic and environmental transformation. ‘Nedbank’s Green Economy CSI strategy is more than just a series of initiatives’, Pillay emphasises. ‘It’s a long-term commitment to fostering a sustainable and prosperous South Africa. By focusing on skills development, entrepreneurship, and strategic partnerships, we are helping to create a future where economic growth and environmental stewardship go hand in hand.’

# Nedbank harnesses people power to drive meaningful social change



In an era where corporate social responsibility is vital for the sustainable upliftment of society, volunteerism has emerged as a cornerstone, playing a crucial role in addressing some of South Africa's most pressing challenges.

Importantly, the benefits of volunteerism extend to everyone involved. For the recipients, it delivers much-needed support, resources, and opportunities that can improve lives and create more resilient communities. For the organisation and its employees, it builds a sense of purpose, fosters collaboration, and nurtures a culture of giving back.



For all these reasons, volunteerism is a key pillar in Nedbank's Corporate Social Investment (CSI) strategy. According to Poovi Pillay, Executive Head of CSI at Nedbank, the group recognises the immense power of volunteerism to deliver on its purpose, which is why it aims to deliver the most impactful employee volunteerism programme in South Africa. 'For us, volunteerism is more than just an occasional day out to offer short-term help; it is deeply rooted in our group's broader purpose to use our financial expertise to do good,' Pillay explains.

## Expanding mentorship through the N-Circle programme

Nedbank's N-Circle mentorship programme is a key part of its broader Employee Volunteerism Programme (EVP), which is deeply rooted in the bank's commitment to help create resilient and purpose-driven communities. The EVP aligns with Nedbank's Green Economy Strategy, which focuses on key areas such as agriculture, water, energy, and waste. This alignment represents a shift from a transactional model of volunteerism – where contributions might have been more short-term – to a transformative approach that creates lasting change. Nedbank's EVP is designed to cater to diverse employee interests and passions, enabling employees to engage in volunteer activities that resonate with them, whether through hands-on community service or skills-based contributions like mentorship. The N-Circle programme, in particular, is positioned as a pillar within this strategy, offering structured mentorship opportunities that leverage the bank's expertise to address societal challenges.



The N-Circle strategy centres around 3 core objectives: expanding partnerships, facilitating effective mentorship for both internal employees and external stakeholders, and equipping mentors with

the resources to ensure impactful engagements. This demand-driven model adapts based on participant feedback, creating a tailored mentorship experience that meets diverse needs.



## Delivering targeted mentorship impacts

Recognising that the needs of its partners vary significantly, the N-Circle programme is built on 4 distinct mentorship models. Each programme is designed with a specific focus, time frame and intensity level to address the unique challenges of different groups, from young jobseekers to emerging entrepreneurs. This tailored approach ensures that the mentorship offered is effective and impactful, creating lasting value for both mentors and mentees. The approach and impact of the four programmes are as follows:

- **Fix Forward Programme** – Focused on 1-on-1 mentorship for entrepreneurs in the building industry, this programme matched 17 entrepreneurs with Nedbank mentors over a three-month period. The results were impressive, with 90% of participants reporting improvements in business management skills and a 25% increase in business inquiries.
- **YES youth programme** – Aimed at young interns, this six-week group mentorship programme provided career and personal skills development. Twelve interns were supported by co-mentors, who guided them in building essential skills like communication and networking, resulting in a 100% satisfaction rating.
- **KP Cares Programme** – Offering leadership development through 1-on-1 mentorship, this initiative focused on sharing skills to support small, medium, and microenterprises (SMMEs). Mentees reported enhanced leadership abilities, while mentors found personal growth in their own professional engagement.
- **Indalo Programme** – Emphasising leadership skills, this programme paired Nedbank employees with mentees requiring project management and strategic planning support. Mentees improved in stakeholder management and strategic communication.

The structured and adaptive approach of the N-Circle programme has had a significant impact on both mentors and mentees. Mentees have gained valuable skills, from strategic thinking to enhanced operational abilities, while mentors have experienced professional growth and personal satisfaction.

'By focusing on both immediate community needs through volunteerism and long-term development through mentorship, Nedbank is having a lasting impact,' Pillay says. 'One that extends far beyond traditional CSI efforts to actively support sustainable positive change, sets a new standard for volunteerism and aligns with our commitment to building a legacy of impact by doing good.'

see money differently

**NEDBANK**

# Ethical business leadership to heal a divided country



Ethical leadership is a prerequisite for a moral, capable state – but many leaders abuse the privilege that is leadership, **Professor Bonang Mohale** argued when delivering his keynote address on the first day of the **Dialogue Business in Society Conference 2024**.

In his keynote address to delegates on the eve of our country's historic general elections, Professor Mohale, Chancellor of the University of the Free State, former President of Business Unity South Africa and Professor of Practice in the Johannesburg Business School, drew attention to the inextricable link between ethical leadership and the prosperity of a nation.

The author of the bestselling books *Lift as You Rise* and *Behold the Turtle* pointed out that leadership has “nothing to do with the title on a business card or the corner office”. He added that anyone who feels that they are called to lead can do so. However, such leadership is “an opportunity to improve the lives of others, not to enrich the self”.

“Business cannot continue to be an island of prosperity in a sea of poverty,” Mohale told delegates, stressing the importance of “opening up spaces for the majority of our people, just to participate, not even to reach their fullest potential – just to reclaim their self-worth and self-respect”. He added that business leaders should transition from being “important people to people of significance”.

### The importance of education

Ahead of the May elections he urged conference delegates to elect the leaders they want to see in charge of the country. “In Australia, if you don't vote, you go to prison. In this country, it should be even more dire because people died and made the supreme sacrifice so that we can exercise this choice. Let's not be mere complainers about the type of leadership we've inherited; instead, let's choose the leadership we want, have earned and deserve,” he said.

Mohale listed some problems besetting the country, including load-shedding, water-shedding, the decline of the economy and the high levels of historical tertiary education debt. He implored business leaders to take the money their organisations have already made available to invest in education for poor students and to clear the historical debt.

Mohale noted that many companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange focused on education in their social impact strategies and programmes.

“If we approach these companies and simply ask that they take the money that has already been approved by their boards and put it in a historical debt fund, we would be able to wipe out the entire R16.5 billion debt – not in 30 years but in one – because we dared to have a compelling vision and the courage of our convictions,” he asserted. “We wouldn't even be asking them to make more profits or to increase their business footprint, but by wiping out the historical debt we give not future leaders but today's leadership a little bit of hope to ensure that they don't have to suffer the indignity of food insecurity and period poverty.”

### The need to fight corruption

Mohale, currently the Chair of publicly listed Bidvest, reminded the audience that former President Nelson Mandela noted that education was “the surest way in which one can transcend social classes”.

However, he said that people born poor in Alexandra, for example, should be able to afford “a house in the leafy suburbs of Bryanston”, not because they had won a tender, but because they had worked hard for 20 years, could afford the home

and deserved to have it. “Education matters because, when one steadily burns the midnight oil, one gains access to the domain of knowledge and wisdom, the world that cannot be conquered without the persistent crusade,” he pointed out. “Unscrupulous politicians hate educated blacks because educated blacks make it impossible to be fooled by unscrupulous politicians.”

He concluded by saying it is easy to blame colonialism for poverty and colonisers undeniably “stole and pillaged”, preventing Africans from reaching their “proper nirvana”. However, “in the last 60 years, the people who've made us poorer are those who are our very own, that steal from their children the monies due for their education and PPE [personal protection equipment] money that's supposed to buffer them against the pandemic”.

For this reason, it is imperative to fight corruption and establish an ethical, capable state that can help to realise the dreams of all South Africans.





# TRENDS IN CORPORATE GIVING

## 1

Findings from Trialogue's 2024 research into CSI, followed by the winner of Trialogue's Strategic CSI Award 2024, published CSI expenditure of 108 companies, and the role companies play in strengthening democracy.

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- 30** Overview of 2024 CSI research
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- 78** Rewarding strategic CSI
- 83** CSI expenditure per company

Photo credit: *Discovering São Tomé in colours: The Forest*, Kwame Sousa. 2020. São Tomé and Príncipe. A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.

# IS STRATEGIC CSI DEAD?

With the trend towards trust-based philanthropy gaining momentum globally, the architect of ‘strategic philanthropy’ as a concept has declared it dead. In this article, **Cathy Duff** unpacks the arguments for why it has failed and reconfirms Trialogue’s commitment to strategic corporate social investment (CSI).

In 2002, Michael Porter and Mark Kramer published the seminal article ‘The Competitive Advantage of Corporate Philanthropy’ in the *Harvard Business Review* (*HBR*). The article argued that corporate philanthropy could be aligned with business interests to create a competitive advantage. Rather than reactive giving, the authors recommended aligning philanthropy with business strategy and leveraging company resources and capabilities for social good to create a synergy between corporate success and societal improvement.

The pair went on to author the 2011 *HBR* article ‘Creating Shared Value’, which argued that companies should move beyond corporate social responsibility (CSR) and gain a competitive edge by simultaneously improving their economic value and addressing societal needs. They explained that companies can create shared value in three ways: reconceiving products and services to address social needs, redefining productivity in the value chain in ways that benefit society, and strengthening the local business environment by investing in infrastructure, education and technology that benefit both the company and the community. The shared value-approach speaks to shifts in a company’s business model – its products and services and how it operates – rather than just its philanthropy or social investment.

Also in 2011, Kramer and co-author John Kania introduced the concept of ‘Collective Impact’ in an eponymous article in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (*SSIR*), arguing that large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, rather than isolated interventions by individual organisations. And such collaboration requires a common agenda, shared measurement systems,

mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and, importantly, a backbone support organisation to manage the initiative.

## WHERE STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY WENT WRONG

Fast forward to 2024 and Kramer – the thought leader that mainstreamed the concepts of strategic philanthropy, shared value and collective impact – together with Steve Phillips published the article ‘Where Strategic Philanthropy Went Wrong’ in the *SSIR*’s summer edition titled ‘Strategic Philanthropy Has Failed: What’s Next?’ In the article, Kramer and Phillips define strategic philanthropy as ‘philanthropic initiatives intended to create lasting solutions to societal problems’ and argue that because we have not seen significant improvements in any social indicators and social issues are in fact deteriorating, this type of philanthropy has failed. They purport this is largely because funding nonprofits does not significantly shift the system and can never reach the scale required to move the needle on social indicators.

They go on to propose a more effective form of philanthropy, which they call ‘empowerment philanthropy’. This approach involves empowering people and communities more directly through direct cash transfers, universal basic incomes or peer support programmes.

They also argue that only governments can effect social change and, as such, philanthropy should consider influencing the political system. One recommendation is to support voter education and activation to get people to register and vote so that politicians are more representative of what people want and held more accountable. As evidence to support this, they cite the fact that countries with progressive governments have the highest ‘social progress’ rankings. They also mention that another way of influencing a government is through lobbying but note that in the US, charitable foundations are barred from doing this.

### ... and where it went right

There have been numerous responses to the *SSIR* article, many of them disputing its conclusions. Phil Buchanan at the Centre for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) argues there is no single approach to philanthropy, and different approaches make sense in

different circumstances and for different types of donors. He also notes that funding communities directly or supporting voter engagement is part of a strategy, so would still be considered strategic philanthropy and in no way undermines the concept of strategic philanthropy.

Rhodri Davies, a philanthropy commentator, also raises the point that there are multiple approaches to philanthropy. In particular, he highlights that trust-based philanthropy – where funders provide unrestricted, flexible funding and reduce administrative burdens on grantees – can be highly effective. High-profile philanthropists MacKenzie Scott and Melinda French Gates have taken just such a trust-based approach and are inspiring others to adopt more equitable approaches too. Davies stresses that the success or failure of philanthropic initiatives often depends on the specific context in which they are implemented and provides examples of philanthropic initiatives that have successfully shifted systems.

Similarly, in their rebuke article in the *SSIR* ‘Strategic Philanthropy is Alive and Well’, Jodi Nelson and Fay Twersky provide examples of where philanthropy has shifted systems. They cite the Bridgespan Group’s *HBR* article ‘Audacious Philanthropy’ which provides case studies of 15 social movements that achieved life-changing results such as virtually eradicating polio globally, ending apartheid in South Africa and establishing the universal 911 service in the United States, most of which were supported by some form of philanthropy.

Nelson and Twersky’s summary reply to authors Kramer and Phillips is, “You have sounded the death knell of strategic philanthropy prematurely and without compelling evidence.”

## STRATEGIC CSI IS VERY MUCH ALIVE

The key assumption made by Kramer and Phillips is that strategic philanthropy sets out to have an overarching positive societal impact. Does it and is this realistic in the first instance? We know that poor government policy and action have a much vaster influence on social conditions than philanthropy can ever have. It is obvious, based not only on the relative amounts spent, but also because philanthropic programmes operate out of the system without any direct social mandate. So showing that social conditions do not respond to philanthropic spend is not surprising to us, or indeed any foundation or company. It certainly does not mean that philanthropy is ineffective.

We agree with the authors that solely funding nonprofit projects is not going to change things at scale and, to the extent possible, CSI (or philanthropy) should try to influence government systems and leverage government funds. However, we propose that this can be done not only through advocacy and voter education but also by innovating and testing solutions, doing research and then using the knowledge to influence policy and practice more broadly. Another approach could be directly supporting research and policy work, or indeed working in/with the system on collective impact approaches.

As many other respondents to the article have argued, there are plenty of examples of where philanthropy has shifted the system – either through one of the means proposed by the authors (direct transfers, voter education) or by supporting advocacy, mass movements or innovation.

We would argue that strategic CSI is a fundamentally different proposition from what is defined as strategic philanthropy in the article. Whereas they see the history of philanthropy as a ‘placebo’ – or diversion from the ills of the system that enable excessive profits in the first instance – we are seeing evidence that strategic CSI is integral to the business and a means of reinforcing the organisation’s overall social impact.

For CSI to be strategic, it has to be aligned with and create value for the company – value that goes further than mere reputation benefits, either through enhanced stakeholder relationships with key business stakeholders (suppliers, customers, consumers or employees) or through mechanisms that lead to competitive advantage (lower costs, access to scarce skills or new markets).

Alignment allows the business to leverage internal resources and relationships to increase developmental impact, often at a fraction of the cost that would otherwise apply. For example, a telecommunications company could use its networks to connect beneficiaries or allow free messaging on social issues, a healthcare company could leverage its resources to support indigent patients, or a logistics company could use its networks to distribute social products. And they could all do this at a much lower cost than a funder without the internal assets and competencies.

Ultimately, CSI which is strategic is more sustainable as it will not be the first thing to be cut when profits are down, as there is company value dependent on it.

From the time of the 2002 *HBR* article, which resonated strongly with the work that Trialogue was doing, Trialogue has advocated

for strategic CSI. We used our research and experience supporting companies with their CSI strategies to develop the CSI Positioning Matrix, which enables companies to determine which of the four approaches to CSI their projects fit (charitable, developmental, commercial or strategic) and what shifts are required to make their work more strategic.

We also launched the Strategic CSI Award in 2014 to celebrate a single project each year that effectively demonstrates the principles of strategic CSI. Each of the award-winning projects since shows how valuable they are, not only to society but also to the company – even if they do not result in systemic change (see page 80 for the 2024 winner of the Trialogue CSI Award). On the back of our advisory work and the project case studies from the awards, we offer a strategic CSI masterclass.

## THE FUTURE OF CSI IS LEVERAGED

As with philanthropy, there are different approaches to CSI and no one size fits all. Trialogue positions CSI programmes broadly across three categories, namely charitable CSI (CSI 1.0), strategic CSI (CSI 2.0) and leveraged CSI (CSI 3.0). There is space for all three types of CSI within a company’s portfolio, and the combination will depend on the company’s business strategy, stakeholders and context, appetite for risk and approach to development, among other elements.

We have witnessed and encouraged a broad shift from more reactive giving in CSI 1.0 to more strategic giving, with many companies now allocating a significant portion of their budgets to strategic programmes. Leveraged CSI builds on a strategic approach by seeking to influence a broader developmental landscape or system. This can be achieved by funding research, advocacy or through collaborative and collective impact investments within a chosen developmental field.

The approach requires a shift from a symptomatic project-focused mindset to investing in structures and processes that aim to solve longer-term systemic or structural deficiencies. It is likely to be effective in instances where companies have acquired a deep understanding of a developmental context and have relationships with influential stakeholders. It requires investment in collaboration itself, which may not always show immediate or obvious outcomes as well as a consideration of longer-term and more flexible styles of giving.

Initial interest in this approach is coming from companies with larger budgets that have ambitions for more substantive change. The downside is that this approach is complex and takes a long time, with positive outcomes for beneficiaries not immediately visible. This means it will not be a preferred approach for some companies, many of whom have shorter funding cycles and pressure to demonstrate immediate results.

In conclusion, Trialogue believes strategic philanthropy is very much alive. Our view is that companies need to be strategic with their giving, by aligning their CSI strategy to the business. The government holds the primary mandate for development. With CSI funding amounting to only a fraction of government developmental budgets, CSI cannot realistically be expected to transform the developmental landscape. However, by leveraging corporate capacity, knowledge, and relationships through innovative and aligned initiatives, CSI can deliver a far greater impact relative to its budget size than one might expect. ■



### Sources and further reading:

- ‘The Competitive Advantage of Corporate Philanthropy’. *Harvard Business Review* 2002.
- ‘Audacious Philanthropy’. *Harvard Business Review* 2017.
- ‘Where Strategic Philanthropy Went Wrong’. *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 2024.
- ‘Strategic Philanthropy Is Alive and Well’. *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 2024.
- Centre for Effective Philanthropy. Blog.
- Rhodri Davies. Blog.
- ‘CSI 3.0: The evolution of corporate social investment’. Trialogue Knowledge Hub.



Scan for the online version of this article with sources.

CSI EXPENDITURE

TOTAL ESTIMATED  
CSI expenditure in 2024

R12.7 billion

7.5% increase from  
R11.8 billion in 2023

TOP THREE CONTRIBUTING SECTORS

- 1 **BASIC MATERIALS** (mining, water, forestry, chemicals)
- 2 **CONSUMER SERVICES** (retail, media, travel and tourism)
- 3 **FINANCIALS** (banks, insurance, real estate, financial services)

55%

NON-CASH GIVING **GROWING**

55% of companies gave products, services, volunteering time or a combination of these

Non-cash giving constituted **29%** of CSI expenditure

**85%** of NPOs received non-cash donations

55%

increased

CSI SPEND INCREASING

stayed the same

25%

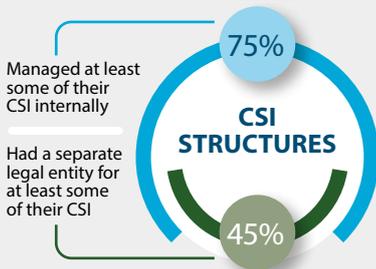
decreased

20%

MEDIAN SOCIAL INVESTMENT: **R29m**

2024 RESEARCH FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

CSI MANAGEMENT



Only half of companies had a stated policy on M&E

**STRONG ALIGNMENT TO BUSINESS**  
78% of companies have a CSI strategy that is very much aligned with the overall business strategy, 21% are somewhat aligned

MEDIAN: CSI EMPLOYEES

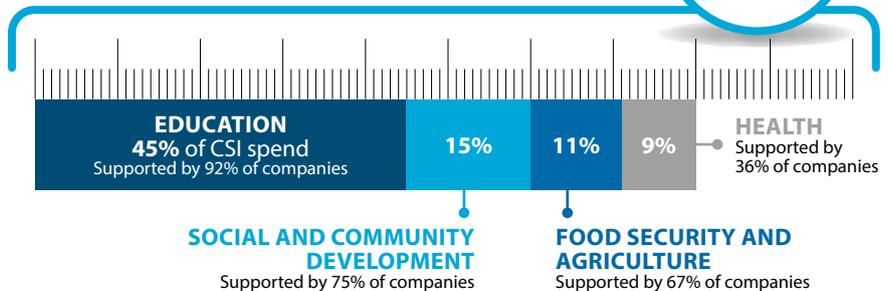
3

5

FOCUS AREAS

Companies supported an average of five sectors

MOST SUPPORTED DEVELOPMENT SECTORS:



83% of companies and 72% of NPOs did not support the election process. Staff and community election awareness was supported by the remainder.

FOCUS AREAS

## CSI PROJECTS

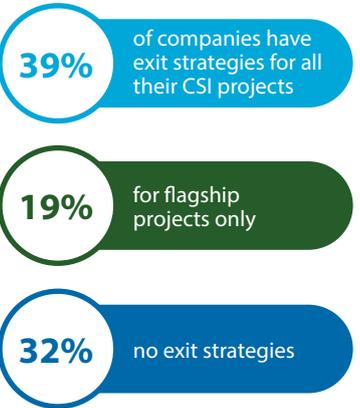


**SUPPORTED THREE OR MORE FLAGSHIP PROJECTS**

Companies spend 61% of their CSI budget on flagship projects

**63%** partnered with NPOs to implement their flagship projects, 37% designed and implemented projects themselves

## EXIT STRATEGIES



## TOP 3 CSI COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- Social media** (88% of companies)
- Company annual report** (85%)
- Company website** (84%)

## COMMUNICATION OF CSI

## SUPPORT FOR NPOs

# NPO

**93%** of companies supported NPOs

**71% OF CSI EXPENDITURE WENT TO NPOs**

**70%**

OF NPOs RECEIVED INCOME FROM SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANIES.

Corporate funds accounted for 30% of NPO income. NPOs had funding relationships with a median of five South African companies.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Companies offered an average of two types of capacity-building activities to NPOs. NPOs received an average of two types of capacity building.

Most common types of support: Workshops and training (41%), mentorship (28%) and academic programmes (21%).

39% of companies did not offer any capacity-building support to NPOs. 37% of NPOs did not receive any such support.

Companies offered **FOUR TYPES OF EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVES** on average

### Most common types

- 95%** Company-organised volunteering initiative
- 71%** Fundraising/collection drives
- 63%** Time off for individuals during work hours

## VOLUNTEERING

# trialogue

**Triologue** is a niche corporate responsibility consultancy with almost three decades of industry research and experience. We provide consulting and thought leadership services in sustainability and corporate social investment (CSI).

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP SERVICES

Triologue's knowledge-sharing platforms offer companies the opportunity to profile their work, position their brands as thought leaders, and share their insights with peers in the development sector.



### TRIALOGUE BUSINESS IN SOCIETY HANDBOOK

For almost three decades, the Handbook has been the leading annual CSI and responsible business research publication in South Africa, providing reliable data and insight that contributes to enhanced impact.



### TRIALOGUE BUSINESS IN SOCIETY CONFERENCE

This premier annual industry event convenes more than 400 civil society, private- and public-sector delegates to share insights and innovations on the 'S' in ESG.



### TRIALOGUE KNOWLEDGE HUB

A free online platform, the Triologue Knowledge Hub is a comprehensive body of knowledge on topics across numerous development sectors and responsible business topics. The NPO Directory helps funders identify nonprofits for potential partnerships.



### TRIALOGUE ACADEMY

An online learning platform offering courses in responsible business, sustainability and CSI for company and nonprofit professionals.



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Monthly online in-depth conversations provide expert input and insights on a range of responsible business topics.



### SOCIAL IMPACT STORIES

Triologue has partnered with Expresso, SABC 3's award-winning breakfast show, to provide select companies with the opportunity to showcase their responsible business initiatives.

## CONSULTING SERVICES

Triologue supports its clients in making their CSI and sustainability practices more effective through its end-to-end consulting process.

### 1 SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY

We apply our integrated sustainability model to gauge the maturity of sustainability processes and practices across the company. We then develop tailor-made roadmaps to integrate sustainability and provide strategy development and implementation support.

### 2 SOCIAL IMPACT ADVISORY

We offer executive level presentations on CSI trends and developments, CSI strategy and policy development, and implementation support.

### 3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We support clients throughout the M&E process, from the development of theory of change frameworks to the creation of dashboards for analysis and impact reporting. We also conduct project and programme reviews and evaluations.

### 4 CORPORATE REPORTING

We offer a full reporting service for integrated, sustainability and social reports, from concept design, information collection, writing and editing, through to print management and delivery. We bring the latest thinking and advice to ensure enhanced disclosure.

Contact Lerato Ramoba: [lerato@trialogue.co.za](mailto:lerato@trialogue.co.za) or 011 026 1308



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# OVERVIEW OF 2024 CSI RESEARCH

Triologue is pleased to present its 27th consecutive year of research into the state of corporate social investment (CSI) in South Africa. This chapter outlines the most noteworthy results from the 2024 primary research as well as Triologue's secondary analysis of CSI expenditure. Note that '2024' refers to data from the 2023/24 financial year, which differs across organisations, depending on the month of financial year-ends.

Total estimated  
CSI expenditure  
in 2024 was

**R12.7  
BILLION**

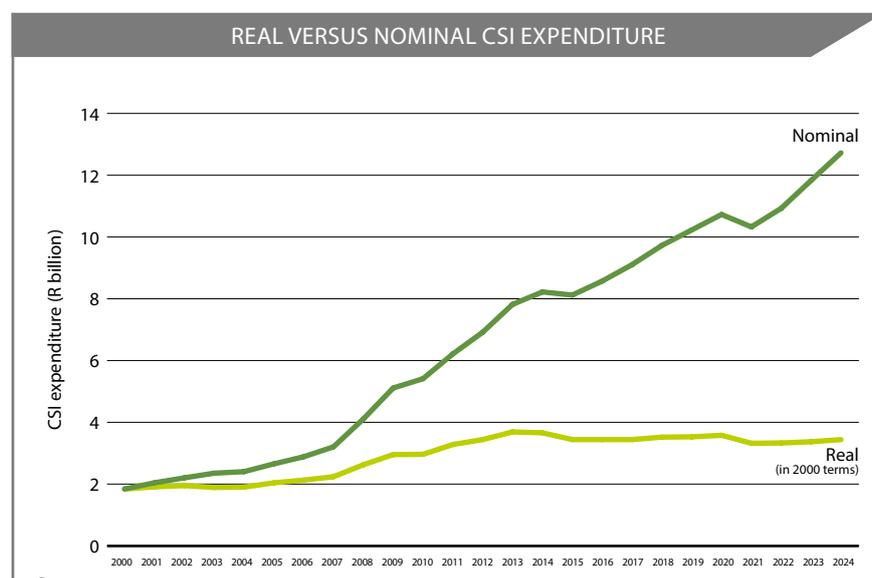
## Estimate of total CSI expenditure

This estimate is based on an analysis of the CSI expenditure of listed South African companies and multinationals operating in South Africa as well as state-owned enterprises. Our analysis considers:

- Year-on-year changes in the CSI expenditure of 133 listed companies and the net profit after tax (NPAT) of 128 listed companies, using publicly reported data
- Year-on-year changes in the CSI expenditure of the 75 companies that participated in Triologue's 2024 primary research and a year-on-year comparison for the 36 companies that participated in the 2023 and 2024 research
- A triangulation of published CSI expenditure as a percentage of published NPAT with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) data on total company taxable income and tax
- A comparison of the combined CSI expenditure of the top 100 published expenditure companies and scenario analysis of how much of the total market the top 100 companies represent
- An extrapolation of total expenditure based on the number of medium and small companies in South Africa.

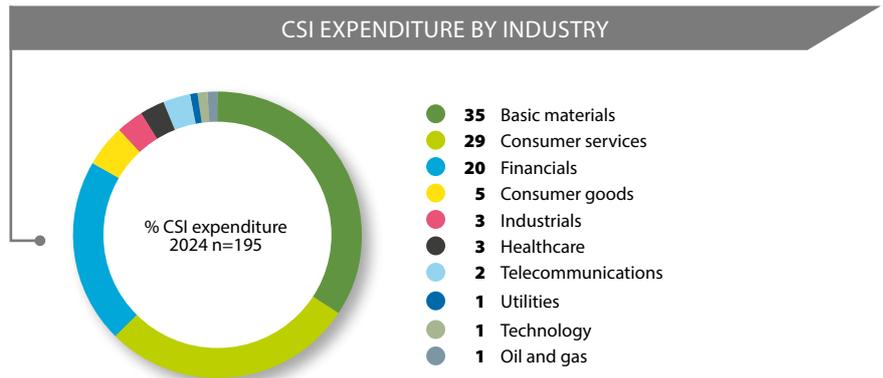
## Growth in total CSI expenditure

- The trend-line in CSI expenditure has shown inconsistent movement after an extended period of growth in real terms between 1998 and 2013. In 2014 and 2015, CSI expenditure experienced negative growth in real terms. In 2016 and 2017, real growth flattened. It showed a slight increase between 2018 and 2020 before showing a significant decline in 2021 because of Covid-19. Growth in 2022 and 2023 was marginal in real terms.
- In 2024, our CSI estimate showed a 2.2% real (7.5% nominal) increase from the previous year to R12.7 billion. This real growth is a significant increase over the past two post-Covid-19 years and reflects a recovery from that period, despite a difficult operating environment for companies in 2024.



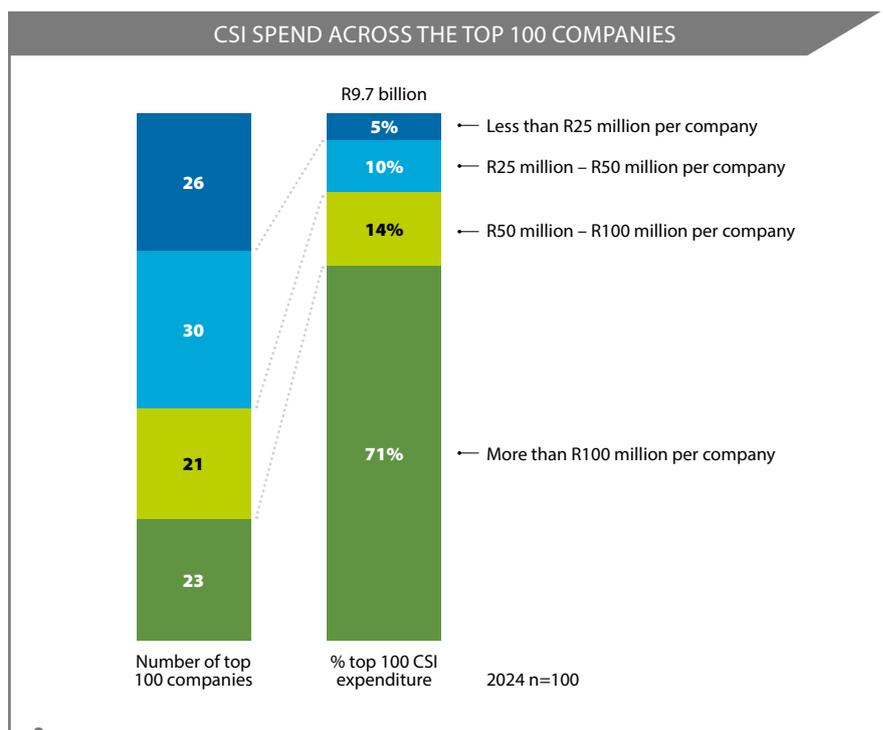
### CSI spend by industry sector

- Based on the estimated CSI expenditure data of 195 companies in 2024, the three industry sectors contributing the most to CSI were the same as in previous years.
- Basic materials (29 companies), including mining, water, forestry and chemicals, accounted for the largest portion of CSI expenditure (35%) in 2024.
- Consumer services (35 companies), including retail, media, travel and tourism, was the second-largest contributor, accounting for 29% of CSI expenditure, a sizable portion of which was non-cash contributions.
- Financials (55 companies) was the third-largest sector, accounting for 20% of CSI expenditure in 2023.



### CSI spend across the top 100 companies

- CSI expenditure remained concentrated, with the top 100 companies (by CSI spend) accounting for R9.7 billion, or 76%, of total CSI expenditure estimated at R12.7 billion.
- Of the total R9.7 billion spent by the top 100 companies, nearly three-quarters (71%) was spent by the 23 companies whose CSI expenditure exceeded R100 million and averaged close to R300 million in 2024.



## RESPONDENTS

### Companies

Between May and August 2024 professional researchers conducted interviews with CSI representatives from large South African companies. Companies also had the option of self-completing the online questionnaire, which was then verified by the researchers.

- There were 75 participating companies in 2024. Of these, 52 (69%) also participated in 2023.

- Since it was first measured in 2011, the financial sector has been the best-represented sector in the corporate respondent sample (29% in 2024). The consumer goods sector was the second largest in 2024 (16%), followed by consumer services (including retail, travel and leisure) at 13% and basic materials at 12%. Other sectors included education, legal services, logistics and manufacturing.

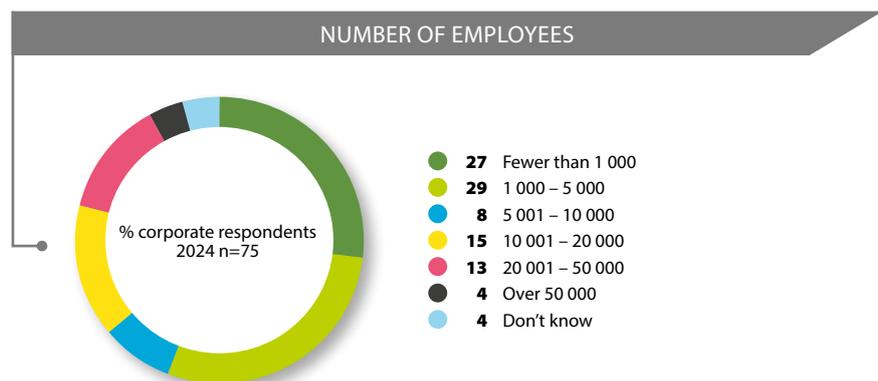
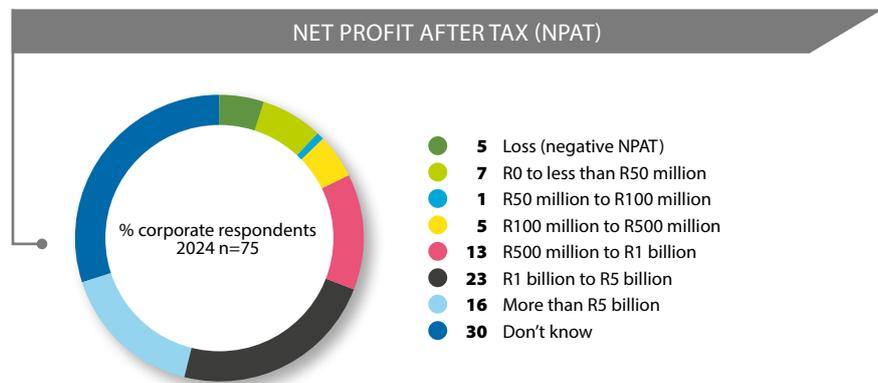
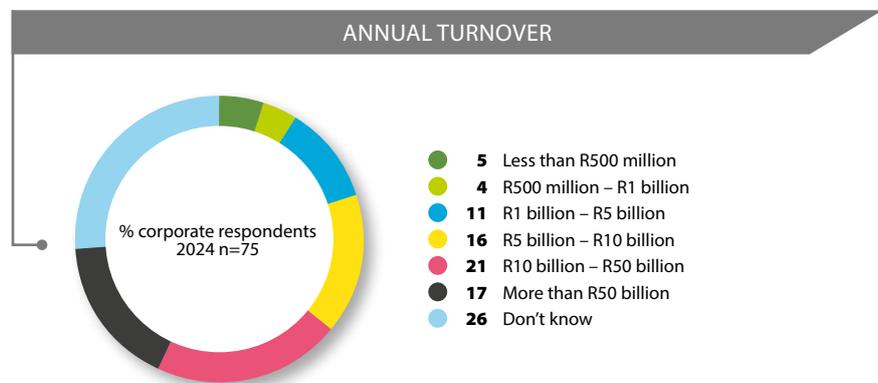
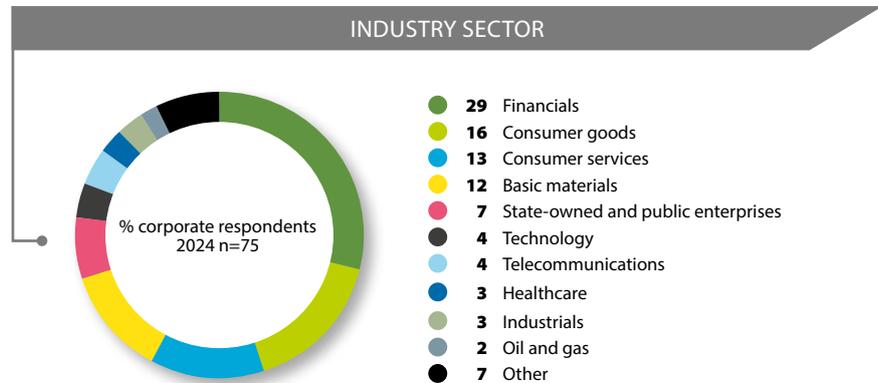
- The surveyed companies were large, with about two-thirds (65%) having an annual income of over R1 billion in their latest full financial year and 38% having an income of over R10 billion. Over a third of companies (39%) had an NPAT of over R1 billion.

- Two-fifths (40%) of companies employed more than 5 000 people, with 17% having more than 20 000 employees.

- Six in 10 companies (60%) had a Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) status of level 1 or level 2.

- Most companies (85%) scored the full five points for the socioeconomic development (SED) element of the BBBEE Scorecard.

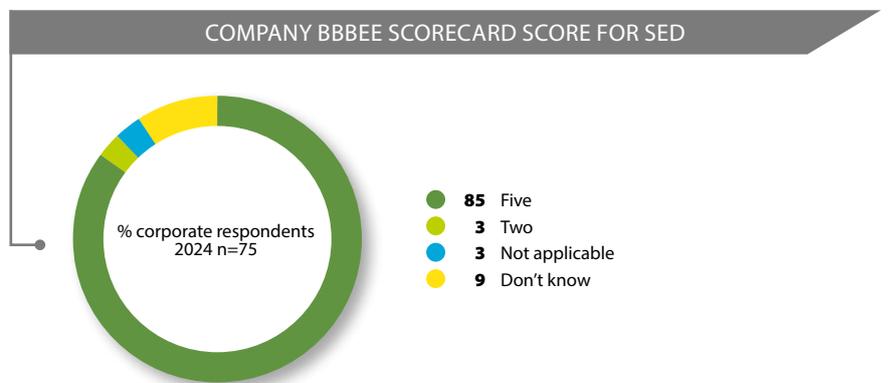
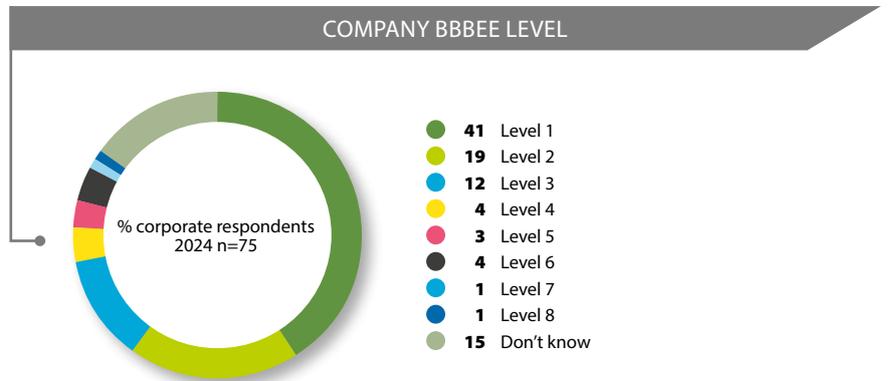
- Twenty companies in the sample (27%) are included in the FTSE/JSE Responsible Investment Index. Of these, 14 companies (70%) are in the top 30 companies in the index.





American data cited in this chapter is taken from Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose's (CECP) *Giving in Numbers 2024 Edition*. It is based on responses from 219 US-headquartered companies that took part in the *Giving in Numbers 2024* survey on 2023 contributions.

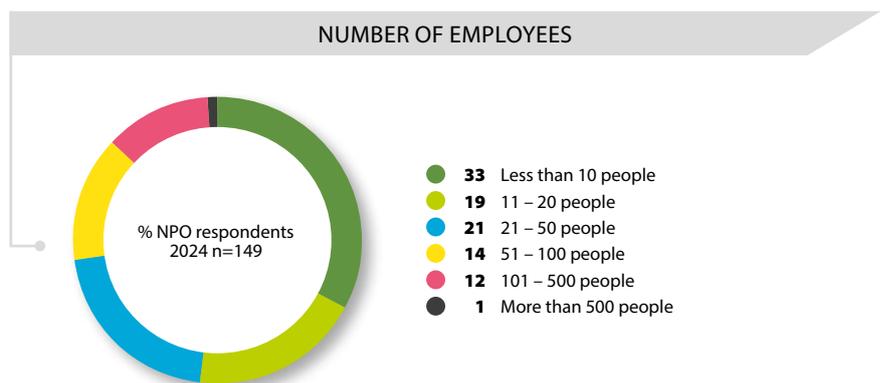
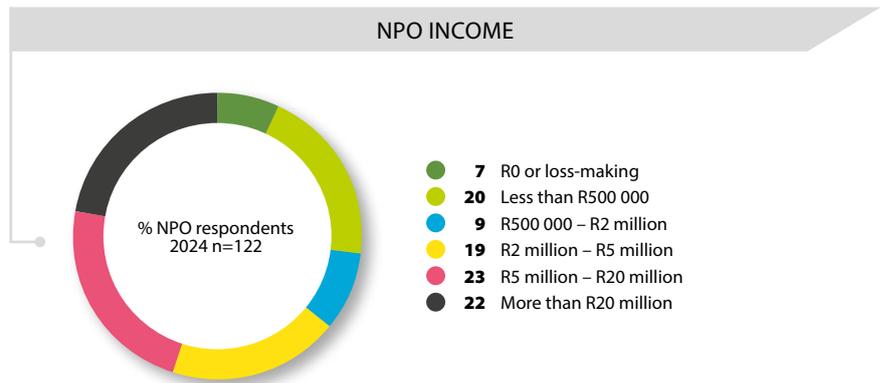
Dialogue is the southern African partner of the CECP Global Exchange, a network of country-based, mission-driven corporate engagement organisations that aims to advance business as a force for good around the world.



## Nonprofit organisations

Nonprofit organisations (NPOs) were surveyed between May and July 2024, using the online survey tool Qualtrics.

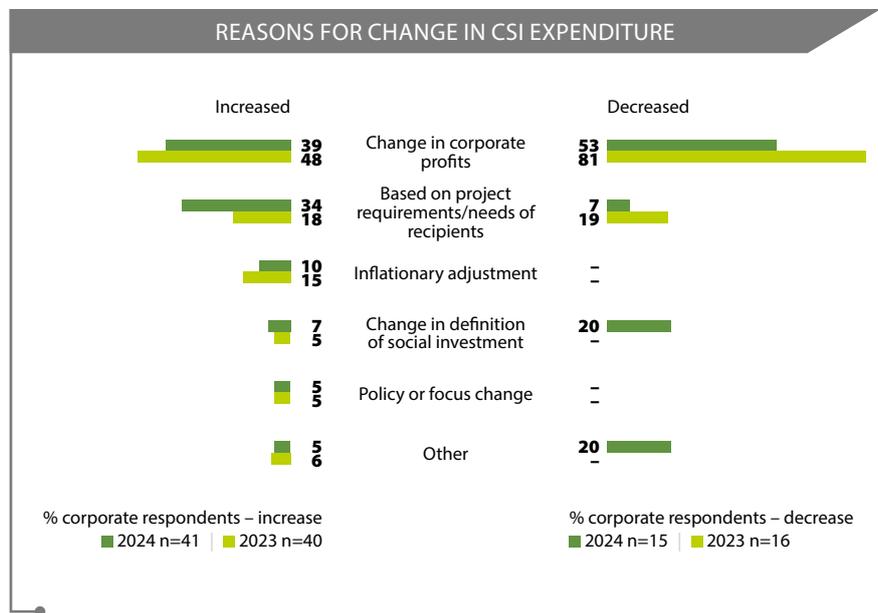
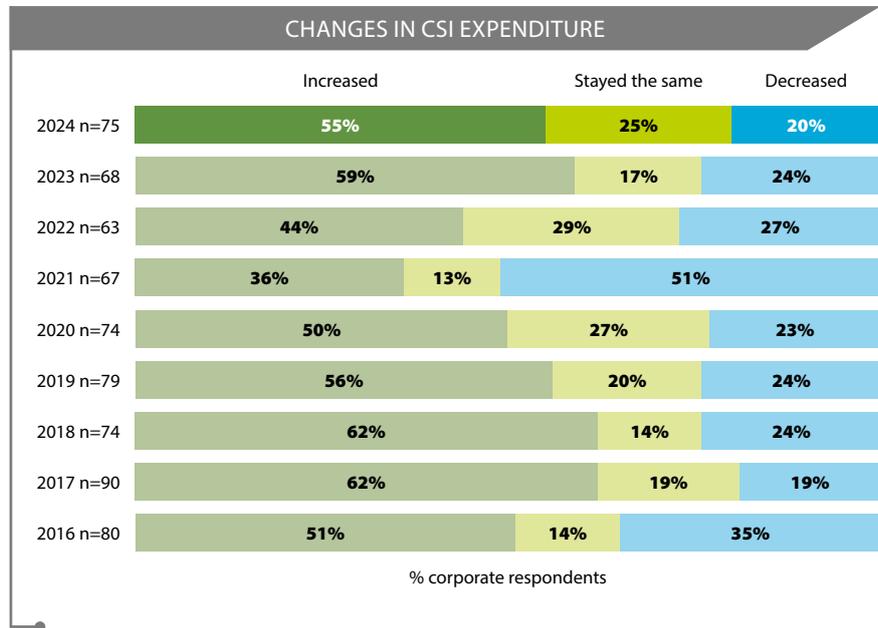
- A total of 149 NPOs participated in the 2024 research. Of these, only 14% or 21 organisations, also participated in 2023.
- The NPO sample was relatively evenly distributed in terms of organisation size, although weighted towards medium to large organisations with an annual income of between R2 million and R20 million (42%). Over one-fifth (22%) of the sample had annual incomes of more than R20 million.
- About three-quarters of NPOs (73%) employed 50 people or fewer, while 13% employed over 100 people.



## CSI EXPENDITURE IN 2024

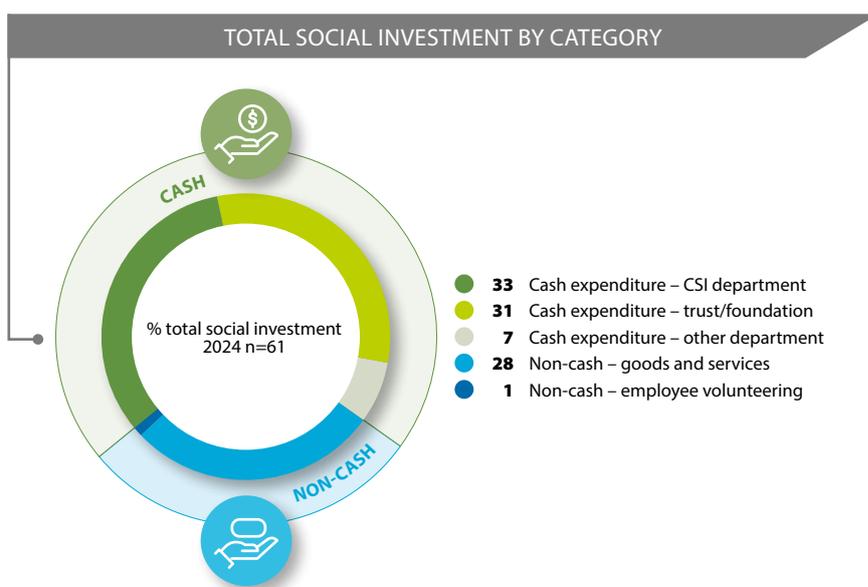
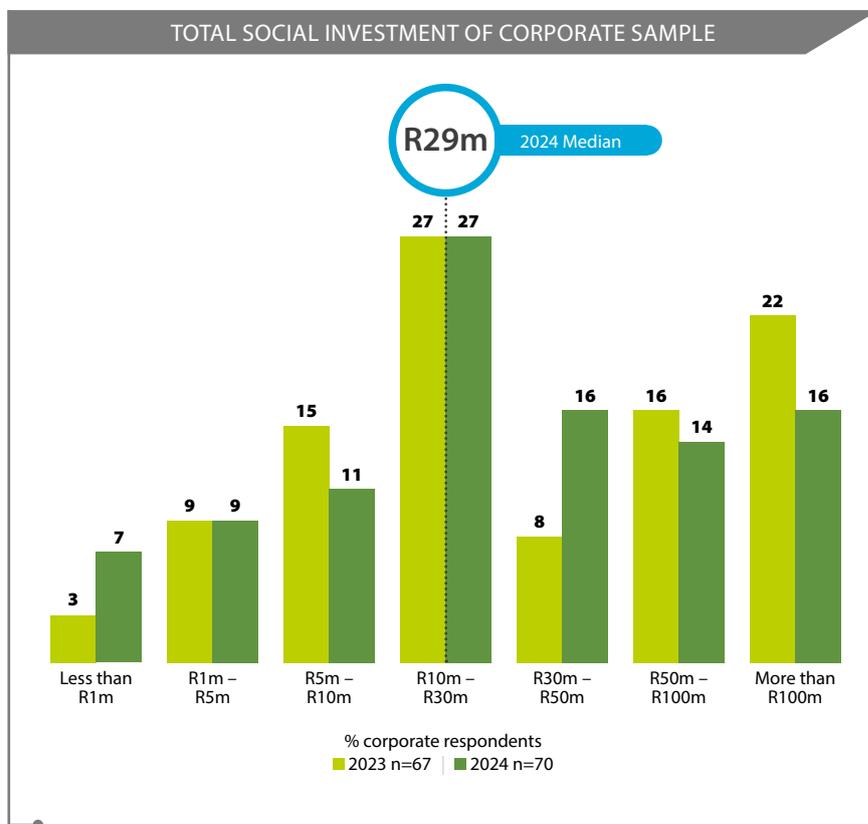
### Changes in CSI expenditure

- A slightly lower percentage (55%) of companies reported that their CSI expenditure had increased in 2024 than in 2023 (59%). Results remained positive and higher than 2022 (44%) and 2021 (36%), when notable decreases were associated with the pandemic and subsequent economic downturn.
- The proportion of companies reporting a decrease in CSI expenditure in 2024 dropped to 20% from 24% in 2023, 27% in 2022 and 51% in 2021. This is a more positive finding than in the US where over half of companies (53%) decreased their total community investment between 2021 and 2023.
- Changes in corporate profits remained the most frequently cited reason for both year-on-year increases and decreases in CSI expenditure, followed by project requirements/needs of recipients.
- Interestingly, three of the 15 companies (20%) that reported lower CSI expenditure in 2024, cited a change in definition of social investment as the reason, presumably with some previous CSI expenditure moving to a different budget line item.



## Value of social investment of corporate sample

- Almost three-quarters of the 70 companies that indicated the range of their CSI expenditure (51 companies, 73%) spent more than R10 million on social investment in 2024. Twenty-one companies (30%) invested more than R50 million and 11 companies (16%) invested more than R100 million.
- Total social investment of the 61 companies that reported exact expenditure figures for 2024 was just over R4.1 billion. Total social investment is comprised of cash CSI expenditure by a CSI department, foundation or other department and non-cash expenditure in the form of donated goods and services, and volunteering time. It excludes expenditure through BBBEE community ownership trusts (four companies reported spending through such trusts, to the value of R89 million in 2024).
- Most social investment was in the form of cash expenditure through a CSI department, other department or trust/foundation. Cumulatively, cash expenditure through these channels amounted to 71% of total social investment in 2024.
- Cash CSI expenditure totalled over R2.9 billion and was mainly spent through a CSI department (33% of cash expenditure) or a separate legal entity such as a trust or a foundation (31%).
- Non-cash giving amounted to R1.2 billion for the sample – equivalent to 29% of total social investment – and was almost entirely (98%) comprised of donations of goods and services. This differs from the US where product donations comprised 61% of non-cash giving and pro bono services 20% in 2023. The high proportion of non-cash giving in the South African sample over the past three years is largely attributable to the high value of goods donated by one retail company, the value of which amounted to 69% of total non-cash giving by all companies in the 2024 sample.

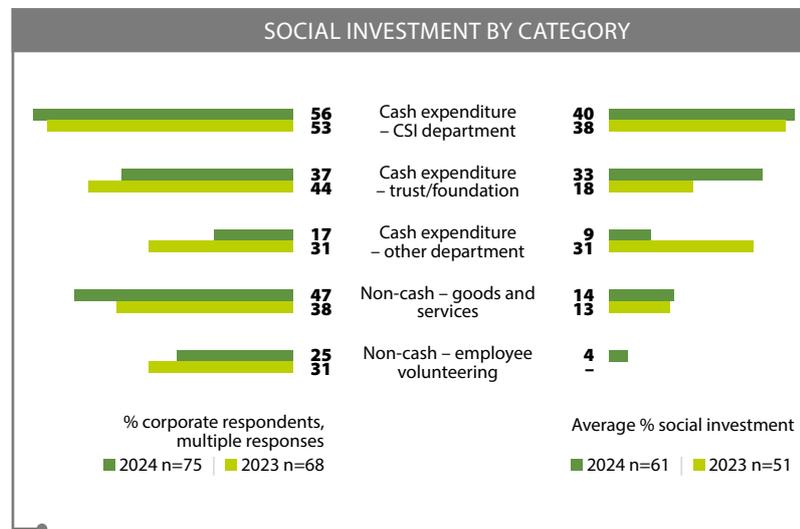


- The 2024 median social investment of the 61 companies reporting exact expenditure figures was just over R29 million, consistent with 2023 results. The average total social investment by companies reporting values decreased to R68 million from R75 million in 2023, although still higher than the R59 million spent in 2022.

## CSI EXPENDITURE IN 2024 (continued)

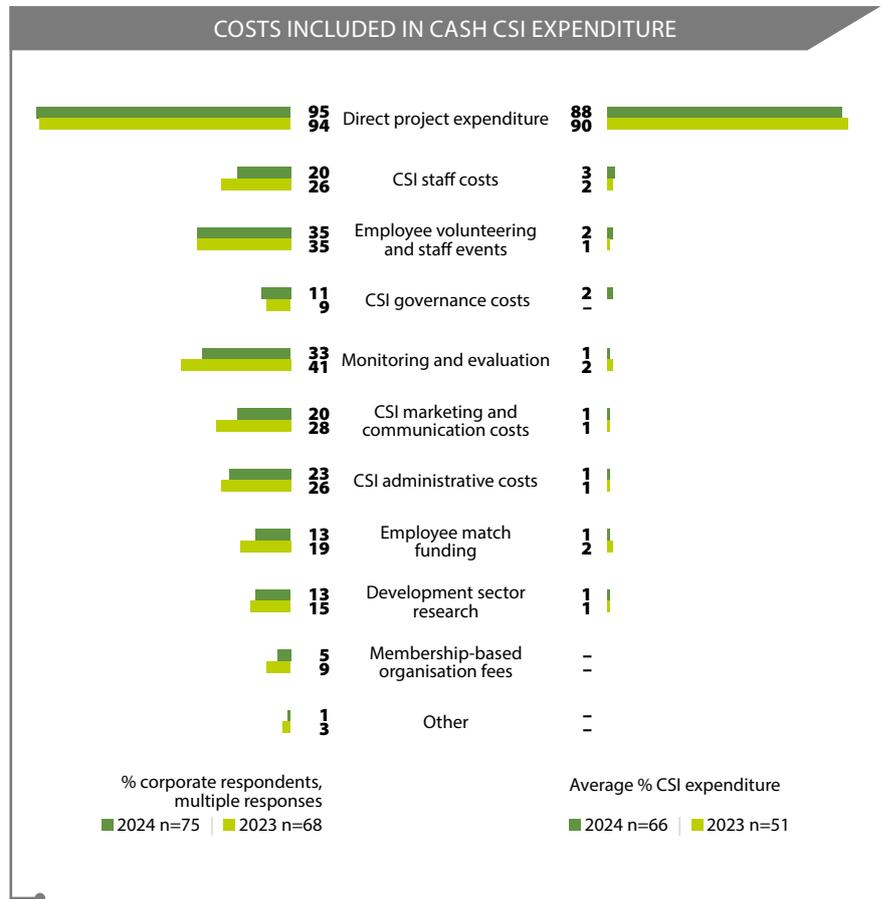
## Categories of social investment

- In 2024, just over half of companies (56%) reported CSI expenditure through a CSI department, comparable to 53% in 2023. Average cash expenditure through a CSI department increased slightly to 40% of total expenditure in 2024 from 38% in 2023.
- Only 17% of companies reported cash expenditure through another company department or division other than CSI in 2024, compared with 31% in 2023. The average expenditure in this category also dropped considerably, from 31% in 2023 to only 9% in 2024.
- About a third of companies (37%) reported cash expenditure through a trust or foundation in 2024, a decline from 44% in 2023. However, the average cash expenditure through a trust or foundation almost doubled, from 18% in 2023 to 33% in 2024. This is still fewer companies than in the US where over three-quarters of companies (76%) reported cash expenditure through a foundation, which comprised 35% of total community investments on average in 2023.
- Over half of companies (41 companies, 55%) reported non-cash giving of products, services, volunteering time or a combination of these. This is also lower than in the US where 69% of companies reported non-cash giving.
- More companies reported giving goods and services in 2024 (47% compared to 38% in 2023) but the average CSI expenditure through this category remained almost the same at 14% in 2024.
- Although 19 companies (25%) reported contributing volunteering time in 2024, only six companies quantified its value, resulting in a low average value across the sample (4%).



### CSI expenditure line items

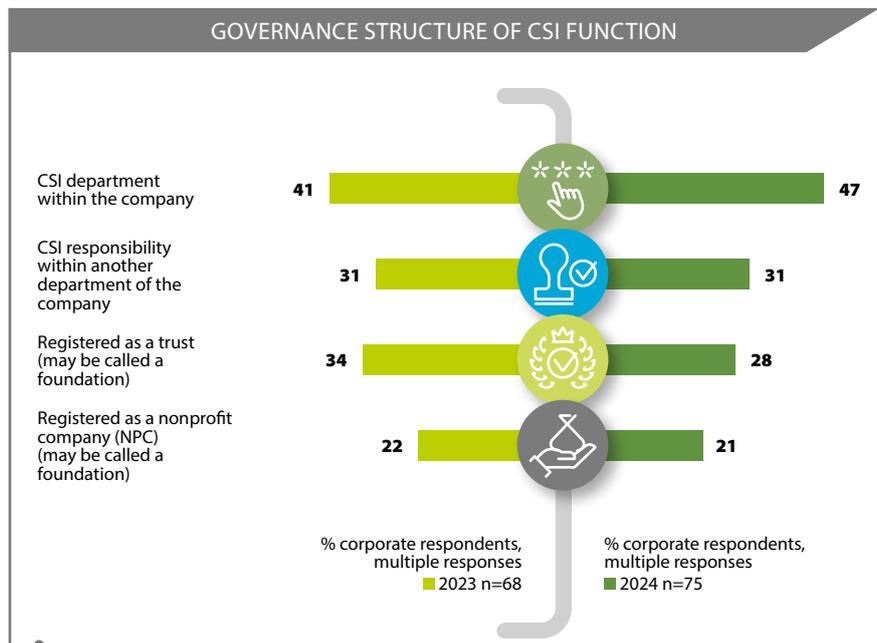
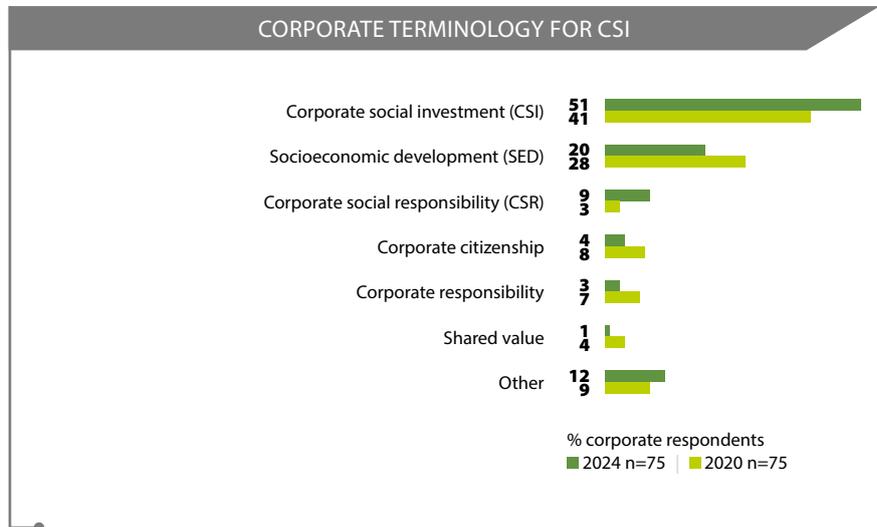
- Almost all respondent companies (95%) included direct project expenditure in cash CSI expenditure, which comprised 88% of total cash CSI expenditure on average, slightly lower than in 2023 (90%).
- Costs related to CSI staff were included in the CSI budget by a fifth of companies (20%, slightly lower than 26% in 2023). However, the average expenditure on staff was just 3% of companies' cash CSI expenditure.
- Just over a third of companies (35%) included employee volunteering and staff events costs in CSI expenditure, recording an average spent of 2% for this category.
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) costs were included by 33% of companies, a decrease from 41% in 2023. However, the average percentage of CSI expenditure on M&E was just 1%.
- Two percent of average CSI expenditure went to CSI governance costs, representing a marginal increase from zero in recent years.



## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### Governance structure

- About half of participating companies (51%) use the term corporate social investment (CSI), an increase from 41% in 2020. The use of the term socioeconomic development (SED) – which is the term used in the BBEE regulations – has become less common, declining from 28% to 20% over the same period. The same has happened for the term ‘shared value’ which has declined from 4% in 2020 to only 1% in 2024. Some of the ‘other’ terms used were social impact and community development/support/engagement.
- In 2024, around a fifth of participating companies (15 companies) reported having multiple structures for managing CSI. In most cases (11 companies), respondents reported a CSI department in the company as well as a trust and/or foundation. This is consistent with previous years with 16 companies reporting CSI expenditure through multiple structures in both 2022 and 2023.
- Fifty-six companies (75%) managed at least some of their CSI internally in 2024 – 33 companies through a dedicated department within the company, 21 companies through another internal department and two companies reporting the use of both.
- Of the 56 companies that managed their CSI within a division or department, 71% cited integration with the business and sustainability agendas as the main reason for doing so, followed by forming part of the broader company social impact (59%) and access to business staff and systems (34%).

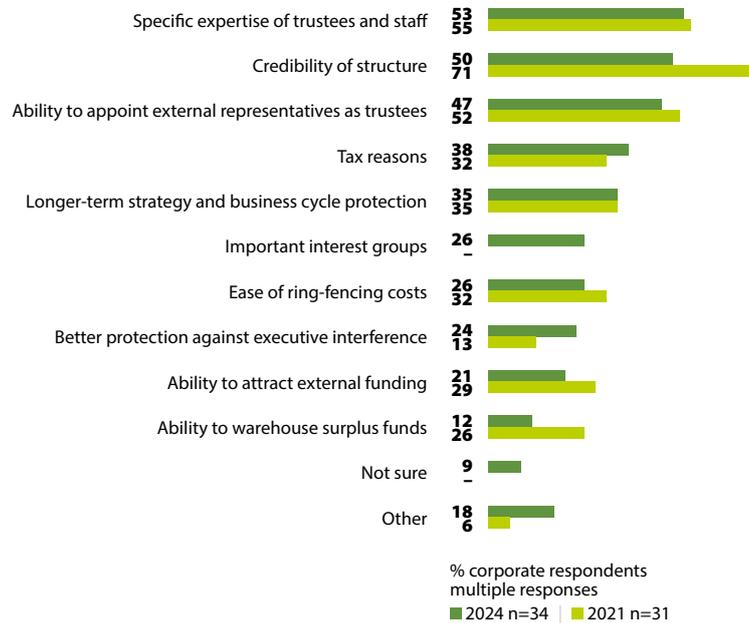


- Almost half of the companies (34 companies, 45%) managed at least some of their CSI through a separate legal entity. Of these 34 companies, 18 (53%) managed their CSI through a registered trust, 13 companies (38%) through a registered nonprofit company (NPC) and three companies (9%) through both.
- The primary reason for managing CSI through a trust or NPC was the specific expertise of trustees and staff (mentioned by 53% of companies in 2024, in line with 55% in 2021), followed by the credibility of the structure (mentioned by 50% of companies in 2024, down from 71% in 2021).

#### REASONS FOR MANAGING CSI INTERNALLY THROUGH A DIVISION/DEPARTMENT



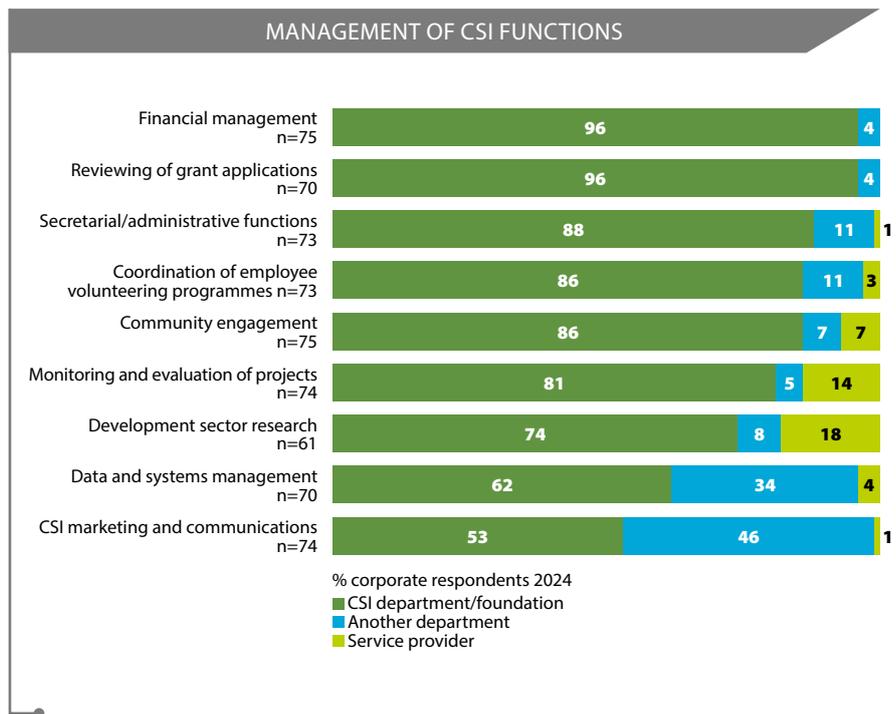
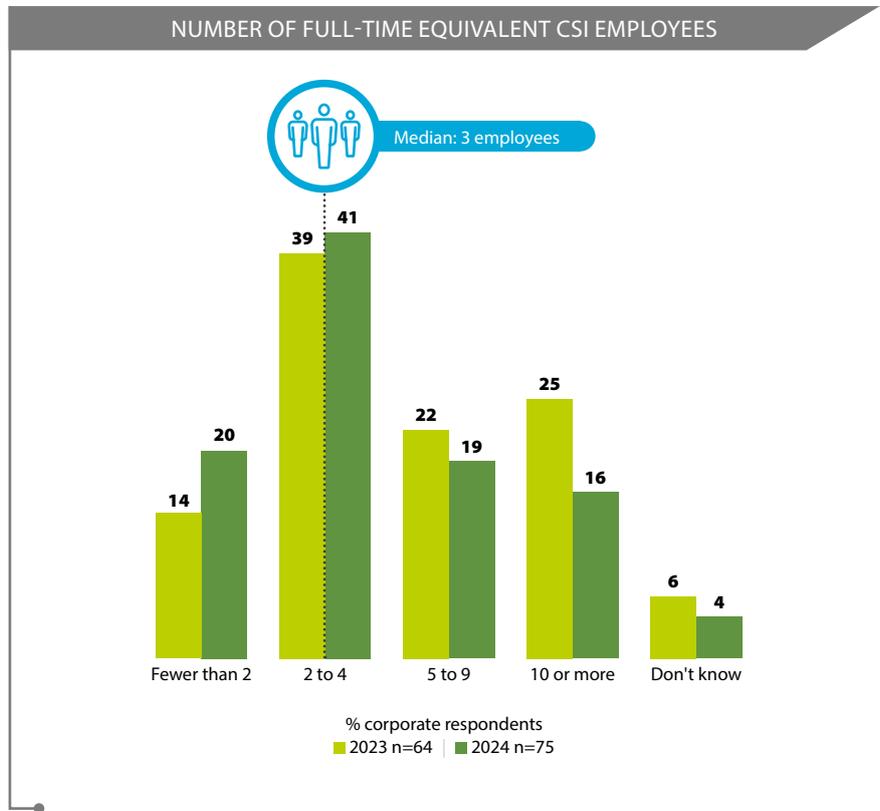
#### REASONS FOR MANAGING CSI EXTERNALLY THROUGH AN NPC/TRUST



GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

Management of CSI functions

- Six in 10 companies (61%) had small teams of fewer than five full-time equivalent (FTE) employees managing and administering CSI in 2024 and 20% had fewer than two FTE employees. Only 16% employed 10 or more people in 2024 compared to 25% in 2023.
- In 2024, the median number of FTE CSI employees was three, unchanged from 2023 and 2022. In the US the median number of community investment employees was nine in 2023.
- Company CSI departments managed most CSI functions internally. The majority of CSI departments (96%) managed finances, up from 84% five years ago. CSI departments were slightly less likely to coordinate employee volunteering, which declined marginally to 86% in 2024 from 91% in 2019.
- The functions most commonly managed by another department in the company were data and systems management, and marketing and communications. Nearly half of companies (46%) have another department managing CSI marketing and communication, a significant increase from 19% in 2019.
- Development sector research and M&E were the functions most commonly outsourced to service providers, by 18% and 14% of companies respectively in 2024, down from 33% and 22% in 2019.

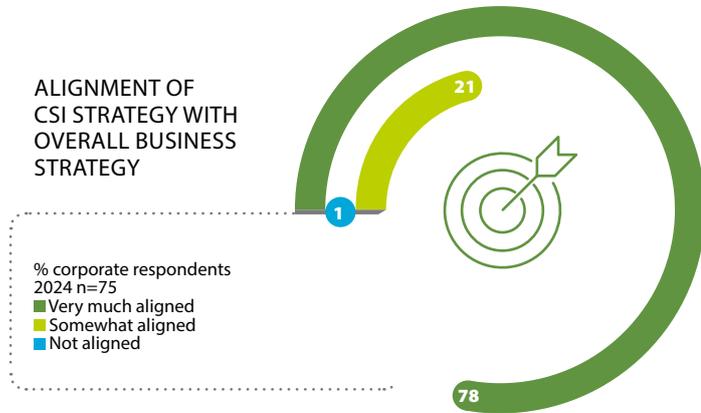


## STRATEGY

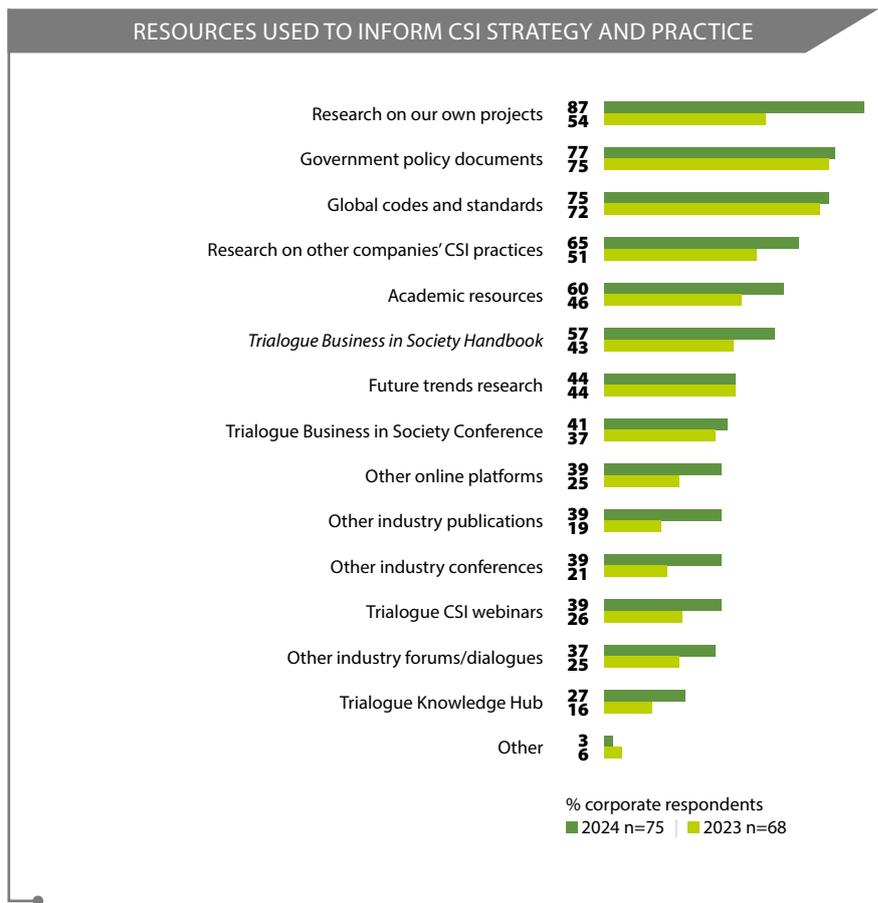
### CSI strategy

- Over three-quarters of companies (78%) have a CSI strategy that is very much aligned with the overall business strategy. Around a fifth (21%) described their CSI strategy as somewhat aligned with the company's business strategy.
- Companies were most likely to conduct their own research (87%) to inform their CSI strategy and practice, followed by using government policy documents (77%), global codes and standards (75%) and research on other companies' CSI practices (65%).
- There were increases in the use of academic resources (60%) and this Handbook (57%), up from 46% and 43% respectively in 2023.
- Overall, there has been an increase in the use of all listed resources in 2024.

### ALIGNMENT OF CSI STRATEGY WITH OVERALL BUSINESS STRATEGY



### RESOURCES USED TO INFORM CSI STRATEGY AND PRACTICE

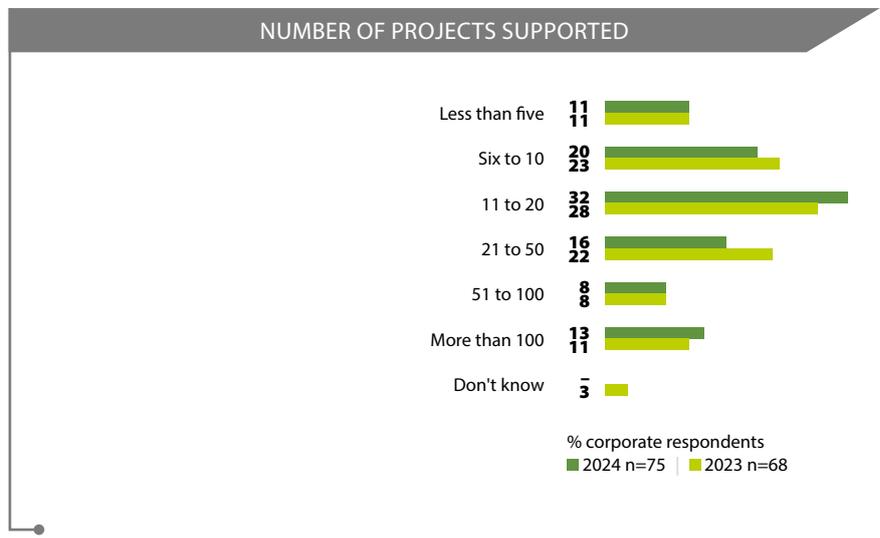


Read pages 80–81 for the winner of the *Dialogue Strategic CSI Award 2024*.

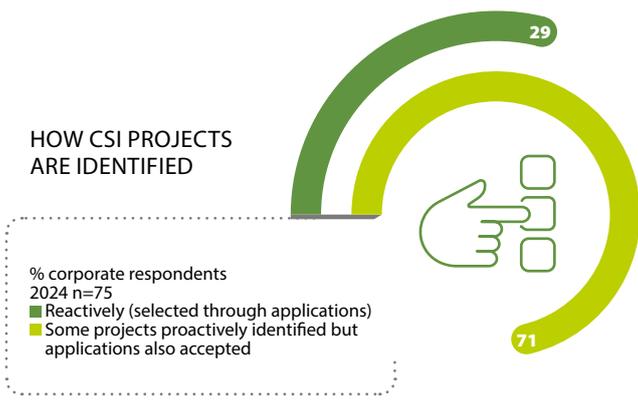
STRATEGY (continued)

Number and type of CSI projects

- Companies supported many projects, with 69% supporting more than 10 CSI projects. Thirteen percent of the sample, or 10 companies, supported over 100 projects.
- The percentage of companies supporting between 21 and 50 projects decreased to 16% in 2024 from 22% in 2023.
- In 2024, nearly three-quarters of companies (71%) identified projects through a combination of proactive (identify through CSI function) and reactive (select through applications) measures, while the remainder (29%) identified projects reactively through applications.

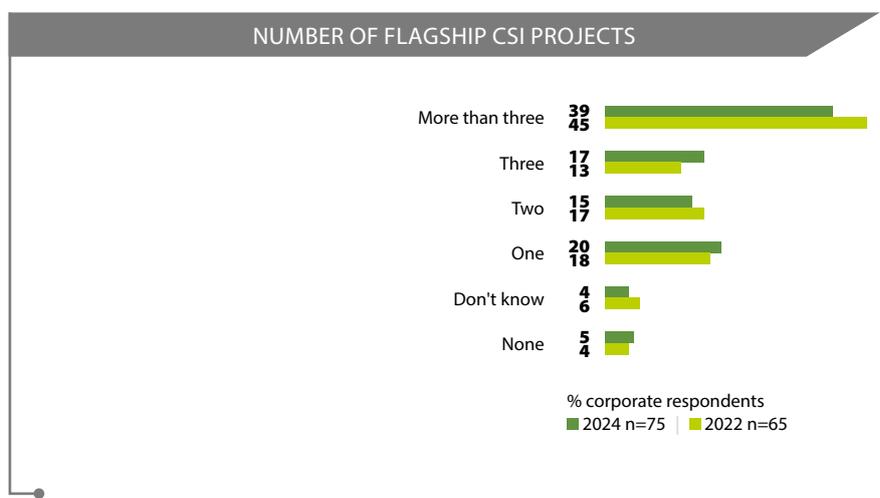


HOW CSI PROJECTS ARE IDENTIFIED

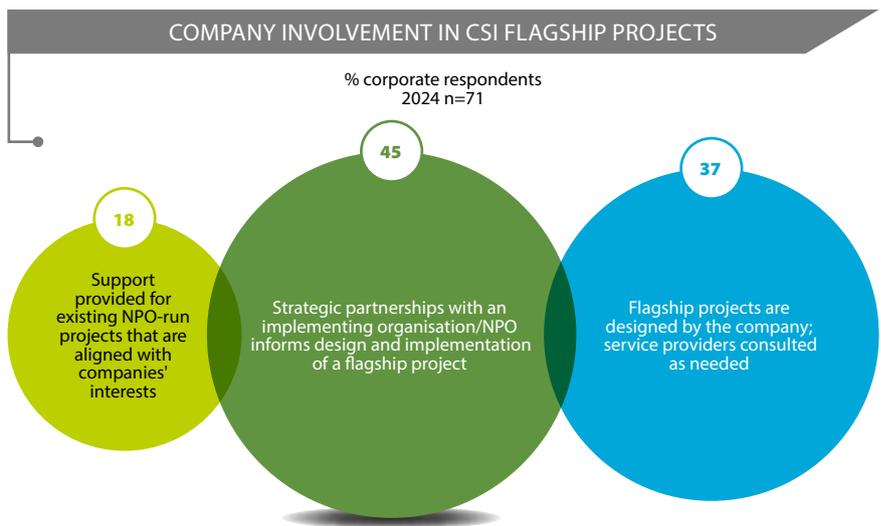
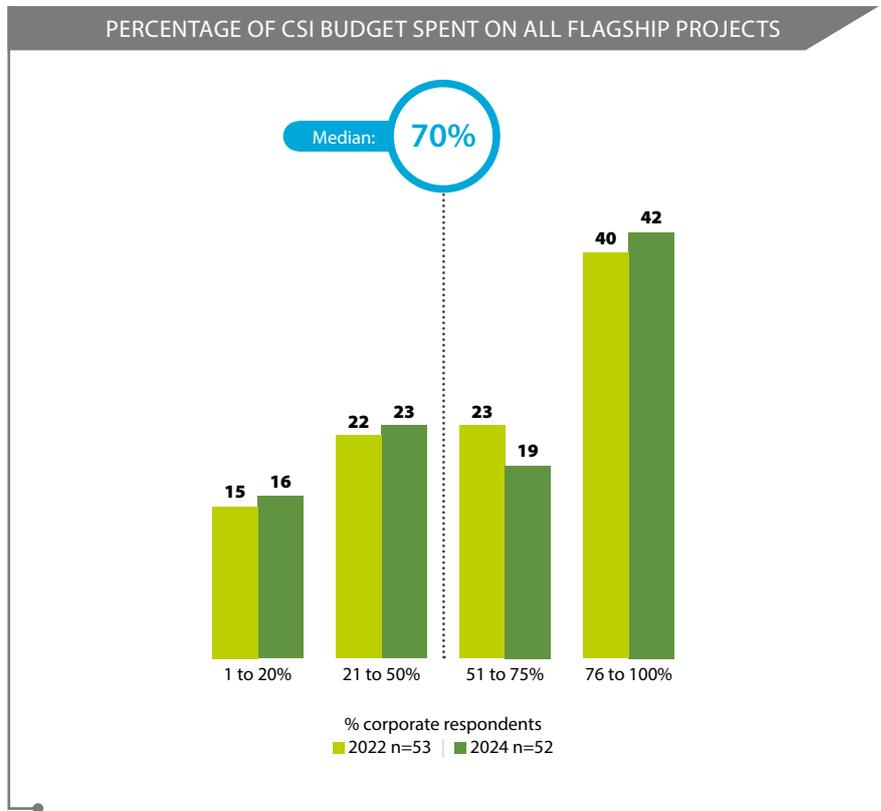


Flagship projects

- More than half of companies (56%) supported three or more flagship projects in 2024. Consistent with 2022 results, over a third of companies (35%) supported one or two flagship projects.



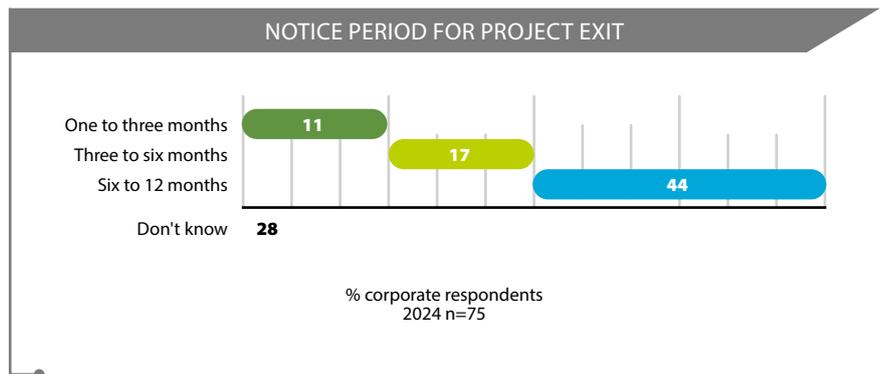
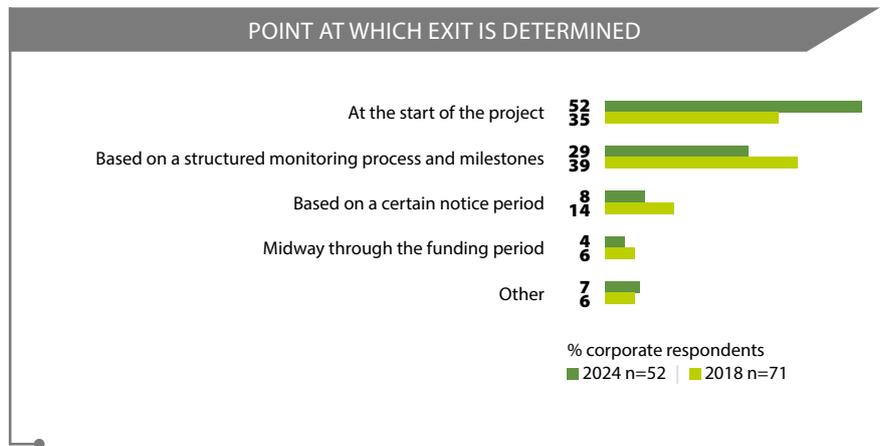
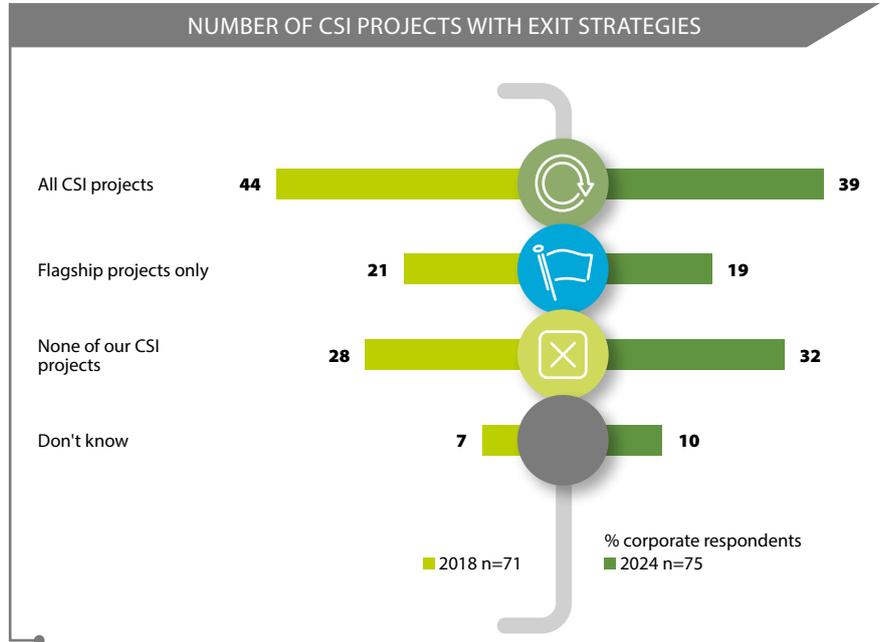
- In line with findings from 2022, on average companies spend 61% of their CSI budget on flagship projects. The median CSI budget allocation to flagship projects was 70% in 2024, with over 60% of companies spending more than half of their CSI budget on flagship projects.
- Most companies (63%) partnered with NPOs to implement their flagship projects. The remaining 37% designed and implemented projects themselves, consistent with a split of 62% and 38% respectively in 2022.



STRATEGY (continued)

Project exit strategies

- Around four in 10 companies (39%) reported having exit strategies for all their CSI projects in 2024. In contrast, a third of companies (32%) do not have exit strategies for any of their CSI projects. This represents a slight decrease in the prevalence of exit strategies from 2018, when 44% of companies had exit strategies for all their CSI projects and 28% did not have any.
- Most companies determined the project exit point either at the start of a project (52%) or based on the results of structured monitoring processes and milestones (29%). Upfront determination of project exit increased from 35% in 2018 to 52% in 2024.
- Companies are providing longer exit notice periods. The highest percentage of companies (44%) provide between six and 12 months' notice before exiting a project, a considerable increase from 25% in 2018. The percentage of companies providing one to six months' notice declined from 34% in 2018 to 28% in 2024.



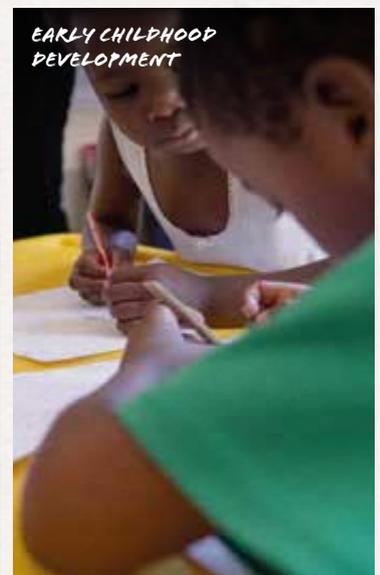
## LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

Sound exit strategies are crucial for ensuring that the NPOs and projects from which companies withdraw their support remain sustainable. They can help to reduce an NPO's dependency and strengthen its resilience; facilitate the capacity building of NPO staff and communities; clarify expectations and the extent of responsibilities; and encourage community ownership of projects. Some considerations for companies regarding project exits:

- 1 Plan your exit from a project or NPO at the outset of your involvement. If not planned from the outset, consider phasing your exit and giving sufficient time for affected NPOs and communities to prepare and build up alternative sources of funding.
- 2 Engage project stakeholders to promote a shared approach to responsible exiting.
- 3 Consider the language used – a sustainability strategy, rather than an exit strategy, provides a more positive framing and describes the process from the partner's perspective.
- 4 Communicate the exit strategy clearly and consistently.
- 5 Include time-bound targets and criteria for exiting and assigned responsibilities for exit activities and monitoring.
- 6 Develop an exit budget that accounts for the transition costs – such as the upskilling of NPO staff or community members.
- 7 Incorporate aspects of capacity building and knowledge-sharing with the NPO and broader community.
- 8 Consider non-financial support – leveraging the skills of employees to provide the NPO with specialised services or connecting the NPO with alternative potential funders, possibly from other parts of the business or business partners, such as suppliers or customers.
- 9 Build a reasonable degree of flexibility into the exit process.
- 10 Plan and set aside financial and other resources for an evaluation after exit to determine whether programme or project impact has been sustained, expanded or improved; whether the relevant activities have continued in the same or a modified format; and whether the systems that were developed continue to function effectively.



Is your CSI making  
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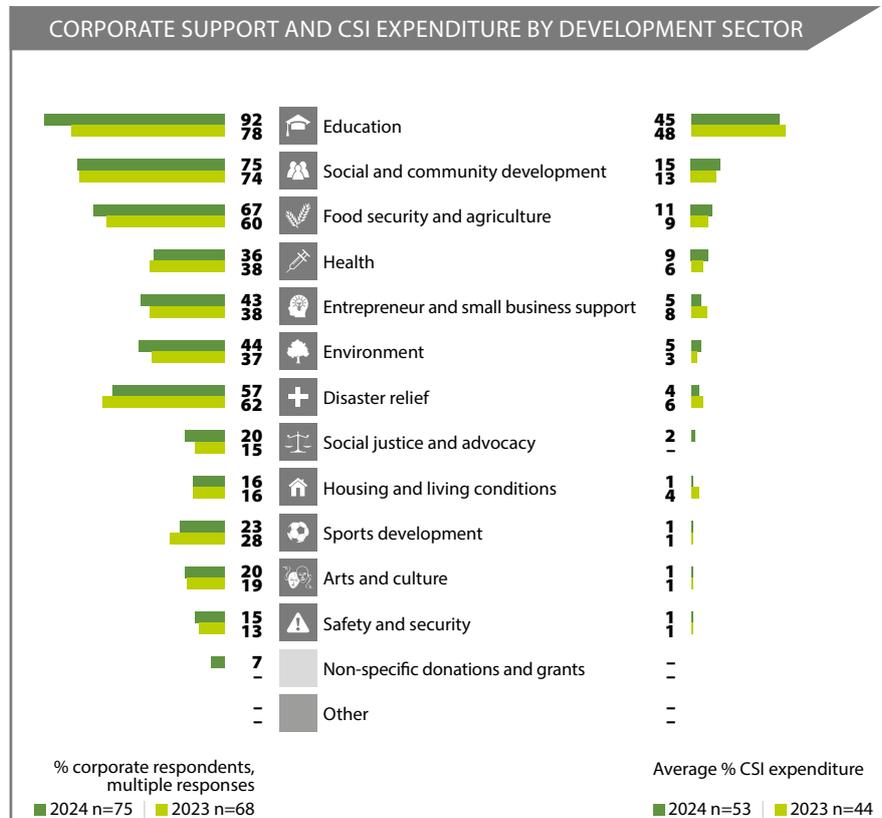
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Chest Durban**

## DEVELOPMENT SECTOR FUNDING

### Companies

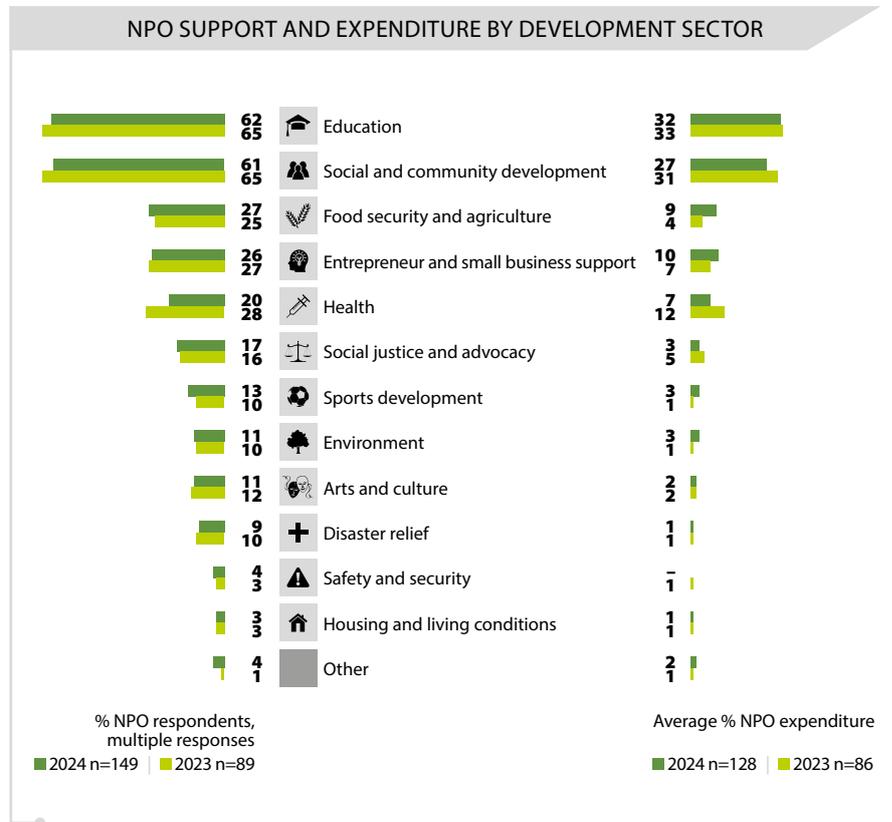
- Similar to 2023, companies supported an average of five development focus areas in 2024, with 30 companies (40%) supporting more than five areas.
- Education remains the most supported development sector among companies. While 92% of companies invested in education – a significant increase from 78% in 2023 – average CSI spend in this area decreased slightly to 45% in 2024 from 48% in 2023.
- Social and community development remains the second most supported development area, mentioned by three-quarters of companies (75%) in 2024. Average CSI spend on social and community development increased slightly to 15% in 2024.
- Food security, the third most popular development focus area (supported by 67% of companies), attracted 11% of average CSI spend in 2024, up from 9% in 2023.
- The percentage of companies supporting the health sector decreased marginally from 38% in 2023 to 36% in 2024, continuing to decline from 43% in 2022. However, at 9% the average CSI spend on health was higher in 2024 than in 2023 (6%).
- The percentage of companies supporting disaster relief declined from 62% in 2023 to 57% in 2024, with average CSI spend on the sector also decreasing from 6% to 4%.
- Support for environmental causes increased from 37% of companies in 2023 to 44% in 2024, with the sector receiving 5% of average CSI spend.
- Although 16% of companies reported support for housing and living conditions, consistent with 2023 results, the average CSI spend fell to 1% in 2024 (from 4% in 2023).



- In line with results from 2022 and 2023, a fifth of companies (20%) supported arts and culture, but the sector still received just 1% of CSI spend on average.
- More companies supported the social justice and advocacy, and safety and security sectors in 2024 than in 2023. However, average CSI spend in these sectors remains at 2% or less.
- In the US, health and social services recipient organisations and programmes received the largest average allocation of total community investment at 26% in 2023. The next most funded programme areas were education at 22% of average spend and community and economic development, which received an average of 17%.

## Nonprofit organisations

- NPOs supported an average of three sectors in 2024, in line with previous years and lower than companies, reflecting the role of NPOs as implementers.
- Consistent with previous years and the corporate sample, NPOs were most likely to support the education, and social and community development sectors. More than 60% of NPOs supported each of these sectors, accounting for an average of 32% and 27% of NPO spend respectively.
- Food security was the third most supported sector (27% of NPOs), with an average expenditure of 9% in 2024.
- The percentage of NPOs supporting the health sector decreased from 28% in 2023 to 20% in 2024, and average spend declined from 12% in 2023 to 7% in 2024.

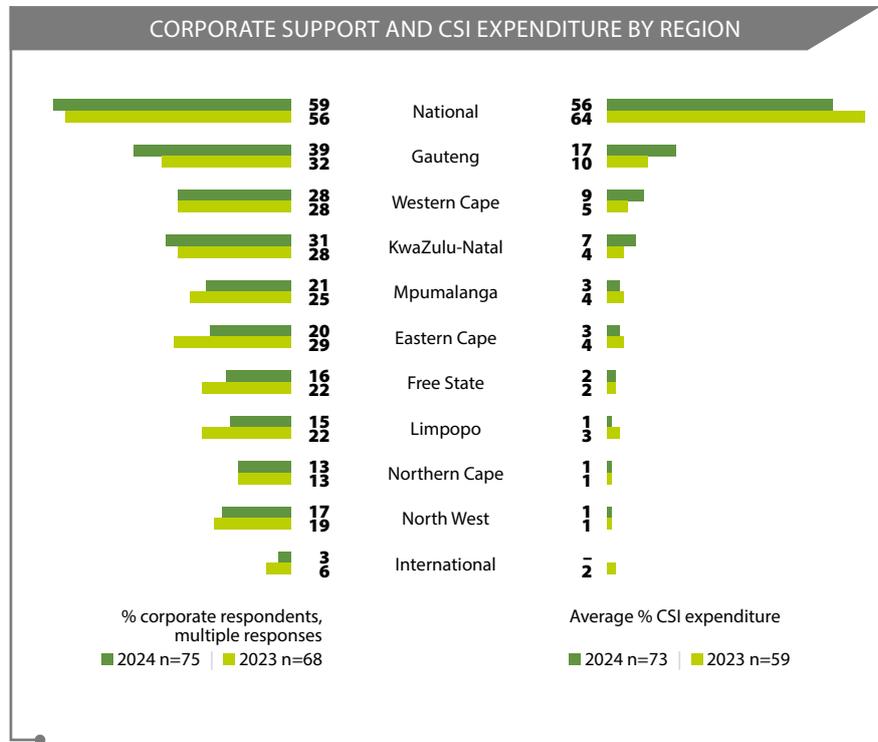


Read Chapter 3: Development sectors on pages 128–190 for a breakdown of expenditure within each sector.

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING

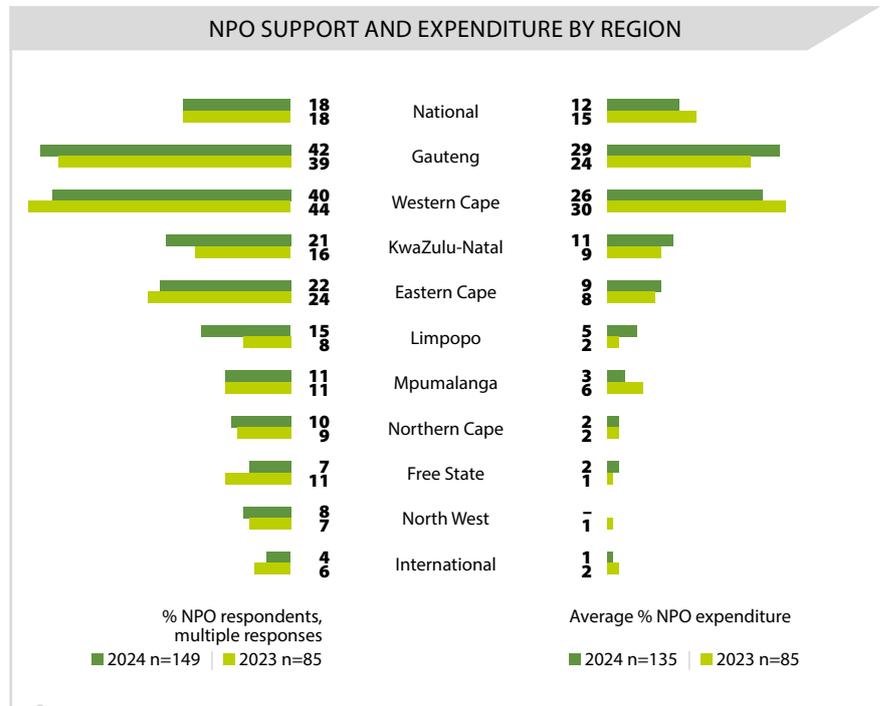
### Companies

- Companies supported projects in an average of four South African provinces in 2024, excluding international and national projects (those operating in two or more provinces). This was slightly lower than 2023, when companies supported projects in an average of five provinces.
- Over half of companies (59%) supported national projects, which accounted for 56% of average CSI expenditure in 2024. This is slightly down from last year, when national projects received 64% of average CSI expenditure.
- Gauteng was again the most supported province, receiving an average of 17% of CSI expenditure from 39% of companies. As in 2023, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal were the second and third most supported provinces, receiving support from just under a third of companies.
- Projects in all provinces except for Gauteng received less than 10% of average CSI expenditure, with Limpopo, the Northern Cape and North West province each receiving only 1% of average CSI spend in 2024.
- Only two companies (3%) supported international projects. This is significantly lower than in the US, where 73% of companies reported making community investments to international end-recipient organisations in 2023, and international giving accounted for 20% of total community investments on average.



## Nonprofit organisations

- NPOs operated projects in an average of two provinces, excluding those operating nationally and/or internationally. This is consistent with 2023 findings and lower than the company average, reflecting the community focus of many NPOs.
- The percentage of NPOs operating projects nationally remained the same at 18% in 2023 and 2024. Average expenditure on national projects decreased slightly from 15% to 12% over this period. Notably, average NPO expenditure on national projects is significantly lower than corporate expenditure on national projects (56%), reflecting NPOs' role as on-the-ground implementers in specific communities.
- Consistent with 2023 findings, the highest percentages of NPOs reported operating in South Africa's two economic hubs, Gauteng (42%) and the Western Cape (40%). Average NPO spend increased slightly in Gauteng, from 24% in 2023 to 29% in 2024, and decreased slightly in the Western Cape.



# 42 years and 40 000 learners later ...

PROTEC is celebrating 42 years of delivering high-quality education and career support to disadvantaged learners with the potential to succeed in STEM careers.

PROTEC was established in 1982 in Soweto by the SA Institute of Civil Engineers to enable black high school students to pursue engineering, science and related careers. Since then, the PROTEC model has been delivering excellent matric and bachelor pass rates. Protec has added teacher support and development to it's already impactful model providing hybrid education support in Maths, Science, English, and World of Work life skills lessons through Saturday classes, vacation school, and digital access.

#### PROTEC's success is founded on:

1. PROTEC's people who deliver the programme in the field
2. A flexible operational model
3. Funders who enable programme delivery

*Balan Moodley, PROTEC CEO, says, " Today we are proud to say the 40 000 learners have successfully passed through PROTEC's programmes and many stand in leadership positions locally and overseas. With the launch of its PROTEC Alumni Network we hope to amplify our impact and draw the PROTEC family together where Alumni mentor and support our young learners and students."*

@PROTECnpo

@PROTECnpo

@PROTEC STEM

@protecstem

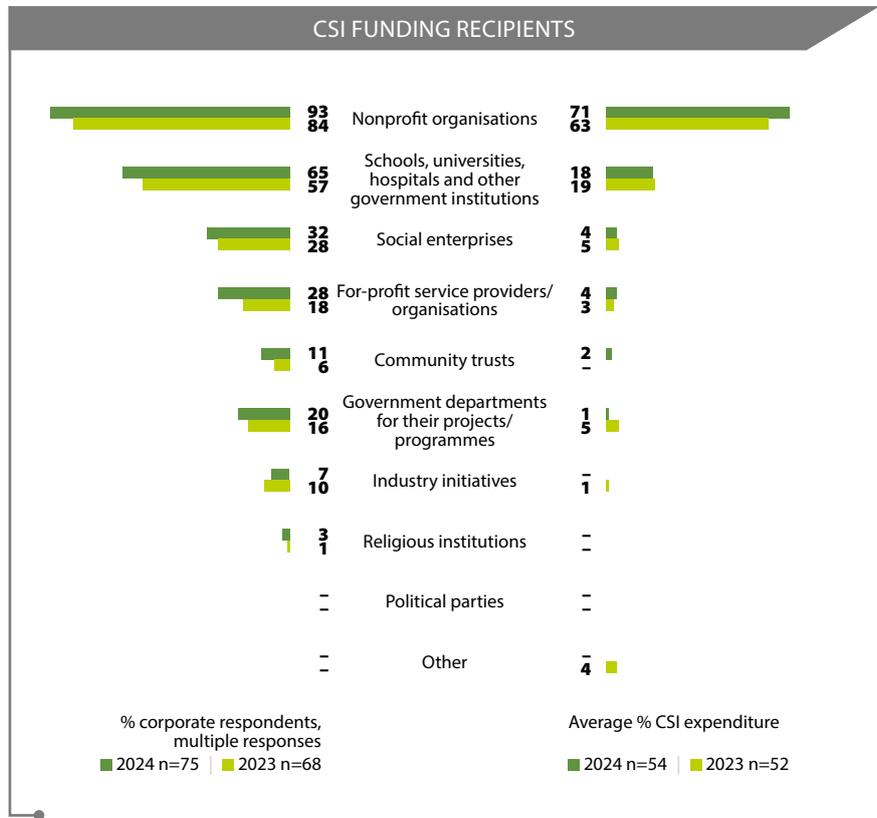
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## FUNDING RECIPIENTS

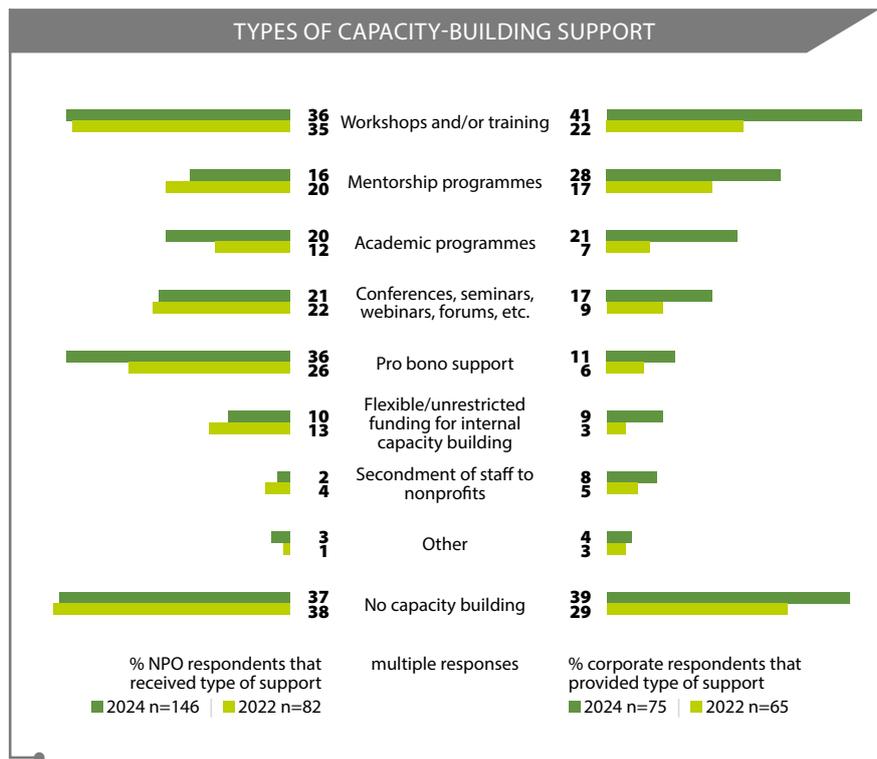
### Types of organisations supported

- NPOs remained the most commonly supported recipient type, with 93% of companies spending an average of 71% of their CSI budget on NPOs in 2024. The results show increases in both the percentage of companies supporting NPOs and the average CSI spend on NPOs.
- Schools, universities, hospitals and other government institutions remained the second most supported recipient group, mentioned by 65% of companies, with the latter receiving 18% of CSI expenditure, almost unchanged from 2023.
- Support for social enterprises is growing. About a third of companies (32%) supported social enterprises with an average of 4% of CSI expenditure in 2024, up from 15% of companies and 3% of expenditure in 2019.
- Despite 2024 being an election year, no companies mentioned supporting political parties – in line with 2023 survey results.

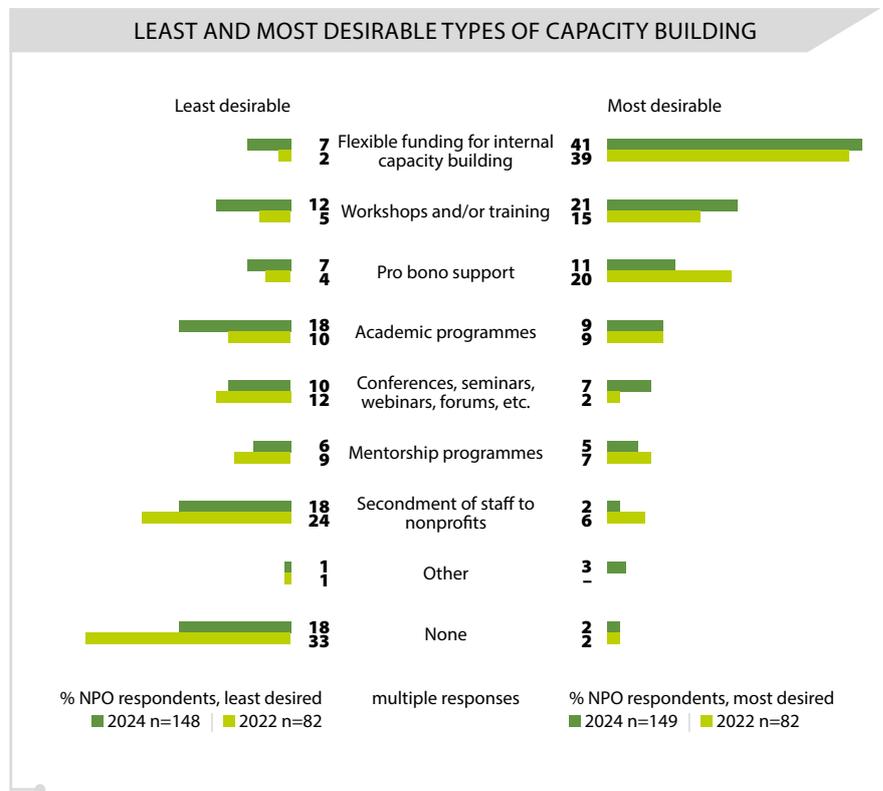


### Capacity building

- In 2024, companies offered an average of two types of capacity building to NPOs, and NPOs received an average of two types of capacity building from companies.
- More companies did not offer any capacity-building support to NPOs in 2024 (39%) than in 2022 (29%). The percentage of NPO respondents not receiving any such support stayed almost the same at over a third.
- Among companies that did offer capacity-building support, this was most often through workshops and training (41%), mentorship (28%) and academic programmes (21%) in 2024. These were also the three most common forms of capacity-building support provided in 2022, but were all mentioned by a higher percentage of companies in this year's survey. Workshops and training were the most desired type of support for 36% of NPOs in 2024.



- Nine percent of companies offered flexible or unrestricted funding for internal capacity building to NPOs in 2024, an increase from 3% in 2022. Flexible or unrestricted funding was the most desired type of capacity-building support for 41% of NPOs but was only received by 10% of surveyed organisations in 2024.
- Thirty-six percent of NPOs reported receiving pro bono support, the most desired type of capacity building for 11% of NPOs. However, only 11% of companies offered pro bono support.
- Staff secondment (18%) and academic programmes (18%) were the least desired forms of capacity-building support for NPOs. Secondment was offered by only 2% of companies, while 9% offered academic programmes.
- One in five NPOs (18%) did not select any type of support as least desired, implying that any support would be welcomed.



## BUILDING CAPACITY IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

Ensuring the stability and sustainability of NPOs can help them to better support disadvantaged communities and achieve a thriving society. Some considerations for companies regarding capacity building:

- 1 Do not apply a one-size fits all approach.
- 2 Consult with NPO partners to analyse what support is needed.
- 3 View capacity building from the perspective of building on an organisation's core strengths, rather than fixing its weaknesses.
- 4 Where possible, provide continuous support as once-off workshops are unlikely to bring about meaningful change within an organisation or help it to become self-sustaining.
- 5 Provide long-term general support alongside capacity-building grants.
- 6 Work together with other companies to increase impact and promote greater knowledge-sharing.

*"It may seem counter-intuitive, but the best way to build an organisation's capacity is to stop giving grants for capacity building and instead provide unrestricted funds over several years, especially to organisations led by and serving marginalised communities; trust that organisation to know what's best for its operations and programmes; and convince other funders to do the same."*

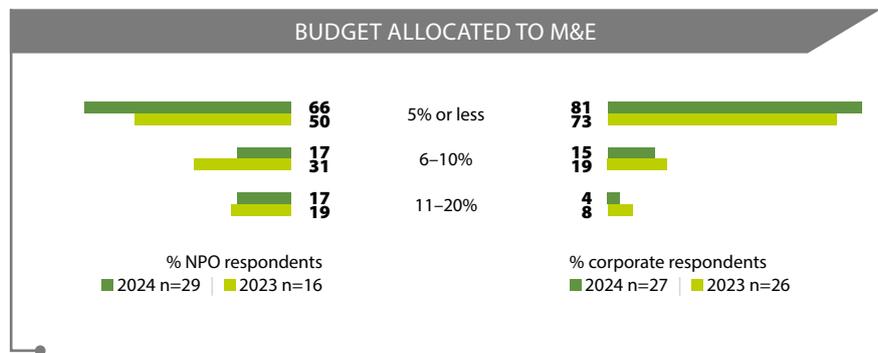
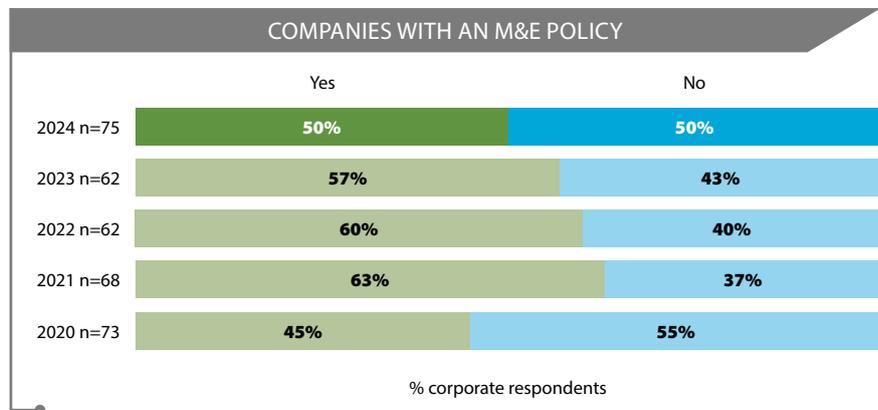
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Sources: Trialogue, GEO

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

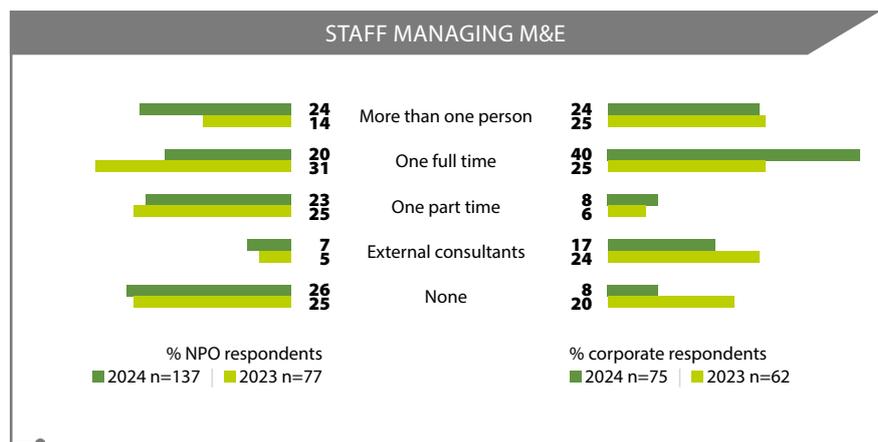
### M&E policies and budgets

- Half of the surveyed companies (50%) had a stated policy on M&E in 2024, a surprisingly lower percentage than in the three previous years.
- Thirty-five companies (47%) confirmed that they allocated a portion of the CSI budget to M&E. Of the 27 companies that provided a detailed breakdown of expenditure, most (81%) allocated 5% or less of their CSI budget to M&E. Allocations ranged from less than 1% to 15% with a median of 4% and an average of 4%. This average 4% M&E allocation was higher than the 1% indicated in the analysis of costs included in CSI expenditure (see page 37) due to the smaller number of companies that reported on detailed M&E expenditure.
- A third of NPO respondents (34%) had an M&E budget, slightly down from 37% in 2023. Of the 29 NPOs that reported M&E expenditure, two-thirds (66%) allocated 5% or less of their organisational budget to M&E.



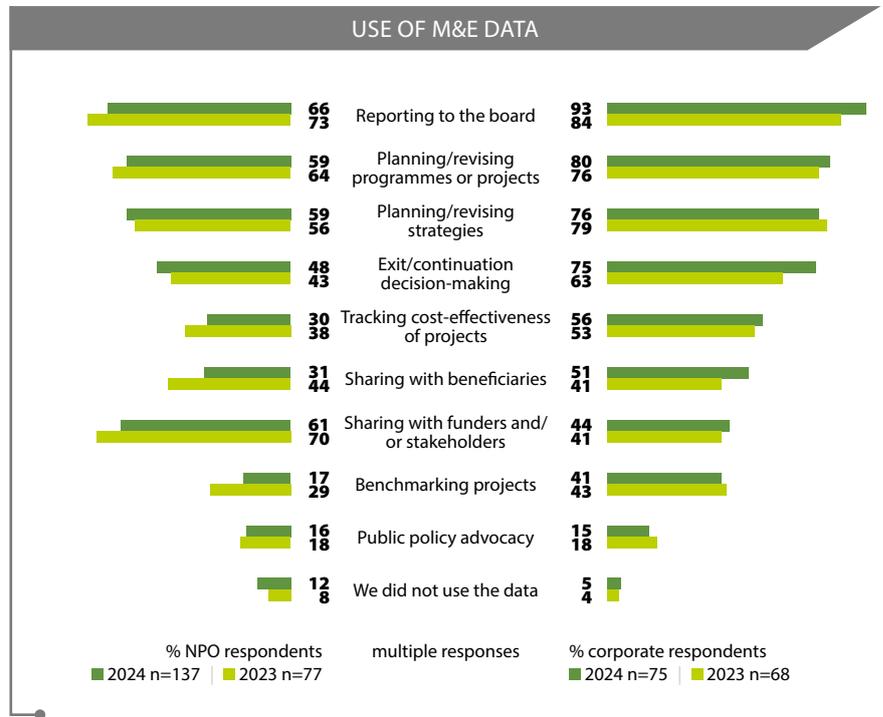
### M&E staffing

- The percentage of companies with internal staff managing M&E appears to be gradually increasing, from 50% in 2020, to 56% in 2023 and 72% in 2024. Cumulatively, two-thirds of companies (64%) had one or more full-time people in 2024, up from 50% in 2023. In line with this, fewer companies (8%) did not have any internal or external resources dedicated to managing M&E in 2024 compared to 2023 (20%).
- The proportion of NPOs with internal staff for M&E (either part time or full time) has remained fairly consistent at close to 70%, higher than for companies. A quarter of NPOs (26%) had no dedicated internal or external M&E resources, significantly higher than the proportion of companies with no such resources (8%).
- More companies (17% in 2024, down from 24% in 2023) than NPOs (7%) used external consultants for M&E.



### Use of M&E data

- Companies most frequently used M&E data in reporting to their boards (93%), planning and revising projects (80%) and strategies (76%), and making decisions about whether to exit a project or continue with support (75%).
- The highest percentages of NPOs used M&E data in reporting to their boards (66%), sharing with funders and stakeholders (61%), and planning and revising projects (59%) and strategies (59%).
- Only half of companies (51%) and a third of NPOs (31%) shared the data with recipients or beneficiaries.



# Global Employee Volunteering Programme.

Precise tracking, scalable impact and enhanced employee engagement.

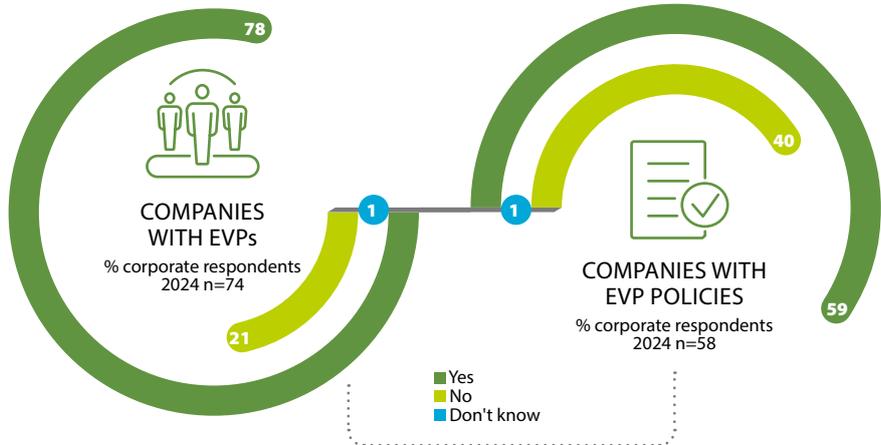


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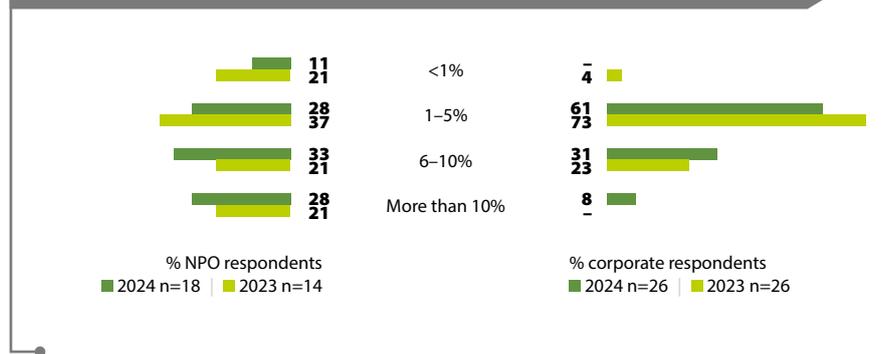
## EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

### EVP policies and budgets

- Over three-quarters of companies (78%) had employee volunteering programmes (EVPs) in 2024. Of the 58 companies that reported having an EVP, 59% had a stated EVP policy and 63% had a separate budget for EVP.
- Twenty-six companies provided budget information on employee volunteering in 2024. Most of these (61%) allocated between 1% and 5% of their CSI budget to EVPs. One-third (31%, or eight companies) allocated between 6% and 10%, and two companies allocated more than 10% of their CSI budget to EVPs. The average CSI budget allocation to EVPs was 6%, while the median was 5%. The lowest allocation was 1% and the highest was 20%.
- The proportion of NPOs with a budget for managing volunteers and volunteering programmes remains low (16% in 2024 and 12% in 2022). Of the 18 NPOs that provided budget data, a high 61% allocated more than 5% to volunteer management.



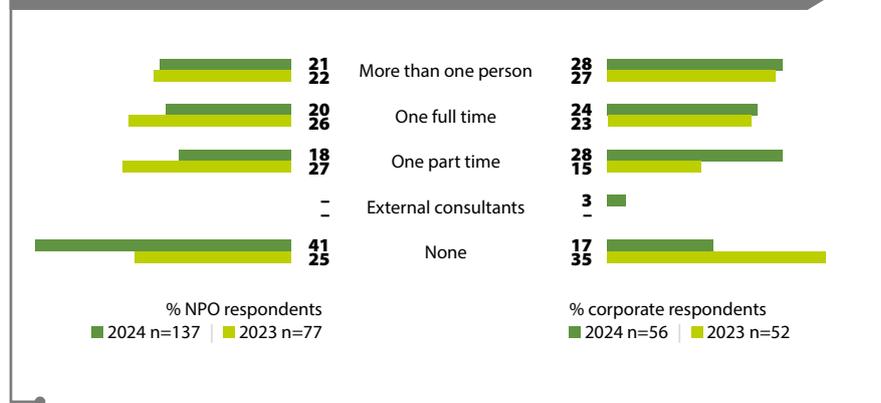
### BUDGET ALLOCATED TO VOLUNTEERING



### EVP staffing

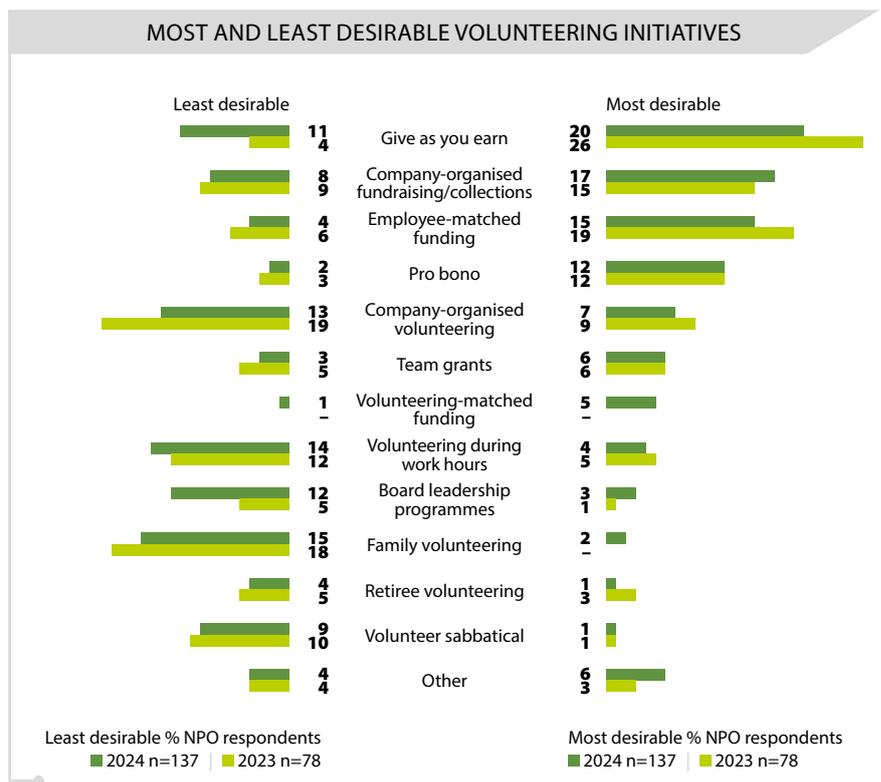
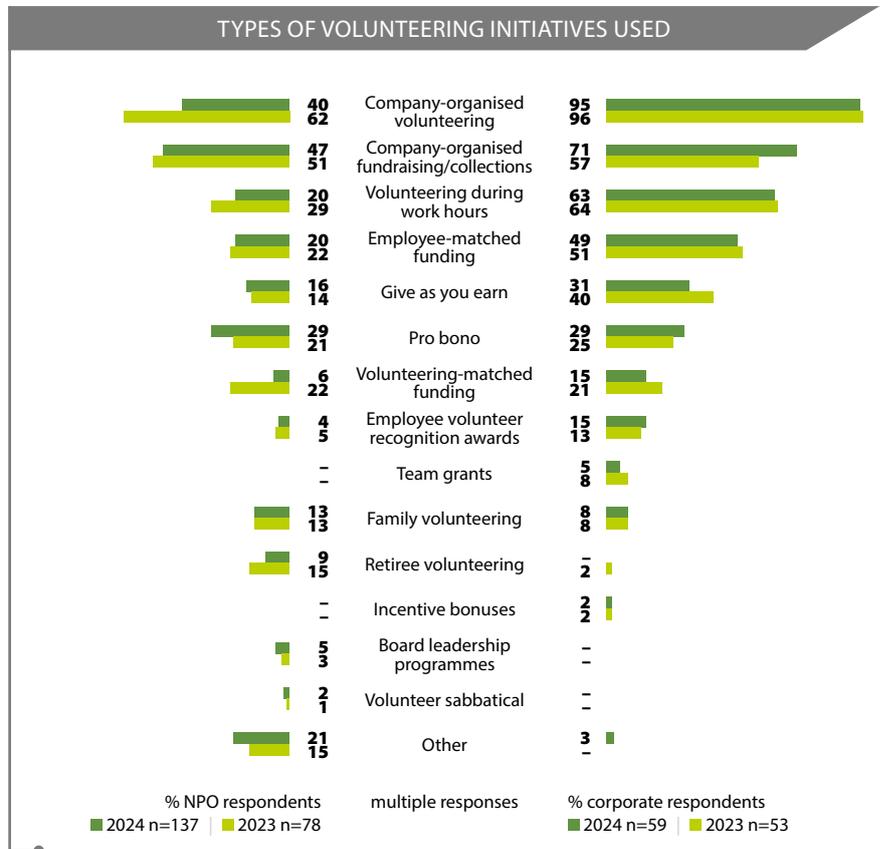
- In 2024, 80% of companies with EVPs had one or more internal staff members appointed to manage volunteering in a full-time or part-time capacity, higher than in 2023 (65%). Seventeen percent of companies had no one dedicated to managing employee volunteering, a notable decline from 35% in 2023.
- More than half of NPOs (59%) have one or more people appointed in a full-time or part-time capacity for managing employee volunteering, despite only 16% of NPOs having a budget for volunteering.

### STAFF MANAGING VOLUNTEERING



## Types of EVP

- In 2024, companies offered four types of employee involvement initiatives on average.
- Most corporate respondents with EVPs offered company-organised volunteering initiatives (95%), fundraising/collection drives (71%) and time off for individuals during work hours (63%). In the US in 2023, 94% of all companies offered matching-gift programmes to their employees, compared to 49% of South African companies in 2024.
- Whereas the majority of surveyed companies organise staff volunteering initiatives, far fewer NPOs (40%) were recipients of these. They also remain among the top three least-liked type of initiative for NPOs (13% of NPOs selected this as their least desirable), with only 7% selecting it as most desirable.
- NPOs most liked initiatives that involve funding – give as you earn, collection drives and matched funding. Give as you earn remained the most liked EVP in 2024, selected by 20% of NPOs as their preferred EVP type.
- NPOs least liked family volunteering, individual volunteering in work hours and company-organised volunteering initiatives.
- The most received type of initiative was fundraising/collection drives (47% of NPOs), which was also the second most liked (17% of NPOs selected it as their most desired type of EVP).



# FIRSTRAND VOLUNTEERS

**ACTION WITH PURPOSE**

The FirstRand Volunteers Programme was launched in 2003 to facilitate and support employee community involvement. The Programme provides employees from across the group with the opportunity to make a real difference by matching their time and monetary donations to their chosen registered organisation or school.

Governed by clear guidelines, and aligned to the FirstRand Foundation, the Programme provides support including R1-for-R1 matched funding for employee donations of time and money, sourcing of organizations to support, annual group drive incentives and training and guidance for employees to share their time, skills and knowledge with their chosen organizations and schools.

The programmer's vision of 'action with purpose' encourages employees to create strong long-term relationships with the communities supported. Employees are also encouraged to use action plans and metrics to track the impact of their initiatives.



## THE FIRSTRAND VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME OFFERINGS INCLUDE:



**Cause-related volunteering:** employees support registered causes they are passionate about.



**Skills-based volunteering:** employees are encouraged to utilise their skills in volunteering efforts.



**Volunteering with the FirstRand Foundation:** employees volunteer their time, skills and knowledge to organisations funded by the foundations.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME PARTICIPATION IN 2024

The Programme experienced a 9.8% growth in employee participation in 2024. Participation increased from 3.2% at the end of June 2023 to 13% at end June 2024. During the year, 623 organisations and schools were registered and received support from employees.

Programme management encouraged volunteering with an emphasis on the support and involvement of group CEOs and executives.

The Programme focused on increasing visibility and provided different volunteer immersion opportunities on office campuses countrywide.

## FIRSTRAND CEOS IN CAREER CONVERSATIONS WITH FIRSTRAND FOUNDATION FUNDED BURSARS

The Programme intentionally included group executives in the roll-out of the Programme strategy in 2024. FirstRand Foundation funded undergraduate and honours bursars were invited to join an online Career Conversations platform to listen in to FirstRand executives who shared their personal career journeys including personal challenges, growth opportunities and achievements they have experienced along the way.

Each CEO shared their career journey for 20 minutes and the bursars then had the opportunity to engage each CEO with questions relating to their own career aspirations. All bursars provided detailed feedback on how each executive's insights, experiences and "ah-ha" moments helped inform their own future career paths.

## RMB EXECUTIVE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

The RMB Exco mentorship Programme offered 10 township entrepreneurs a well-rounded development experience.

The mentorship sessions included a pitching session, financial literacy in collaboration with the FNB team, branding and marketing workshops which included a rebrand of each business followed by procurement and training and successful onboarding onto the Firstrand Procurement portal.

The objective was to ultimately assist the entrepreneurs with the growth and strategy of their businesses.

.....

## MOVE-IT FOR GOOD CAMPAIGNS

Employees signed up on the Strava app and recorded their movements and were matched by FirstRand for every 30 minutes instances of movement recorded. All types of movement counted including running, walking, cycling, dancing or moving whilst employees did their shopping.

A Move-It for ECD and a Move-It for Youth Empowerment campaigns raised over R1 million in support of ECD's and Youth Empowerment Programmes.

## EDUCATION DRIVE

Volunteer teams had the opportunity to register an underserved school to receive an incentive to purchase school shoes and/or school uniforms for learners. Volunteers registered 42 schools from across 7 provinces of the country. 3372 learners received new school shoes and school uniforms this year.



*THROUGH MENTORSHIP PROGRAMMES, THE EMPLOYEES OF FIRSTRAND CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OUR YOUTH, INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING MORE FUTURE LEADERS.*





## How to improve internal CSR communication



Effective CSR communication to employees enhances an organisation's corporate identity and affects employees' attitudes and behaviour. But how do employees perceive CSR communications from and the methods used by their employers, and what can companies do to communicate more effectively? **Marelize Theron** sheds light on the subject.

Tell us about your research into CSR communications to employees and the purpose for this research.

Everything within a company – including its culture, leadership, communications, values and CSR initiatives – contributes to its unique corporate identity. I have always believed that companies that invest significantly in CSR can better leverage the positive effect CSR has on their identity and, ultimately, employees' attitudes and behaviour.

Having observed that employees are often unaware of their employers' CSR initiatives, my thesis specifically examined the South African retail sector as a leading contributor in terms of CSR spend. My research developed a conceptual model testing the significance of relationships between employees' perceptions of environmental, economic and social CSR (both external and internal) and a company's corporate identity.

Do companies neglect to communicate their CSR initiatives internally? How might this affect the way in which employees engage with these initiatives?

Lower-tier employees are typically less aware of their organisation's CSR initiatives compared to middle and senior management. Additionally, employees are generally more aware of economic CSR initiatives (internal ones such as ethical labour practices or external ones such as promoting economic progress in communities), and external social CSR (such as donations to social causes).

There is a lower awareness of environmental CSR (external climate change initiatives or internal workplace environmental policies) and internal social CSR (including ethics training, volunteering and workplace social justice policies). For example, only half of the employees perceived their companies as having policies for good work-life balance. Companies are unlikely to reap the benefits and have good engagement or participation in these forms of CSR if there is a low awareness among employees.

Research shows that employees are more engaged if a company actively pursues CSR initiatives. How does this influence employee attitudes and behaviours?

CSR significantly influences employees' relationship with their companies, leading to increased motivation, productivity, trust, pride, job satisfaction, morale and loyalty. It also leads to improved recruitment, as socially responsible companies are more attractive to potential employees. Companies where employees feel connected can see a productivity increase of 20–25%, according to McKinsey Global Institute, and effective CSR can reduce employee turnover by 50%, according to the Social Innovation Lab. However, benefits can only be realised if employees are aware of CSR initiatives and internal CSR communication strategies are in place.

Which internal communication methods are most used by companies and which have proved most effective?

Digital channels like emails, internal newsletters, websites and social media platforms are commonly used (although the latter two are often aimed at external audiences). Face-to-face meetings or internal forums such as CSR training sessions are often preferred by employees. Employees expressed a desire for two-way communication and more dialogue around CSR, indicating a need for more informal communication channels to be used as opposed to formal, one-way communication.

There appears to be a mismatch between what and how companies communicate and what information employees would like to receive. Why is this and how can companies close the gap?

Employees need to understand *why* companies engage in CSR. This should be evident in a company's identity, such as its brand values and promises. Based on the conceptual model developed in

my research, employees only perceived external social CSR to significantly influence a company's corporate identity, where international studies suggest all forms of CSR contribute to corporate identity. The 'mismatch' may arise from employees being overexposed and overcommunicated to in terms of external social CSR, while companies can do more to integrate other forms of CSR into their corporate identities.

Although most employees indicated that they receive sufficient CSR communication, there seems to be a disconnect between what is communicated and what employees want to know. For example, employees expressed a desire for more information on the specific stakeholder groups targeted by CSR initiatives, with many wanting a greater focus on local communities. To bridge this gap, collaborative communication platforms are required for employees to provide feedback and make suggestions regarding their company's CSR initiatives.

Consistent internal CSR communication is key, particularly for lower-tier employees, but overcommunication can diminish employees' perceptions of CSR. Most importantly, there should be congruency between a company's CSR, corporate identity and its internal communication.

What advice do you have for companies that would like to improve internal CSR communication?

Prioritise your internal communication as much as your external messaging. After all, your employees are the face of the brand. Carefully consider and track the platforms you use to communicate, mapping out communication journeys as you would for external customers. Ensure that the messaging is authentic and sincere, tailored to each internal target audience and that it fosters dialogue. Include CSR training in the onboarding of new employees to raise awareness and encourage participation. Bottom line: make sure your company benefits from the positive effect CSR can have on employees.

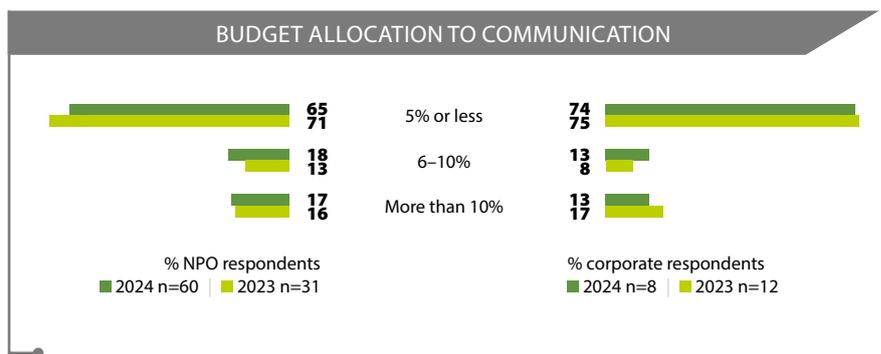
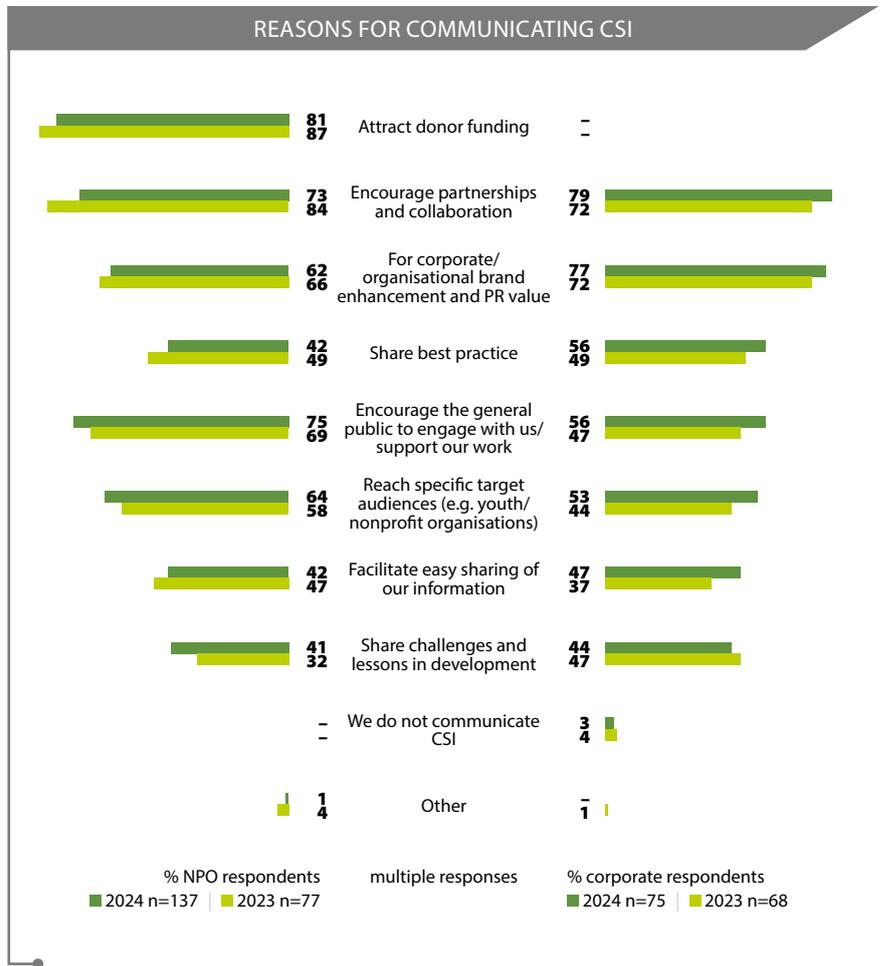
**MARELIZE THERON**

MCom Business and  
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## CSI COMMUNICATION

### Communication rationale and budgets

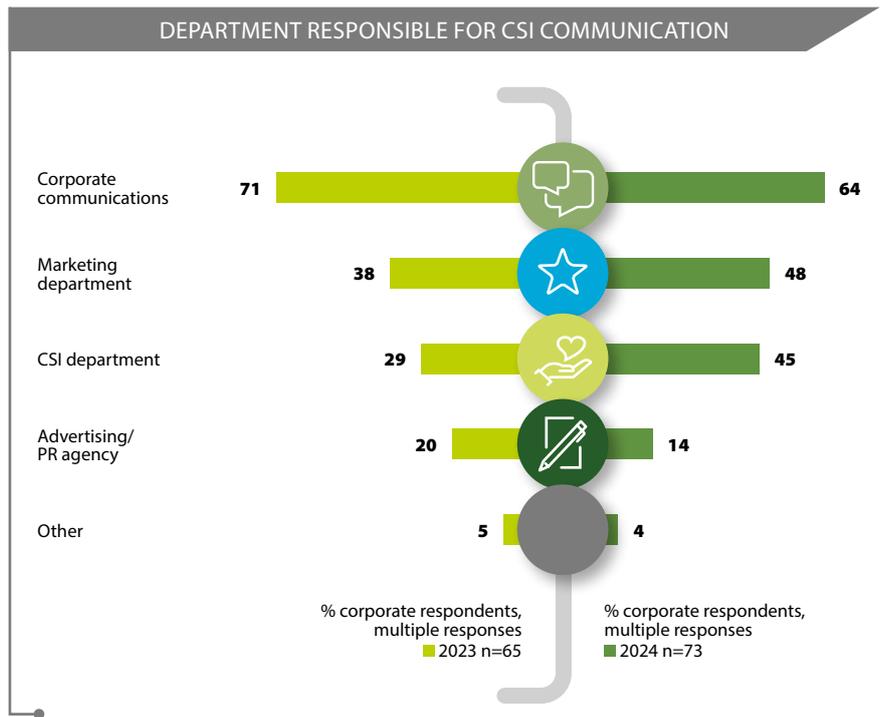
- The most common reasons companies communicated their CSI work in 2024 were to encourage partnerships and collaboration (79%) and for brand enhancement (77%).
- NPOs communicated their work most frequently to attract donor funding (81%) and encourage partnerships and collaboration (73%).
- A quarter of companies (26%) allocated a portion of their CSI budget to communication. For the eight companies that provided budget data, most (74%) allocated 5% or less to communication, with a range from 1% to 30% of CSI budget and a median of 4%.
- More NPOs (59%) than companies allocated a portion of their budget to communication in 2024. Of the 60 NPOs that provided communication budget information, two-thirds (65%) allocated 5% or less. Communication allocations among NPOs ranged from 1% to 30%, with a median of 5%.



CSI COMMUNICATION (continued)

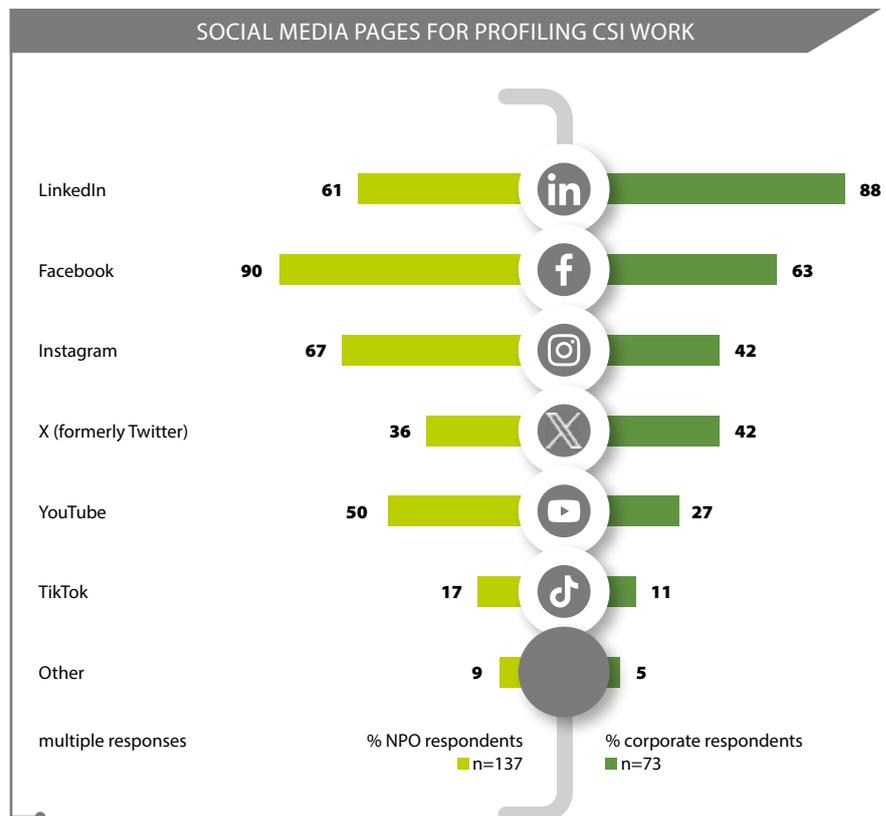
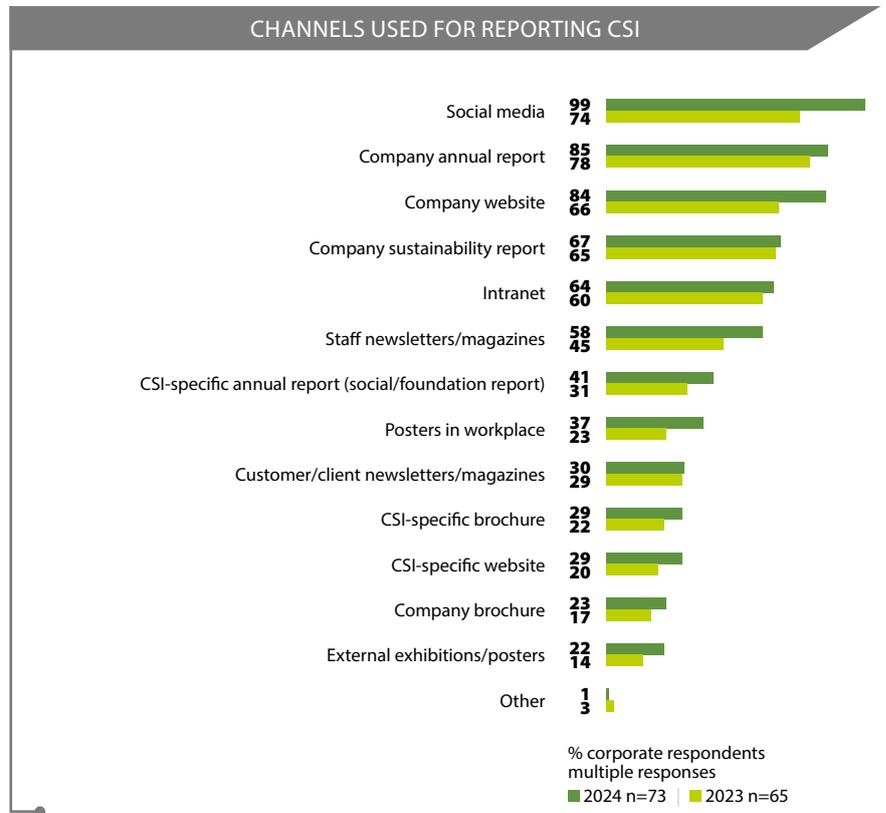
Communication staffing

- More than three-quarters of companies (78%) employed staff internally to manage CSI communications in 2024 – 12% one part time, 26% one full time and 40% more than one person. This is slightly more than those employing M&E staff internally, although much fewer companies used external consultants for communication (1%) compared to M&E (17%). Around one-fifth (21%) did not employ anyone to manage communication.
- Forty-five percent of companies manage CSI communications within the CSI department. Most companies used the corporate communications (64%) or marketing (48%) departments to manage CSI communication.
- The majority of NPOs surveyed (77%) have one or more people appointed to manage communication internally, either in a full-time or part-time capacity. Only one-fifth of NPOs (20%) did not have any staff managing the communication function.



## Communication channels and reporting

- For the first time social media was the most common channel for reporting on CSI, used by 99% of companies in 2024. The next most used channels were company annual reports (85%) and websites (84%).
- LinkedIn (used by 88% of companies and 61% of NPOs) and Facebook (63% of companies and 90% of NPOs) were the most popular social media platforms for both companies and NPOs.
- Use of staff newsletters/magazines increased from 45% in 2023 to 58% in 2024. ■



# COMPANY AND NPO REPUTATIONS

As part of its annual primary research, Trialogue asks company and NPO respondents to name the three companies and NPOs that they perceive to be having the greatest developmental impact. These rankings are based on the perceptions of respondents and are not necessarily reflective of actual performance or impact.

## COMPANY IMPACT

### Top companies as ranked by companies

Ranking	Company	Number of mentions*	Percent mentions
1	Vodacom	27	15
2	Anglo American <sup>#</sup>	13	7
3	Nedbank	10	6
4	FirstRand <sup>#</sup>	8	5
5=	MTN	7	4
	Sasol	7	4
	Shoprite	7	4
	Woolworths	7	4
9	Standard Bank	6	3
10	Old Mutual	5	3

\* Multiple response question; 67 company respondents mentioned 61 companies; total number of mentions = 178 (up to three mentions per respondent allowed; not all respondents mentioned three companies)

<sup>#</sup> Anglo American mentions include mentions of Anglo American Platinum and Anglo American Chairman's Fund  
FirstRand mentions include mentions of FNB and RMB

### Top companies as ranked by NPOs

Ranking	Company	Number of mentions*	Percent mentions
1	Nedbank	21	7
2	FirstRand <sup>#</sup>	19	6
3	Old Mutual	15	5
4	Shoprite	13	4
5=	Standard Bank	11	3
	Vodacom	11	3
7=	Anglo American <sup>#</sup>	10	3
	MTN	10	3
	Woolworths	10	3
10	Investec	7	2

\* Multiple response question; 112 NPO respondents mentioned 125 companies; total number of mentions = 317 (up to three mentions per respondent allowed; not all respondents mentioned three companies)

<sup>#</sup> Anglo American mentions include mentions of Anglo American Platinum and Anglo American Chairman's Fund  
FirstRand mentions include mentions of FNB and RMB

- **Vodacom** was ranked first by companies for the eighth consecutive year, with the highest percent of mentions by some margin. The company was ranked joint fifth by NPOs this year, down from joint first in 2023.
- **Nedbank** moved up to first place as ranked by NPOs and third as ranked by companies.
- **Anglo American** moved up to second place as ranked by companies but dropped to joint seventh as ranked by NPOs.
- **FirstRand** moved up to second place as ranked by NPOs but dropped to fourth as ranked by companies.
- **Old Mutual's** ranking by NPOs improved to third but its ranking by companies dropped to 10th place.
- **Shoprite** appeared in both lists for the first time and was ranked fourth by NPOs and joint fifth by companies.
- **MTN** was ranked joint fifth by companies and joint seventh by NPOs.
- **Standard Bank** was ranked joint fifth by NPOs, down from joint third in 2023, and ninth by companies.
- **Woolworths** was ranked joint fifth by companies and joint seventh by NPOs, down from joint first by NPOs in 2023.

## NPO IMPACT

Top NPOs as ranked by companies			
Ranking	NPO	Number of mentions*	Percent mentions
1	Gift of the Givers	29	16
2	Afrika Tikkun	8	4
3=	South African Red Cross Society	5	3
	Smile Foundation	5	3
5=	Food and Trees for Africa	4	2
	FoodForward SA	4	2
	Meals on Wheels	4	2
	Nelson Mandela Foundation	4	2
9=	Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSAs)	3	2
	DG Murray Trust	3	2
	Kutlwanoong Centre for Maths, Science and Technology	3	2
	Rise Against Hunger	3	2
	Smart Start	3	2
	WeThinkCode_	3	2

\* Multiple response question; 70 company respondents mentioned 111 NPOs; total number of mentions = 186 (up to three mentions per respondent allowed; not all respondents mentioned three NPOs)

Top NPOs as ranked by NPOs			
Ranking	NPO	Number of mentions*	Percent mentions
1	Gift of the Givers	21	7
2	Afrika Tikkun	12	4
3	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)	6	2
4=	Book Dash	4	1
	Ikamva Youth	4	1
	Kolisi Foundation	4	1
	Nelson Mandela Children's Fund	4	1
	Nelson Mandela Foundation	4	1
	South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA)	4	1
10=	Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSAs)	3	1
	Child Welfare South Africa	3	1
	FoodForward SA	3	1
	Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator	3	1
	Inyathelo   The South African Institute for Advancement	3	1
	Sci-Bono Discovery Centre	3	1
	Smile Foundation	3	1
	Sozo Foundation	3	1
	The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)	3	1

\* Multiple response question; 113 NPO respondents mentioned 228 NPOs; total number of mentions = 320 (up to three mentions per respondent allowed; not all respondents mentioned three NPOs)

- **Gift of the Givers** was ranked first by both companies and NPOs for the fourth consecutive year.
- **Afrika Tikkun** was ranked second by companies and NPOs for the second consecutive year.
- **Smile Foundation** was ranked joint third by companies and joint 10th by NPOs.
- The **Nelson Mandela Foundation** was ranked joint fifth by companies and joint fourth by NPOs.
- **FoodForward SA** was ranked joint fifth by companies, down from fourth position in 2023, and joint 10th by NPOs, down from joint third in 2023.
- The **Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSAs)** was ranked joint ninth by companies and joint 10th by NPOs.
- No other organisations appear in the top 10 of both company and NPO rankings. ■

# GLOBAL TRENDS IN CSI AND ESG: THE POWER OF COLLABORATIVE ACTION FOR LASTING IMPACT

The world of CSI and environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices is evolving rapidly. For South African business leaders and global counterparts, this shift presents both challenges and opportunities. As organisations navigate inflationary pressures, complex regulatory requirements and rising stakeholder expectations, the way forward demands a renewed commitment to corporate purpose and impactful social investments.

The CECP's *Giving in Numbers 2024 Edition* reveals that businesses with well-defined purpose statements have seen significant financial benefits. In 2023, companies that integrated corporate purpose into their business practices reported a 32% increase in median corporate revenue and a 45% higher median pre-tax profit compared to companies lacking purpose alignment.

Additionally, insights from CECP's *Global Impact at Scale 2024 Edition*, to which Trialogue contributed, highlight the imperative of rigorous ESG reporting, underscoring how international and local companies are increasingly attuned to the social and environmental responsibilities embedded in their operations.

## REINFORCING CORPORATE PURPOSE AND THE RETURN ON CSI

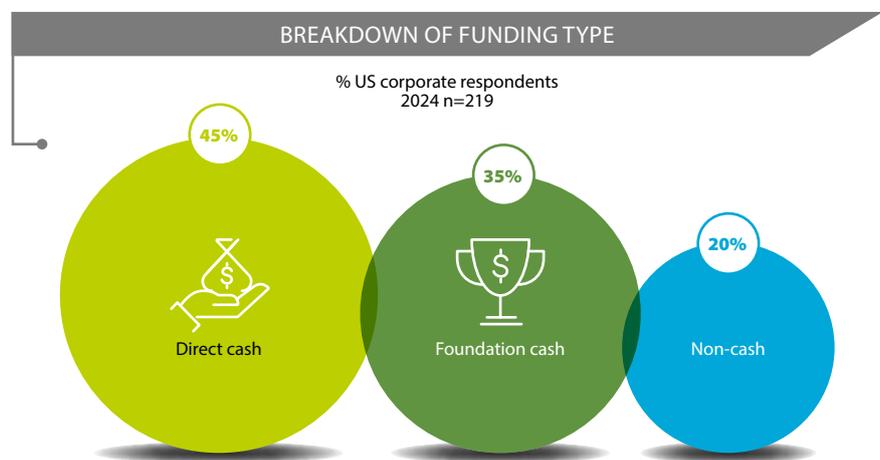
The need for corporate purpose has never been clearer. Across industries, a corporate purpose statement now serves as a key tool for guiding both social and business decision-making. In 2023, 87% of companies surveyed by CECP reported having a purpose statement, with 92% referencing it in social investment decisions and 93% in broader business decisions. This alignment not only informs CSI strategies but also enables companies to demonstrate measurable returns on their commitment to social responsibility.

American CSI funding trends show that direct cash contributions remain the most common funding type, accounting for 45% of total community investment. Foundation cash contributions and non-cash investments, such as pro bono services, have grown as companies seek to leverage their core competencies and employee expertise to support social causes. As companies scale their CSI initiatives, these non-cash contributions offer a unique pathway for employees to engage directly in skills-based volunteerism.

## EXPANDING THE FOCUS OF COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

Social investment by US-based companies is expanding beyond domestic borders, with companies now dedicating an increasing share of investments internationally. In fact, between 2021 and 2023, median international community investments rose by 46%, with 73% of companies reporting contributions to international end-recipient organisations. This shift underscores a commitment to addressing pressing social and environmental issues in communities worldwide, particularly those impacted by crises such as climate change and digital inequality.

Key areas for investment allocations in 2023 included health and social services, community and economic development and education. Health and social services alone received 26% of total CSI allocations, while community and economic development followed closely with a 17% share. Notably, companies with a focus on these programme areas are aligning their social investments with issues critical to long-term community resilience and economic stability.



Beyond traditional programme areas, companies are increasingly responsive to emerging global issues. For example, in 2023, climate change initiatives and support for communities affected by geopolitical conflicts, such as relief efforts in Israel and Palestine, became prominent investment areas. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, another priority, received substantial support, with median contributions reaching US\$1 million, underscoring the importance of equipping young people with skills for a technology-driven future.

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH MATCHING GIFTS AND VOLUNTEERING

Employee engagement is also integral to the evolution of CSI, with companies actively promoting volunteerism and matching-gift programmes. In 2023, 94% of US-based companies offered matching-gift programmes, with median matching gifts reaching US\$1.6 million. Although participation in matching-gift programmes has plateaued, employee volunteering continues to rise, reflecting a growing desire among employees to contribute meaningfully to social causes. The median number of volunteer hours increased by 75% from 2021 to 2023, marking a significant rebound to pre-pandemic levels.

Furthermore, companies are diversifying their volunteer programmes. While virtual volunteering remains the most popular option, flexible scheduling and team grants have gained traction as companies seek to accommodate different employee preferences and schedules. Pro bono service also grew by five percentage points from 2021, reflecting an increased emphasis on skills-based volunteering that aligns employees' professional skills with nonprofit needs.

## REPORTING LINES AND STAFFING

Human Resources emerged as the department most commonly responsible for managing social and community investments (20% of US-based corporate respondents), followed by a variety of departments categorised as 'Other' (16%), including Corporate Affairs, Impact, and Corporate Social Responsibility.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM GIVING IN NUMBERS REPORT:

- Median total community investment as a percentage of pre-tax profit increased by 38% from 2021 to 2023.
- Companies with metrics aligning business practices with corporate purpose had higher median corporate revenue and higher median pre-tax profit in 2023.
- Companies are dedicating more of their community investments outside of the country where they are headquartered.
- Volunteering, both in average participation rates and median hours, has increased since 2021.
- In 2023, Human Resources was the department most commonly responsible for social investments and employee engagement (20%).

"After 'Other', Communications was third at 15%, followed by Sustainability/ESG at 10%," noted the Giving in Numbers report. While the research indicates there are varied ideas on which department should be responsible for CSI, it does point to a more integrated approach to social impact, where departments traditionally focused on internal affairs are increasingly taking on roles in community investment management.

Staffing trends show steady growth in full-time equivalents (FTEs) dedicated to CSI since 2019, with the median FTE count rising by 21% over the past four years. However, growth plateaued between 2022 and 2023, suggesting companies may be reassessing the optimal scope of their social impact teams. This plateau could also reflect budgetary constraints or a strategic decision to maintain existing staffing levels while expanding the breadth of CSI initiatives through cross-departmental collaboration. The findings also indicate that "new responsibilities are arising as CSI and ESG continue to overlap".

## NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF ESG REPORTING AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

As social and environmental priorities evolve, so too do regulatory frameworks governing ESG reporting. The European Union's (EU) Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), for instance, is reshaping reporting standards for

organisations both within and outside the EU. Non-EU companies that trade with EU entities are subject to compliance, making the directive a landmark policy with global implications. This legislation mandates that companies not only report on but actively work to mitigate their environmental and social impacts across the entire supply chain.

However, companies report significant challenges in meeting these requirements. In CECP's 2024 Global Impact at Scale survey, 67% of respondents indicated they are 'somewhat prepared' for mandatory reporting, citing data collection, resource allocation and supply chain transparency as primary obstacles. In fact, nearly 59% of companies are now investing in new systems and processes for data collection, demonstrating the extent to which data infrastructure is crucial to compliance with ESG mandates.

Moreover, the complexity of accurately measuring social impact remains a top concern for respondents. Nearly 39% of CECP's Global Exchange partners cited 'social impact' as the most challenging ESG dimension to measure accurately, due to the often qualitative nature of social outcomes. This challenge is amplified by recent global backlash against ESG policies, which has intensified scrutiny on the perceived costs and effectiveness of corporate sustainability efforts. Despite these challenges, CECP reports that companies continue to integrate ESG initiatives as a core part of their corporate strategy, motivated by the long-term business value of sustainable practices.

## INSIGHTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA'S SOCIAL AND BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

For South African companies, these global trends resonate with a unique set of opportunities and challenges. South Africa's high levels of socioeconomic inequality and complex environmental issues make it essential for corporate leaders to adopt a purpose-driven approach to CSI and ESG. South African companies are increasingly aligning with global ESG standards, balancing local priorities with the need to meet international compliance requirements. The commitment to sustainable development is underscored by initiatives across the country that focus on poverty reduction, economic empowerment and environmental stewardship.

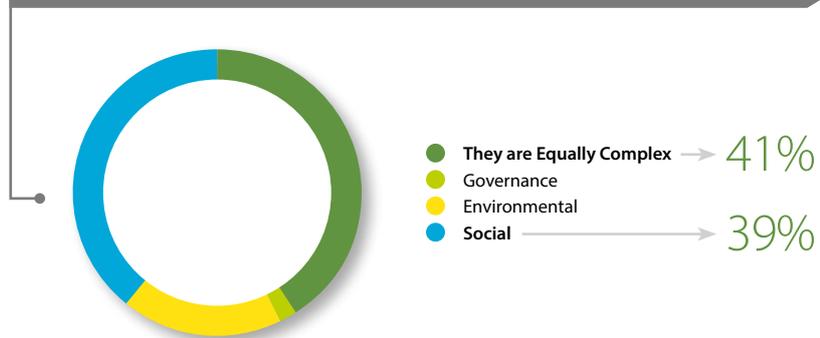
As shown in CECP's 2024 Global Impact at Scale report, companies in South Africa and other emerging markets are positioned to lead on specific social impact fronts, such as workforce development and educational support, which are particularly relevant to the South African context. Additionally, as regulatory frameworks like the CSRD extend their reach, South African companies with ties to the EU will need to prepare for enhanced transparency and due diligence requirements within their supply chains.

## A FUTURE OF PURPOSE-DRIVEN CSI AND ESG

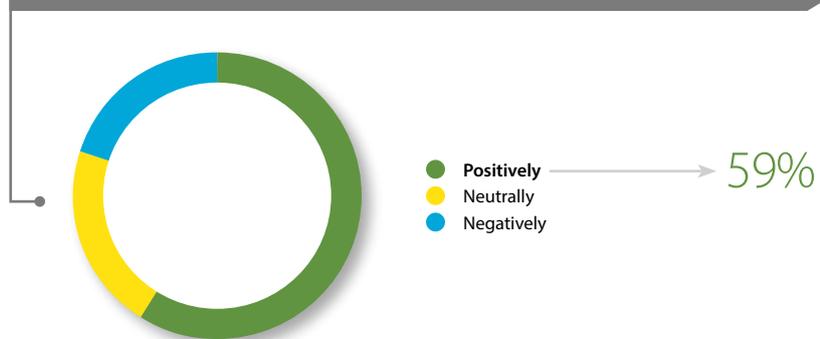
The insights from CECP's 2024 editions of Giving in Numbers and Global Impact at Scale underscore a shift towards more purposeful, resilient corporate strategies that integrate CSI and ESG. For South African business leaders, this is a call to action to leverage their unique capabilities and prioritise sustainable development within their local and global communities.

Companies that embed CSI and ESG principles in their core strategies are more resilient and better positioned to adapt to evolving stakeholder expectations. Whether addressing climate change,

### WHICH CORE AREA OF ESG REPORTING IS THE MOST COMPLEX TO MEASURE ACCURATELY



### HOW IS ESG VIEWED BY THE LEADERSHIP OF YOUR COMPANY



digital literacy, or community health, collaborative efforts hold the potential to create meaningful change on a global scale, with South Africa's corporate leaders at the forefront.

As we move forward, it is essential for companies to evaluate their CSI strategies and programmes against national and global frameworks, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs), and prioritise transparency in ESG practices. Additionally, companies should continue to align their CSI strategies to their business strategies to increase value for all stakeholders, including themselves. Doing so will enable businesses to thrive in a challenging global economy, demonstrating that purpose-driven investment is not only beneficial for society but also essential for long-term corporate success. ■

*Giving in Numbers 2024 Edition is based on responses from 219 US-headquartered companies that took part in the 2024 Giving in Numbers survey on 2023 contributions.*

The 2024 Global Impact at Scale survey is based on responses from 48 companies in eight countries, including 18 in South Africa where Trialogue administered the survey.



Trialogue is the Southern African partner of the CECP Global Exchange, a network of country-based, mission-driven corporate engagement organisations that aims to advance business as a force for good around the world.

# HEINEKEN IS BREWING A BETTER WORLD

Our aspirations as a responsible corporate citizen are encapsulated by Brew A Better World; a strategy which guides our actions in the areas of **ENVIRONMENTAL**, **SOCIAL** and **RESPONSIBILITY**.



Each of these pillars has clear goals: in the area of Environment, our sights are set on achieving carbon neutrality, circularity and healthy watersheds. Our Social priorities are diversity, fair and safe, and community impact, while our Responsibility pillar sees us focusing on healthy choices, addressing harmful use of alcohol and promoting moderation. These goals can be summarised as a path to zero impact; a path to an inclusive, fair and equitable world, and a path to moderation and no harmful use.

During the past year, we undertook a number of initiatives in support of these aims.



## ENVIRONMENT



### Solar Power Boost

We installed a solar plant at Sedibeng Brewery with 14,000 solar panels, reducing our carbon footprint by 30%.



### Water Reclamation

Our Sedibeng Brewery now has a water reclamation plant, allowing us to recycle water used in production and cut down on municipal water usage, preserving our precious water resources.



### Water Preservation Education

We run water preservation campaigns internally to raise awareness among staff and communities, ensuring everyone contributes to conservation efforts.



### Circular Economy Programmes

Through projects like Vuselela and GreenUp, we encourage the collection and recycling of glass bottles, promoting the circular economy and reducing waste.



## SOCIAL



### Empowering Communities

Beyond business goals, we invest in social upliftment initiatives, addressing safety in informal settlements, providing psychosocial support, and driving youth resilience and women empowerment.



### Youth & Women Empowerment

Our social initiatives include programmes to build youth resilience and support women's empowerment, helping drive positive social change in vulnerable communities.



### Volunteerism

Our employee volunteer programme, StarGivers, showcases the spirit of service. Employees actively contribute to communities, creating lasting social impact, beyond just Mandela Day.



## RESPONSIBLE



### Responsible Consumption

We run impactful campaigns on binge drinking, underage drinking prevention, road safety (for pedestrians and drivers), and host tavern dialogues to promote responsible drinking and trading.



### Aware.org Partnerships

Partnering with Aware.org, we work to educate both youth and adults about the dangers of harmful drinking, driving behaviour change in our communities.

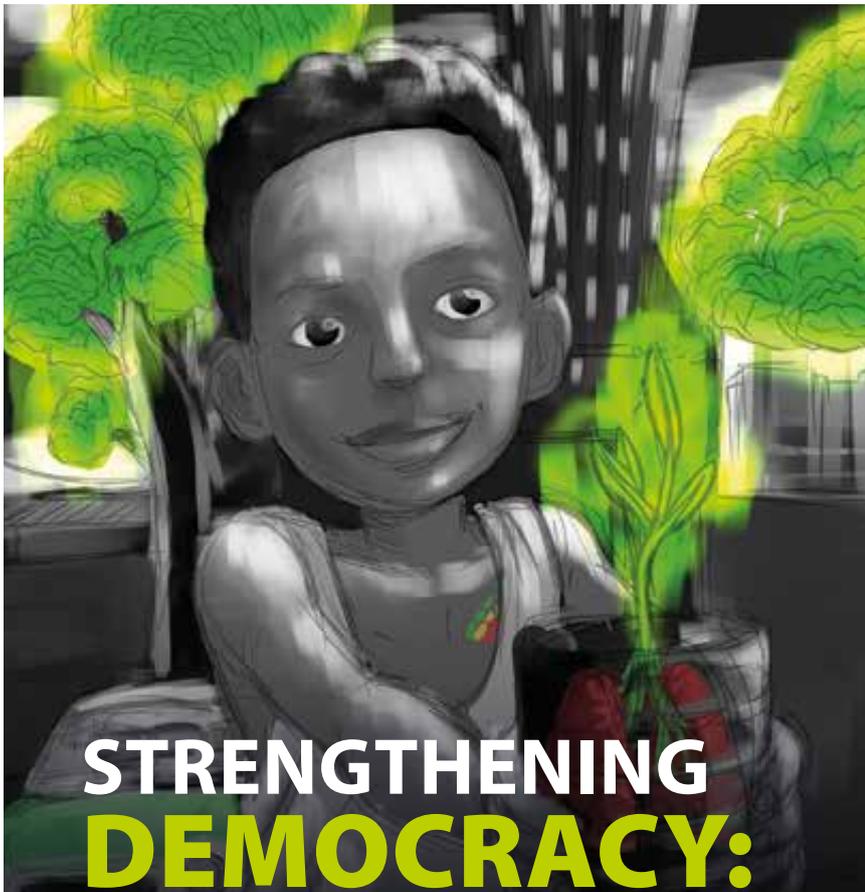


### Low & Alcohol-Free Choices

We encourage outlets to offer low-alcohol and alcohol-free options like Heineken 0% and Savanna 0%. This falls under our 'Low, Slow, No' strategy, promoting responsible enjoyment.



**HEINEKEN**  
beverages



# STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY: What role can companies play?

There is a growing perception that democracy is useless unless it delivers social justice. This view has led to democratic discontent and greater acceptance of authoritarianism globally. **Fiona Zerbst** explores how companies can promote greater faith in the democratic process and ensure it serves all citizens.

In 2024, 60 countries held national elections, making this the biggest election year in over a century – but although this appears to be a victory for democracy, it is not quite the case, according to Sweden’s Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute. This longstanding project on democracy reveals the world is now almost evenly divided between 91 democracies and 88 autocracies, with the level of democracy enjoyed by the average person in the world down to 1985 levels.

According to V-Dem’s comprehensive report *Democracy winning and losing at the ballot*, 71% of the world’s population now lives in autocracies – an increase from 48% just 10 years ago. Only 29% of the global population – 2.3 billion people – live in liberal and electoral democracies.

These are alarming statistics since well-run democracies tend to deliver stronger economies and more opportunities for their citizens. Democracy generally boosts growth through economic reforms, foreign direct investment and enabling more stable sociopolitical environments. The Brookings Institute notes that “democracies thrive because they are better at ensuring the provision of public goods, including education, public health and infrastructure; manage markets more effectively; and channel contestation into political compromise rather than political violence”.

The global erosion of democracy is worrying, but it is worth noting that electoral democracies still outnumber electoral autocracies. Over the past two years, there has been a slight decline in countries trending towards autocracy. This may mean the wave of autocracy has crested – but it remains to be seen whether the trend will continue.



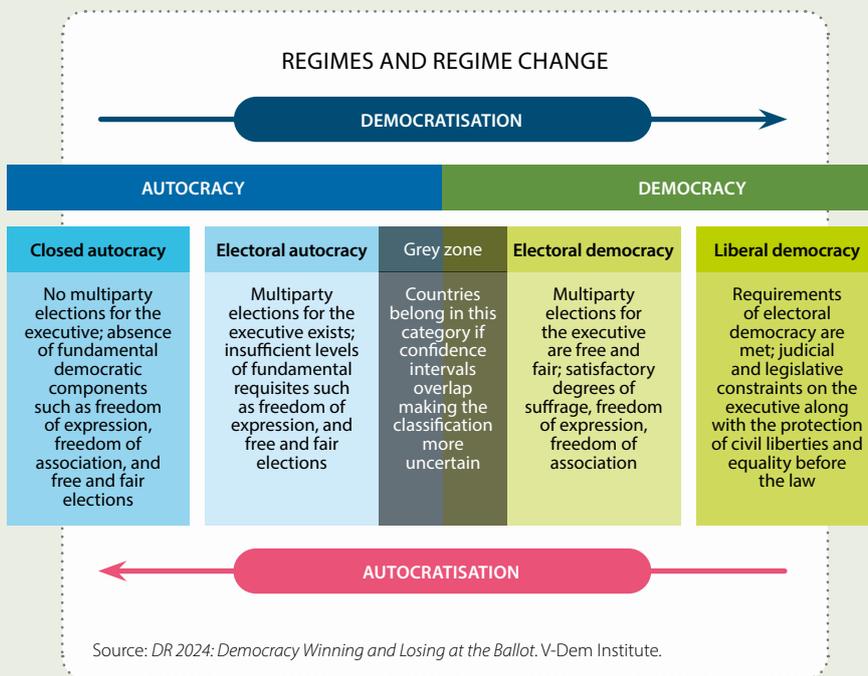
Almost all components of democracy are getting worse in more countries, with freedom of expression declining in 35 countries during 2023.

•••••  
**Clean elections have deteriorated in 23 countries and improved in only 12.**

•••••  
The third most deteriorating component, freedom of association – which includes civil society – was restricted in 20 countries in 2023 and expanded in only three.

Source: *Democracy Report (DR) 2024: Democracy Winning and Losing at the Ballot*. V-Dem Institute, Sweden.  
<https://v-dem.net/publications/democracy-reports/>

Photo credit: **Tree of hope**, Archange Kiyindou "Yamakasi". 2020. Republic of Congo.  
A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.



**16%** of the global population lives in electoral democracies (including Argentina, Brazil and South Africa).

Sub-Saharan Africa is the third most autocratic region worldwide, with the Seychelles the only liberal democracy in the region.

Four of the region's countries have lost the status of liberal democracy in the past decade: South Africa in 2013, Mauritius in 2014, Ghana in 2015 and Botswana in 2021.

Source: DR 2024: Democracy Winning and Losing at the Ballot. V-Dem Institute.

## THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

In Africa, democracy is at risk. Since 2020, there have been nine successful coups on the continent – two occurring in Gabon and Niger during 2023. There have also been military takeovers in five countries since 2020: Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Sudan and Chad.

Regional organisations have been trying to enforce democratic processes – for example, the Economic Community of West African States (2001) Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance provides that any constitutional or election-law reforms carried out within six months of an election require consensus by all parties. However, politicians frequently bypass this provision, according to the pan-African research network Afrobarometer. In addition, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) provides for sanctions against governments that come to power through unconstitutional means. However, enforcement has been inconsistent and influenced by political considerations.

African leaders may not have much time for democracy, but citizens do. Afrobarometer's research, conducted in 39 African countries, shows that 75% of Africans favour fair, open and honest elections to choose their leaders. More than six in 10 citizens support elections in all surveyed countries except Lesotho, where a majority (54%) favour other methods for choosing leaders. However, support for the electoral process has weakened over the past decade and fewer than half of survey respondents said voting ensures representative, accountable governance.

In South Africa – which held free and fair elections in May 2024 – only 36% of the population believe democracy has been successful and only 33% believe their vote will count. This is according to Professor Narnia Bohler-Muller, Divisional Executive of the Developmental, Capable and Ethical State research programme at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), who shared insights into democracy in South Africa at the 2024 Dialogue Business in Society Conference (read Bohler-Muller's article on how businesses can help to build a capable state on page 74).

Worryingly, 30 years after the transition to democracy, almost half of South Africans (47%) said they felt unqualified to participate in politics, according to the South African Reconciliation Barometer 2023, while 51% said they lacked a good understanding of the issues affecting the country.

This was one of the factors that led to a low voter turnout: only 16.2 million of 27.7 million registered voters made their mark at the polls in June – a 58% turnout, the lowest for a general election in our democratic history.

Of course, it can be difficult to strengthen democratic processes where citizens do not see direct benefits or cannot imagine their vote will improve their living conditions. There is a growing perception that democracy is not useful unless it delivers social justice – a view that has led to democratic discontent and a greater exploitation of authoritarianism globally.

## SHOULD COMPANIES GET INVOLVED WITH POLITICAL ISSUES?

How can companies promote greater faith in the democratic process and ensure it serves all citizens?

Getting involved in political matters can be a challenge for businesses, which often perform better in liberal democracies but are reluctant to get directly involved in politics. Most want to avoid divisiveness or accusations of cronyism – and they generally do not factor political action into their sustainability strategy, says the Network for Business Sustainability (NBS), a Canada-based NPO set up to advance sustainable development globally.

However, the NBS points out that companies are obligated to engage in politics responsibly. This means considering their own broader interests and their obligation to society, including:

- Ensuring they have a legitimate basis for any engagement
- Making sure their political activities align with their commitments to employees, customers, investors and other stakeholders
- Ensuring their activities are transparent
- Using their political influence to protect and support the systems we depend on, namely our economic system, civic institutions and the natural environment.

Examples of companies following best practices include:

- Outdoor clothing company Patagonia encourages voter participation and runs campaigns to encourage civic engagement. Since 2016 it has closed its stores on election day to give employees paid time off to vote
- Levi Strauss & Co. promotes voter registration and turnout among its customers and employees and has advocated for voting rights legislation
- Microsoft has enshrined its election protection commitments in principles to help safeguard voters, candidates, campaigns and election authorities globally. Microsoft is also in the process of setting up an Election Communications Hub to support democratic governments around the world to build secure, resilient election processes.
- The NBS crafted the Erb Principles for Corporate Political Responsibility in 2023 – a template that companies can use to decide whether and how to engage in political influence.

Damien du Preez, Research Coordinator at the Centre for Research on Democracy at Stellenbosch University and Co-chair of the Citizens' Assembly Working Group, a collaborative project that explores the potential of citizens' assemblies for South African and African democracy, says companies tend to be cautious as they do not want to be accused of political interference.

“However, because government has been an unreliable partner in the past, business feels it has a responsibility to hold government to account in a way that regular institutions have failed to do,” he points out.

CECP, a coalition of chief executive officers (CEOs) and executives from more than 200 large corporations that advises companies on their corporate purposes, recommends several measures to support democracy. These include offering civic engagement programmes; providing support for employees who want to get more involved in election processes; and sharing accurate, unbiased information to combat misinformation.

Finally, strengthening civil society organisations is important, which involves helping them to become resilient, improve their management and governance practices, and trust them to use funds as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Ultimately, democracy is not just about voting but about engaging in civic action every day to ensure our rights and freedoms remain intact. This means strengthening democratic systems and institutions, and becoming social justice advocates where appropriate (see Louise Jones's Viewpoint on page 178).

## STEPS COMPANIES CAN TAKE TO SUPPORT DEMOCRACY

A recent survey by Morning Consult found that more than 80% of business leaders consider threats to democracy as threats to business, which underscores the business case for safeguarding democracy.

There are several steps that corporates can take to support democratic initiatives.

While companies may shy away from overtly supporting specific political parties as they feel it may alienate stakeholders, they do have the option to fund one or more parties directly. Whether they choose to provide proportional or outright support, they must be clear on their rationale and transparent about their support.

One of the 'grey areas' for companies is political funding and Du Preez believes reform is needed as “it's easy for powerful

### THE CASE FOR CPR

#### Four principles for Corporate Political Responsibility (CPR)

The Erb Principles for CPR can guide companies' engagement in politics.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

Political activity follows the company's larger mission, vision, values and previous commitments to stakeholders.

#### TRANSPARENCY

Political activities are communicated clearly to all stakeholders and broader society.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

Political activity protects systems on which economy, society and life depend. Companies advocate to protect and improve those systems.

#### LEGITIMACY

Political activities have a legitimate basis. Companies impact or are impacted by an issue, or it poses a threat to our whole system.

Source: Erb Principles for CPR, 2023

interests to use their significant resources to advance a political agenda or pervert the democratic process". NPO My Vote Counts won in the Western Cape High Court when it challenged the Electoral Matters Amendment Act 14 of 2024 and asked the court to reinstate funding thresholds for political parties and independent candidates. This removes some secrecy from party funding, though My Vote Counts believes the annual donation cap should be reduced and all donations should be disclosed.

If companies do not want to be directly involved with party politics, they can educate their staff about the democratic process, voting rights and practicalities, like how to register to vote.

Many companies also have a large consumer constituency and they could play a meaningful role by raising constitutional awareness and promoting education beyond their staff members. This kind of education can continue in non-election years to ensure more robust civic engagement and an ongoing commitment to democratic accountability. Those companies investing in youth

programmes can consider incorporating elements of participatory democracy into them.

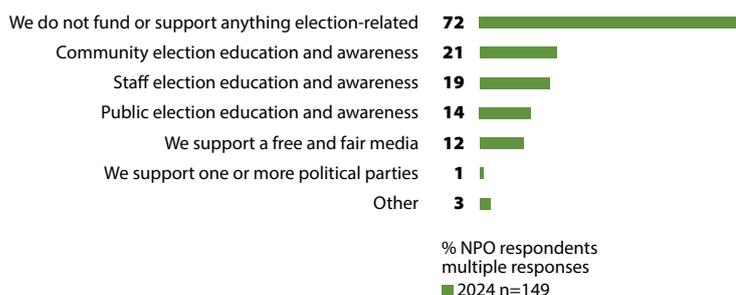
Another way to support democracy is to invest in a free and fair media. Not many South African companies do this, with much financial support provided by international funders. However, the media is a vital part of an informed society and it holds those in power to account. This includes both mainstream media and organisations such as the AmaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism and GroundUp. "Helping to keep the media alive and free reflects well on business without accusations of getting directly involved in politics, thus opening itself up to criticism," says Du Preez.

In recent years misinformation has proliferated online and this often intensifies during election years. It is important to be able to debunk falsehoods and provide a balanced counterpoint to some of the wild promises politicians make. Having a democracy in which people vote on misinformation defeats the purpose of voting.

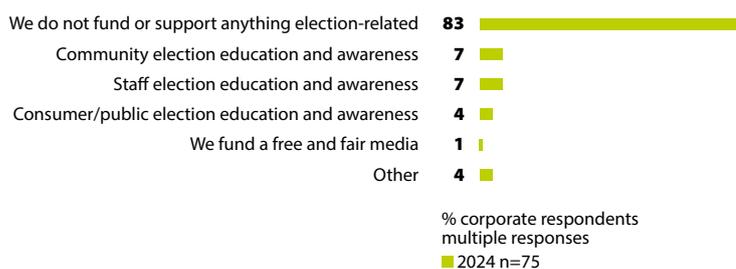
The vast majority of South African companies do not support elections in these ways – with 83% of company respondents in Trialogue's 2024 research stating they do not support anything election-related. Fewer than 10% support awareness and education for employees, communities or the public.

Another strategy is to consider funding and supporting NPOs that advance democracy, constitutional rights, civic freedom and social justice, such as Defend our Democracy, the Democracy Works Foundation, the Social Justice Coalition and others. Supporting organisations that work towards strengthening our democratic institutions is a better course of action than using their own voices to strengthen or weaken arguments, says Du Preez. "Instead of wading directly into political debates, they should ensure the democratic system functions correctly." However, few companies currently support such organisations, with only 20% of companies surveyed by Trialogue in 2024 supporting social justice and advocacy (see social justice and advocacy section on page 176).

### HOW NPOs CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS



### HOW COMPANIES CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS



### HOW COMPANIES CAN MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD

The 2024 *Edelman Trust Barometer South Africa* (Barometer) has once again indicated that global citizens place more trust in businesses (63%) than in governments (51%), underscoring the huge responsibility companies have for providing ethical leadership.

Last year's Barometer indicated that business was the most trusted institution in society (62%), followed closely by NPOs (61%). The media had a 41% approval rating and the government a not unexpected 22% rating. This year the focus was on innovation, but South African businesses emerged as the most trusted when it comes to integrating innovation into society (65%), followed by NPOs (58%) – the government received a poor score of 36%.

Companies are clearly trusted institutions and, as such, there are expectations that they will make their voices heard on pressing issues affecting their employees and customers. The issues South African

company leaders most often speak about publicly are climate change, education, inequality and gender-based violence, although fewer than half of companies do so even on these issues.

In the US a survey conducted by the Business & Democracy Initiative in 2022 found that 77% of business leaders believe it is important to speak out against threats against democracy and over half encourage their staff to champion democracy and work in elections.

As corporate citizens entrenched within societies, companies are entitled to have opinions, shape norms and values, and speak up in the face of injustice. Microsoft established an Immigrant Rights Clinic that provides legal assistance to immigrant employees in the US, Apple has taken part in immigration reform advocacy in the US and Barclays in Britain has partnered with refugee organisations to provide support and resources to refugees.

By making such efforts companies can not only increase public trust but can strengthen the foundations of democracy itself. Increasingly, this seems less a choice than a crucial imperative for a fair and just society.

Companies can also find their voice by joining collective business initiatives, such as Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), Business Leadership South Africa or the National Business Institute, to comment on proposed policy and government action, collaborate on solving pressing problems as well as informing and empowering employees (read our article 'How business associations foster collaboration' on page 106).

### HOW NPOS CAN HELP TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY

NPOs play a crucial role in promoting civic participation, fostering civic education and holding power to account. They are therefore ideally placed to help strengthen democracy. In South Africa, there are a number of NPOs working to increase civil engagement.

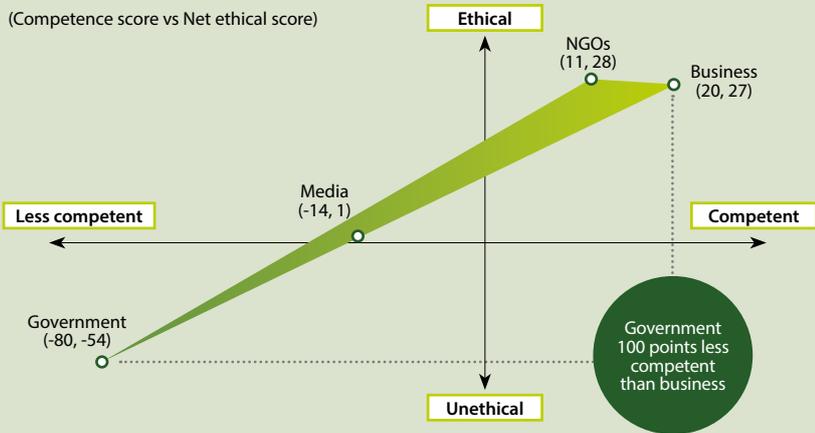
Futurelect is an organisation that has set out to incubate the next generation of leaders in Africa and its aims include reviving young people's trust in politics and democracy. It works with corporate and supranational partners that include Anglo American, Investec, UNICEF and the World Economic Forum to roll out civic education and other programmes. It improves young people's media literacy and educates them about electoral processes.

The Democracy Works Foundation's Cool Politics Cafés are monthly events held in Johannesburg that foster intergenerational dialogues to deepen democratic culture. The foundation has also partnered with the Kgalema Motlanthe Foundation, hosting leadership forums to stimulate dialogue, develop action plans and reach consensus about mapping democratic pathways for the future.

Du Preez says an important role played by NPOs is to fight legal battles on behalf of community interests. If institutions – including companies – are violating community members' rights, NPOs can seek funding and resources to challenge

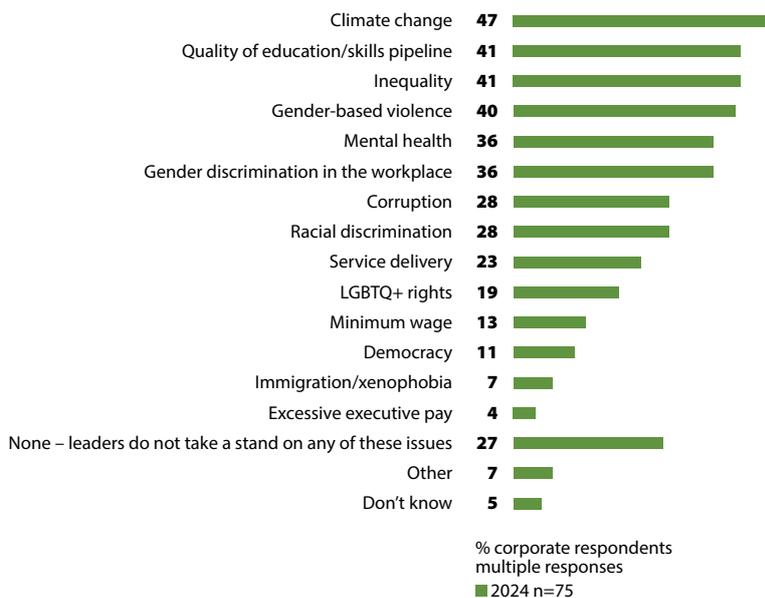
#### IN SOUTH AFRICA, INSTITUTIONS OUT OF BALANCE: GOVERNMENT SEEN AS FAR LESS COMPETENT AND ETHICAL THAN BUSINESS

(Competence score vs Net ethical score)



Source: The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer.

#### ISSUES THAT SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANY LEADERS TAKE A PUBLIC STAND ON



## CASE STUDY

### SAVING DEMOCRACY IN SENEGAL

In March 2024 it was feared that Senegal's former president, Macky Sall, would not step aside when Bassirou Diomaye Faye was elected president. Senegal's democracy is a beacon in West Africa, which has been destabilised by military coups and deteriorating security. Sall's postponement of the 25 February elections was met with protests and demonstrations organised by a coalition of civil society and political organisations, Aar Sunu Election [Protect Our Election] and Plateforme des Forces vives de la Nation. The licence of Walf TV, a media outlet covering the protests, was revoked. However, a delegation made up of representatives from civil society, the private sector and politicians met with Sall and saw that the licence was restored.

Members of the #KeepItOn coalition, a global network of more than 300 organisations in 105 countries working to end internet shutdowns, wrote an open letter to the Senegalese authorities to ensure open, secure internet access during the elections following sporadic shutdowns. The dramatic yet eventually peaceful transfer of power was helped by a robust coalition of civil society, business, media and other stakeholders in the region and beyond.

these institutions. "Our constitutional and lower courts still perform as they should, and this is one of the few recourses to keep government and other institutions in check," he points out.

Good examples include:

- GroundUp has been instrumental in supporting legal challenges related to forced evictions, land expropriation and environmental degradation in marginalised communities

- The African Centre for Environmental Justice and the Centre for Environmental Rights have successfully challenged mining projects posing environmental risks to communities, illegal mining activities and water pollution, and advocated for stricter environmental regulations.

NPOs can function as legal foot soldiers who make sure the government meets its obligations. "For example, if the government is falling short when it comes to the public participation process that is mandatory before Bills are passed, NPOs can take the errant members of Parliament to court," says Du Preez.

NPOs are very good at mobilising citizens to take part in protest campaigns. The Rivonia Circle has played a key role in urging South Africa's new administration to listen to communities and "do things differently". Activist Tessa Dooms, a director at the Rivonia Circle, joined calls for the resignation of former Johannesburg mayor Kabelo Gwamanda under the banner of the Johannesburg Crisis Alliance, which is building a civic movement to arrest the decline of the city.

However, Du Preez says not all NPOs are good at meeting people where they are and should be cautious about organising their own events and taking people along with them. He says NPOs "should amplify people's voices and use their network to translate existing demands into policy-relevant recommendations".

### THE WAY FORWARD

Companies and NPOs possess unique networks, platforms and resources that can significantly contribute to strengthening democracy. There are multiple ways to support democracy, including advocating for democratic policies, investing in civic engagement, promoting transparency and accountability, supporting independent media, fostering dialogue and inclusion, and educating and empowering communities. By actively participating in the democratic process and supporting initiatives that foster a more just and inclusive society, the private and civil sectors can play a vital role in shaping a future in which everyone has a stake. ■



### Sources and further reading:

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Scan for the online version of this article with sources.



## How companies can help build a capable state



A capable, ethical and developmental state requires strong leadership and a capacitated, meritocratic public service, among other things. **Narnia Bohler-Muller**, a Divisional Executive in the Developmental, Capable and Ethical State research division at the Human Sciences Research Council, explains how to build a capable state and what the private sector can do to assist.

**What is the definition of a capable state and which indicators are used to measure such capability?**

The National Development Plan, a blueprint adopted in 2012 to deal with the identified deficiencies in state capacity and capabilities, defines a capable state as one that conducts its work efficiently and effectively towards the pursuit of socioeconomic justice. The core function of our state is to mobilise resources to meet developmental challenges and manage socioeconomic change. To achieve this, the state must be capable and ethical. Corruption and state capture have led to the hollowing out of the state, which interferes with its developmental agenda, service delivery prerogatives and investment opportunities. One of the areas that requires attention is the professionalisation of the public service. Merit-based appointments are needed and cadre deployment must be abandoned as a means of maintaining political control over the administration, which disrupts the effective and efficient delivery of services.

**Which recommendations in the State Capture Commission's report have been effectively addressed to date?**

Progress has been made since the release of the state capture reports in 2022, although much still needs to be done. However, there have been movements towards compliance:

- The National Prosecuting Authority Amendment Bill, introduced to Parliament in August 2023, provides for the establishment of an independent Investigating Directorate against Corruption. In addition, initiatives have been undertaken to establish a professional public service and an independent Public Service Commission (PSC). The amendment Bills that promised reforms (the Public Administration Management

Amendment Bill and Public Service Amendment Bill) lapsed at the time of the inauguration of the seventh administration and must be reintroduced.

- The Public Procurement Act 28 of 2024 was signed into law by the President on 23 July 2024. It entrenches constitutional requirements for a public procurement system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost effective. In July 2023, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development published a discussion document on proposed reforms for the whistle-blower protection regime in South Africa and invited public comments. New regulations in terms of the Auditing Profession Act 26 of 2005 authorise the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA) to impose fines for 'improper conduct' on errant auditors of up to R10 million and up to R25 million on auditing firms. Finally, the Judicial Matters Amendment Bill makes it an offence for a public or private entity, including state-owned enterprises (SOEs), to take 'inadequate measures' to prevent offers, of giving or receiving a 'gratification'.

**What can the private sector do to improve and strengthen state capacity?**

Corporations have an important role to play in stabilising the state and supporting its developmental agenda. Private sector and professional associations can explore collaboration with the National School of Government (NSG) to develop a shared understanding of the benefits of professionalism and professionalisation, and to support the NSG's training curriculum. Collective business initiatives such as Business Unity South Africa, Business for South Africa and Business Against Crime South Africa provide platforms to speak out, tackle pressing problems together, and work closely

with the government and civil society to achieve positive outcomes.

It is worth reviving the National Economic Development and Labour Council where business, labour, the government and civil society can meet to tackle complex challenges with a shared vision of a prosperous South Africa. In addition, business can work with the government, and civil society especially, in the volatile infrastructure sector. An example is participation in the Infrastructure Built Anti-Corruption Forum coordinated by the Department of Public Works in partnership with the Special Investigating Unit. Another platform for collaboration is the Joint Initiative on Crime and Corruption launched by the President, where the government and business work together to prevent and combat these societal ills.

**Which interventions could the government, private sector and civil society work on together to build a more capable state?**

The Government of National Unity (GNU) cannot build a developmental, capable and ethical state on its own. There is a need for better synergies and cooperation between the public and private sectors alongside nonprofit and civil society organisations to drive a change agenda. The latter are in financial trouble due to the withdrawal of international funding agencies and a poor economic climate, so supporting their efforts could ensure that citizens remain active and informed. The diversity and fresh perspectives introduced by the GNU may open doors to better collaboration and shared values for the sake of stability and growth in South Africa.

### NARNIA BOHLER-MULLER

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## VIEWPOINT



# Democracy in Africa: A dream deferred?



Most Africans look favourably on democracy. However, Africa's democratic project faces significant challenges, including weakening support, a lack of accountability and coups. Nurturing democracy on the continent will require active engagement by various stakeholders, including business, says Afrobarometer Director of Communications **Josephine Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny**.

Afrobarometer's report *African Insights 2024: Democracy at risk – the people's perspective* provides a compelling snapshot of the status of democracy on the continent. What are the key findings of the report?

Afrobarometer's *African Insights 2024* shows most Africans prefer democracy to any other system of government and reject non-democratic alternatives, including military rule. They also strongly endorse the norms, institutions and practices associated with democratic governance, such as choosing political leaders through elections, constitutional limits on presidential tenure, presidential compliance with court rulings, parliamentary oversight of the executive, media freedom and multiparty competition. A clear majority say it is more important to have a government that is accountable to the people than one that 'gets things done'.

African citizens have a clear preference for democracy, yet many governments are failing to deliver this. What are some of the main challenges to democratisation and how can these be addressed?

Many African countries suffer from weak political and legal institutions that are unable to enforce laws, ensure accountability or support the democratic process. Only a slim majority of citizens think their presidents usually comply with parliament (56%) and the courts (54%), and just one-third think officials who commit crimes are usually held accountable. Corruption, which undermines these institutions, is getting worse. About six in 10 Africans say corruption levels in their countries increased over the past year. Unfortunately, 67% of Africans say their governments are failing in the fight against corruption.

Why is trust in electoral processes declining and what type of electoral

reforms may be needed to prevent the irregularities and abuse we see across the continent?

The decline in trust in electoral processes may reflect citizens' disappointment with elections that are marred by disputes or violence, or perhaps a recognition that elections by themselves do not guarantee accountable governance or reliable public services. Public trust in national electoral management bodies is weak in most countries. Investing in electoral management bodies and strengthening their independence would go a long way towards restoring public confidence in electoral processes.

Misinformation plays a significant role in influencing voting, both globally and locally. What is the situation like in Africa and what are the best ways to counter misinformation?

Mis- and disinformation pose serious challenges to democratic governance, particularly given the ease and speed with which such information is disseminated in the digital era. Our surveys conducted in 2019 and 2021 show that Africans blame a wide range of actors for spreading information they know is false. The perpetrators cited most often are politicians and political parties (64%) and social media users (64%). About half blame the media (52%), government officials (51%) and activists and interest groups (45%). Effective civic education can help in countering misinformation.

Please provide an example of a democratic 'success story' and indicate to which this can be attributed.

Zambia's democratic resilience over the past few years would be a good example. After Edgar Lungu's disputed 2016 election win, his government arrested opponents, restricted the media, suspended parliament and declared a state of emergency, leading to concerns of authoritarianism. However, Zambians remained committed to democracy, even though their

satisfaction level fell to 37% in 2020. After Hakainde Hichilema's landslide win in 2021, the satisfaction with democracy rebounded to 71% in 2022.

What is the role of civil society in strengthening democracy? How can NPOs get involved?

The role of civil society – including nongovernmental organisations, businesses and social movements – is to act as an additional system of checks and balances to the government. It can strengthen democracy by raising awareness of and advocating against any government actions that threaten to undermine political freedoms or democratic institutions. Civil society groups can also help to empower citizens through civic education.

What should companies do to strengthen democracy in Africa?

Companies should work closely with independent research and advocacy organisations, including providing funding support for research and advocacy aimed at improving democratic and accountable governance. The effective rule of law and public sector accountability are important conditions for businesses to grow and thrive.

What is the future of democracy in Africa?

The ability of governments to deliver democracy and accountable governance continues to lag behind citizens' expectations. However, a majority of Africans remain committed to democracy, which suggests that the grounds are fertile for democracy to thrive. The future of Africa's democracy is bright, but only if elected leaders commit to meeting the aspirations of their citizens.

**JOSEPHINE APPIAH-NYAMEKYE  
SANNY**

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# Standard Bank empowers early childhood development through the Seriti Institute's aRe Bapaleng programme



At Standard Bank, investing in sustainable social initiatives that empower South Africa's communities is core to our mission. **Our support of the aRe Bapaleng parental support and early childhood development (ECD) programme, managed by the Seriti Institute, exemplifies this.** Focused on building capacity among parents and caregivers of children aged 0–8 years, this initiative aims to transform early learning environments in under-served communities.

## Empowering parents and caregivers for lifelong impact

The aRe Bapaleng Programme, which takes its name from a Sesotho phrase meaning 'Let's play', operates on a simple but profound principle: **every child deserves a safe, engaging and nurturing environment for optimal development.** Through workshops and resource-sharing, aRe Bapaleng equips caregivers with tools, skills and support networks to enrich early childhood experiences, fostering environments where children can thrive physically, emotionally and intellectually. Standard Bank is proud to support these efforts, as they align closely with our commitment to community-led social upliftment.



### Programme Reach and Community Engagement

During the first half of 2024 aRe Bapaleng reached over 4 312 caregivers across seven provinces through active learning workshops, home-based visits and awareness campaigns. This comprehensive approach has been instrumental in scaling access to early development resources across diverse communities, with special attention to rural and marginalised areas.

Through its field coordinators who operate across five provinces, namely KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Free State, Limpopo and North West, the programme engages parents and caregivers on various topics including nutrition, learning through play and areas of development. It does this with the support of tools like the Heartlines Fathers Matter toolkit and Nali Bali's Learning Through Play resources. Through such well-rounded interventions, aRe Bapaleng maximises the impact of early learning opportunities in each community it serves.

20

ECD centres and initiatives supported

1 006

Parents and caregivers reached through Active Learning Workshop activities and home-based visits

3 440

Children benefiting

173

Caregiver Network-ERs activated

13

Local implementing partners

11

Enabling partners

### Innovative tools and training for caregivers

Beyond workshops, aRe Bapaleng has launched multiple initiatives to bring accessible resources directly into the hands of caregivers. One such innovation is the aRe Bapaleng Play and Learn Toolkit (also called the FunBox). Each box includes essential learning materials designed to engage children in stimulating activities, aligning with the programme's emphasis on learning through play.

Cotlands' Toy Library training and Singakwenza's Waste-2-Toys training further enhance the programme's offerings, teaching caregivers how to use everyday items to create educational toys. These initiatives not only bring creative learning tools into households but also promote environmental sustainability by repurposing materials.

### Impact through collaboration and awareness

During South Africa's Child Protection Week and International Day of Play, aRe Bapaleng organised events that attracted hundreds of children and caregivers. These gatherings reinforce the programme's message while providing opportunities for stakeholders to witness the positive changes enabled by the programme. The engagement at these events demonstrates the strong community bonds and mutual support fostered by aRe Bapaleng's collaborative approach.

### Milestones and looking ahead

Since its launch aRe Bapaleng has demonstrated considerable success in building the foundations for sustainable ECD support networks. From 2020 to 2023, we have reached a total of 12 574 caregivers and parents across all four aRe Bapaleng activities in 21 municipalities across all nine provinces. The initiative has an ambitious goal to reach 100 000 parents and caregivers by 2025.

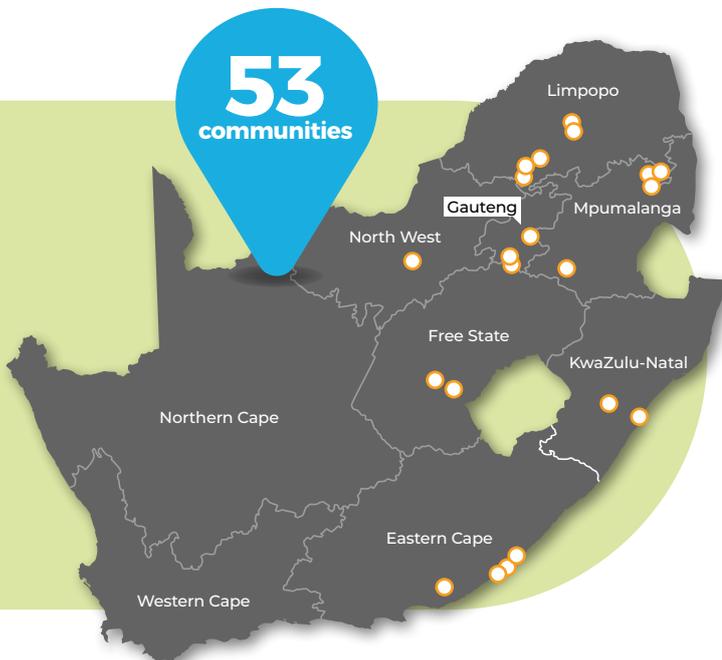
Looking ahead, aRe Bapaleng has plans to establish local 'Junxtions' – community hubs where caregivers can access training, resources and peer support. These sites will serve as gathering points for furthering the programme's reach and fostering collaborative learning. A pilot Junxtion is set for launch in Deelpan, North West.

### A collaborative future for ECD

As a bank committed to driving positive social impact, Standard Bank believes that sustainable change happens through collective action. Our support of aRe Bapaleng is more than just funding; it's an investment in South Africa's future, one that begins with empowering caregivers to provide nurturing, stable environments for the youngest members of our communities.

### Strengthening Caregiver Networks for lasting change

Through its active learning sessions, workshops and continuous support, aRe Bapaleng is growing a network of over 170 Caregiver Networkers. These trained caregivers go on to provide peer support, ensuring that knowledge is shared and reinforced within communities. As this network expands, it amplifies the programme's impact, creating sustainable, community-led growth.



### Seriti's partners

Name
Singakwenza
Nali Bali
Do More Foundation
Project Literacy
Mikhulu Trust
Correct Book
Dlalanathi
Book Dash
Sesame Workshop South Africa
Cotlands

For those interested in learning more about this partnership and how it is transforming home-based ECD in South Africa, we encourage you to connect with the Seriti Institute or visit our website.

# REWARDING STRATEGIC CSI

For CSI to be strategic, it must have a positive developmental impact and benefit the business. Since 2014, the Triologue Strategic CSI Award has recognised projects that exemplify strategic CSI. Through this award, Triologue aims to encourage CSI practitioners to think more strategically when planning and implementing their initiatives.

## TRIALOGUE'S STRATEGIC CSI MASTERCLASS

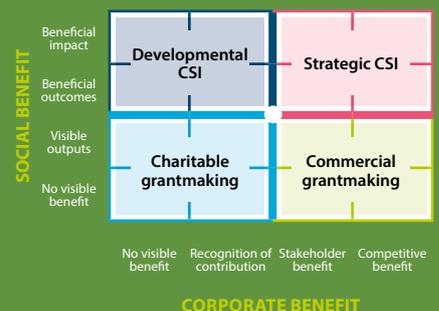
Triologue offers a Strategic CSI Masterclass on the Triologue Academy for senior leaders and decision-makers working in CSI. The Masterclass provides you with the tools to think strategically about CSI in your organisation and to make choices that optimise the business and development value of your CSI initiatives. The Masterclass is also offered in-person the day before the Triologue Business in Society Conference each year.



## TRIALOGUE'S CSI POSITIONING MATRIX

Based on years of experience, Triologue has developed and refined a CSI positioning matrix, with multiple criteria behind each axis, that allows companies to position their projects according to their social and business results, and to allocate CSI funds strategically across the four categories of giving. This award seeks to identify projects that best demonstrate strategic CSI.

Strategic CSI projects deliver a combination of high positive social and business outcomes. While developmental CSI offers beneficial social outcomes, it does not always have significant corporate benefits. Similarly, commercial grantmaking prioritises corporate benefit over social return. Charitable grantmaking is typically more reactive, with social and business benefits not usually measured.





## JUDGING CRITERIA

Companies submit entries for CSI projects they believe are strategic, using a standard entry form. Each project is judged against its objectives, social benefits and corporate benefits, as set out below.

### Objectives

Targets need to be practical and realistic. Projects should have 'SMART' (specific, measurable, relevant and time-bound) objectives.

### Social benefits

**Visible outputs:** Evidence of short-term results that are immediate, visible and concrete (for example, number of houses built, people trained, supplies or pamphlets distributed, community members treated, hours of service delivered).

**Beneficial outcomes:** Evidence of specific changes in behaviour, knowledge, skills or wellbeing of the project beneficiaries. Medium-term developmental results that are the consequence of achieving a specified combination of short-term outputs (for example, behaviour or attitude change, new knowledge or skills, improved grades, reduced isolation, and improved access to health services).

**Beneficial impact:** Evidence of broader long-term (three years or more) consequences of the project. Community, society or system-level changes that are the logical consequences of a series of short- and medium-term results (for example, improved effectiveness of the education system, reduction in HIV prevalence, new social norms, more educated/healthier population, inclusive decision-making, lack of stigma, increased capacity). Government engagement, lesson sharing and advocacy are also considered when judging this element.

### Business benefits

**Recognition of contribution:** Recognition of the project that improves the company's reputation. This can include recognition of expenditure as socioeconomic development is in line with the BBBEE Scorecard, as well as internal and external communication of the project.

**Stakeholder benefit:** Meaningful engagement with key business stakeholder groups in the funding, design or delivery of the project that improves the company's relationship with that stakeholder group. Stakeholders can include communities, regulators, government departments, suppliers, customers or employees.

**Competitive benefit:** Project benefits that enhance the business' competitiveness. This can be done by securing a licence to operate, opening up new markets for the business, introducing new products, reducing costs by developing local suppliers, leveraging corporate resources or securing specialised talent.

## ABOUT THE JUDGES

**Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze** is the Head of Economic Inclusion at the National Business Initiative (NBI). Her responsibilities include developing and implementing the NBI's strategy to develop and deliver programmes and initiatives aimed at developing and empowering South Africa's youth through skills, youth employability and SMME support. She has more than 15 years of experience in social and sustainable development, having worked across sectors, with the bulk of her career in the corporate sector driving the development and implementation of sustainable development strategies. She holds a Masters of Social Science (MSocSc) in Gender and Development from the University of Cape Town.

**Bhekinkosi Moyo** is an adjunct professor at Wits Business School at the University of the Witwatersrand and director of the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment. He was previously the CEO of the Southern Africa Trust, where he helped the organisation to adopt social enterprise tools and pivot to alternative and innovative high-impact strategies for leadership, sustainability and social change.



The Trialogue Strategic CSI Award 2024 was awarded to BritelinkMCT's Head Start programme (pages 80–81).

# BritelinkMCT's Head Start programme

WINNER OF THE TRIALOGUE STRATEGIC CSI AWARD 2024



BritelinkMCT is a full-service optical fibre company that specialises in planning, implementing, maintaining and repairing fibre optic telecommunications infrastructure for network operators. It has active operations across South Africa. Its vision is to deliver quality, sustainable infrastructure connecting communities across all affordabilities.

BritelinkMCT's Head Start CSI programme aims to empower unemployed young people by providing comprehensive training and work experience in the optical fibre installation industry. Each year, the programme enrolls 30 to 50 candidates, offering them an opportunity to gain theoretical knowledge and practical skills over six months. The on-the-job training is designed to meet industry standards, ensuring participants are well equipped for future employment.

In addition to the training and work experience, candidates are provided with a stipend to cover travel and other basic living costs, alleviating a financial burden and enabling them to focus fully on their development. This holistic support is crucial to ensure participants engage effectively with the programme.

The initiative primarily serves unemployed youth across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and the Western Cape, targeting regions with high unemployment rates. By the end of the six-month programme participants not only acquire the skills necessary in the telecommunications sector but also have a significant chance of securing employment within BritelinkMCT, with 75% of work experience candidates typically being absorbed into full-time positions.

This programme has been running successfully since 2018, continuously contributing to reducing youth unemployment and fostering economic growth in the targeted provinces.

## SOCIAL BENEFITS – COMBATING UNEMPLOYMENT

The programme demonstrates quantified changes in beneficiaries' lives. In 2023/24 a total of 216 unemployed young people enrolled in the programme, gaining valuable technical and vocational skills tailored to the optical fibre installation industry. Of the 216 participants who started the programme, 177 completed the six-month training and work experience. Seventy-five percent (121) were offered full-time employment by BritelinkMCT.

The programme also demonstrated measured outcomes over time. Participants demonstrated improved technical skills, as evidenced by pre- and post-training assessment scores, and enhanced employability. Employer feedback indicated that the trained participants met or exceeded industry standards in technical competency and workplace readiness.

## PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS

**R967 933**

Company expenditure on the project in 2023/24

**216**

Unemployed young people enrolled in the programme in 2023/24

**177**

Participants completed the six-month training and work experience

**75%**

Participants absorbed into full-time employment within BritelinkMCT



## BRITELINK MCT

Compared to similar CSI projects, BritelinkMCT's Head Start programme stands out for its high absorption rate (75%), ensuring a substantial number of participants secure employment. The programme's comprehensive support, including stipends for travel and living costs, contributed to higher completion rates and better overall outcomes in comparison to projects lacking such support mechanisms.

### BUSINESS BENEFITS – DEVELOPING EMPLOYABLE TALENT

While the societal benefits of the Head Start programme are evident, it has also had a beneficial effect on the company itself. The programme has created a robust talent pool of skilled and trained individuals in the optical fibre installation sector. By developing and employing new staff, BritelinkMCT has strengthened its workforce with specialised skills critical to the telecommunications industry.

The specialised training provided to participants has elevated the technical capabilities of BritelinkMCT's employees, ensuring that the company has a competitive edge in delivering high-quality services and maintaining industry standards. With a trained and competent workforce, the company can improve operational efficiency, reduce training time for new employees and enhance overall productivity.

The programme has effectively leveraged corporate resources by investing in future employee development. This strategic allocation of resources should lead to long-term cost savings and better returns on investment.

By training and absorbing its trainees, BritelinkMCT has reduced costs associated with external recruitment and onboarding, while ensuring that new employees are well aligned with the company's needs and culture. The company's reputation as a socially responsible employer has also attracted more committed candidates, leading to a more skilled and motivated workforce.

Additionally, the programme's investment in training and providing work experience to unemployed youth has been recognised as a contribution to BritelinkMCT's SED points on the BBBEE Scorecard. This has enhanced the company's overall BBBEE rating and demonstrated its commitment to social and economic development.

Internally, the initiative has been communicated within the company to highlight its social impact and reinforce the company's values and commitment to community development. It has improved employee morale, as employees take pride in working for a company that actively contributes to social development.

The programme has also enhanced BritelinkMCT's corporate image among its

industry peers. It showcases BritelinkMCT's commitment to addressing industry-wide challenges such as skills shortages and unemployment.

Active involvement in the programme's design and funding requirements has improved relationships and engagement with stakeholders by demonstrating a commitment to their needs and concerns.

Finally, the programme's success has influenced the company's broader CSR strategy, integrating more socially beneficial practices and creating a cohesive approach to community engagement.



### JUDGES' FEEDBACK

"BritelinkMCT's Head Start programme was a clear demonstration of a well-thought-through and designed approach that addresses the challenge of youth unemployment through skills development and employment while simultaneously ensuring skills and talent within the company. The programme has a 75% absorption rate, which indicates the clear link to business needs."

## COMMENDABLE MENTIONS

### AECI – PETCO WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

AECI has partnered with Petco to address waste management as a revenue stream for unemployed women and youth. To date, AECI supports 13 waste management businesses. A total of 284 jobs are created annually, managing over 400 tonnes of recyclable waste per month. Jointly, these entities generate an income of over R745 000 per month, a 53% increase in revenue after Petco support. The project has clear intentions, with M&E indicators and tracking, and clear impact across stakeholder groups.



#### JUDGES SAID:

“AECI’s Petco waste management programme scores well on most dimensions with a strong demonstration of its impact. The project has clear intentions, with M&E indicators and tracking, and clear impact across stakeholder groups.”

### STANDARD BANK – ONEFARM SHARE

This project aims to address South Africa’s hunger challenge by providing fresh, nutritious produce to those facing meal uncertainty. The goal is to contribute 100 million meals by the end of 2024. It also aims to accelerate smallholder farmer development through the provision of market access, prompt payment, market-related pricing, and increased access to business and agronomy support. Lastly, it aims to reduce fresh produce waste from commercial farmers and agro-processors by providing an alternative to juicing, landfills and open dumping. The project has clear targets and activities with impact demonstrated through case studies. The business link is clearly illustrated through new markets, products and value to clients.

■ Read more about the OneFarm Share project on page 153.



#### JUDGES SAID:

“Standard Bank’s OneFarm Share has clear targets and activities with impact demonstrated through the case studies. The business link is clearly illustrated through new markets, products and value to clients. A strong project.”

# CSI EXPENDITURE PER COMPANY

The following table contains published figures on CSI expenditure of over R5 million for a full financial year during the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, where available. 'Not available' means the company report had not been published at the time of our Handbook's publication (usually for June year-ends) and 'Not disclosed' is where the report was available, but CSI expenditure was not disclosed.

As far as possible, Triologue has focused on South African expenditure on CSI at group level. However, it is not always possible to distinguish South African from international expenditure. Reported figures are also not consistent in how CSI is defined but, where possible, we have excluded expenditure on non-CSI-related activities (such as housing for employees, or enterprise and supply chain development). Where global figures are reported in dollars, pounds or euros, Triologue has converted these to rands using the SARS average exchange rate for each company's financial year. Footnotes are included to provide clarity in instances where reported numbers do not accurately represent South African CSI expenditure.

Triologue does not take responsibility for the accuracy of published figures. The figures are provided as published by the companies. The scope, in terms of geography and areas of investment included in CSI expenditure as well as the methodology used to determine expenditure and value of non-cash contributions, varies across companies. The figures are therefore not directly comparable across companies.

Company name	2023/24 published CSI spend	2022/23 published CSI spend	2023/24 development focus areas	Source for 2023/24
	(RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	(RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	(not in order of investment)	
<b>4Sight Holdings Limited</b>	6.5	5.1	Social development, education	4Sight Holdings Limited Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg54
<b>Absa Group Limited</b>	286.0	267.0	Education, skills development, humanitarian relief, SMME support, employee volunteering	Absa Group Limited Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg19
<b>ACSA</b>	7.9	13.7	Food security, job creation, skills development, community development	ACSA Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg75
<b>Adcock Ingram Holdings</b>	8.4	8.4	Education, health, environment	Adcock Ingram 2023 Sustainability Data Table
<b>Adcorp Holdings</b>	12.8	Not available	Education, skills development, NPO support	Adcorp Holdings Corporate Citizenship Report 2024, pg45
<b>ADvTECH Group</b>	299.0 <sup>1</sup>	211.0	Education	ADvTECH Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg94
<b>AECI Limited</b>	40.0 <sup>2</sup>	36.0	Disaster relief, climate action, education, orphans and vulnerable children (ECD, water and food security, primary healthcare and psychosocial support), employee volunteering	AECI Limited Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg28
<b>African Bank</b>	Not disclosed	25.1	Education, socioeconomic development, financial literacy	African Bank Environmental, Social and Governance Report 2023, pg44–51
<b>African Equity Empowerment Investments (AEEI)</b>	6.7	10.5	Sports, arts, culture, social development, education, enterprise development	African Equity Empowerment Investments Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg81
<b>African Rainbow Minerals</b>	7.0	2.0	Water infrastructure, sports facilities, education, agri-business	African Rainbow Minerals Integrated Report 2023, pg65
<b>Afrimat Limited</b>	34.4	12.3	Arts, sports and culture, basic needs, education, community upliftment, skills development, small business development	Afrimat Limited Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg61
<b>AfroCentric Investment Corp</b>	4.6	16.6	Education, health	AfroCentric Group Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg23

Company name	2023/24 published CSI spend (RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	2022/23 published CSI spend (RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	2023/24 development focus areas  (not in order of investment)	Source for 2023/24
<b>AlexForbes</b>	5.0	5.6	Community development, skills development, youth empowerment	AlexForbes Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg64–69
<b>Altron Group</b>	6.0 <sup>3</sup>	7.2	Education, skills, community development	Altron Group Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg50–51
<b>Anglo American</b>	1 476.0 <sup>4</sup>	1 782.8	Health, education, economic development, water and sanitation, youth employment	Anglo American Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg65
<b>Anglo American Platinum</b>	471.0	276.0	Health, social welfare, education, skills development, infrastructure, enterprise development, community dividends	Anglo American Platinum Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg89
<b>AngloGold Ashanti</b>	347.6 <sup>5</sup>	261.7	Education, social infrastructure, health, income-generation initiatives	AngloGold Ashanti Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg117
<b>ArcelorMittal South Africa Limited</b>	17.4	16.7	Community science centres, community-based NGOs	ArcelorMittal SA Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg60
<b>Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Limited</b>	15.3	21.5	Health, education, sports	Aspen Pharmacare Integrated Annual Report 2022, pg94
<b>Assupol Group</b>	10.0	10.0	Sanitation, education	Assupol Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg20
<b>Astral Foods</b>	4.8	5.6	Food security, health, wellness, community development, empowerment of emerging farmers	Astral Foods Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg113
<b>Attacq</b>	10.4	6.1	Community development, food security	Attacq Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg77
<b>AVI Limited</b>	25.9	23.8	Education, job creation, community development	AVI Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg60
<b>Barloworld</b>	12.0	11.0	Social entrepreneurship	Barloworld Social, Ethics and Transformation Committee Report, pg3
<b>Bid Corporation</b>	30.5	34.0	Community development, food projects	Bid Corporation Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg36
<b>Bidvest</b>	71.0	54.0	Education, community development, health, welfare	Bidvest Environment, Social and Governance Report 2024, pg21
<b>Blue Label Telecoms</b>	11.6	14.9	Education, youth development, community development	Blue Label Telecoms Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg49
<b>Brimstone Investment Corporation</b>	5.0	12.0	Education, disaster relief, community development, health	Brimstone Investment Corporation Integrated Annual Report, pg11
<b>Burstone Limited Group (previously Investec Property Fund)</b>	7.0 <sup>6</sup>	7.2	Community development, employment opportunities, skills development	Burstone Limited Group Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg96
<b>Capitec Bank</b>	39.0	43.0	Education, community development, disaster relief	Capitec Bank Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg25
<b>Cashbuild</b>	183.3	182.5	Education, community development, youth empowerment	Cashbuild ESG Report 2023, pg6
<b>Clicks Group</b>	26.7	24.0	Education, food security, health, wellbeing	Clicks Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg16
<b>Curro Holdings</b>	140.0 <sup>7</sup>	137.0	Education, community development	Curro Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg27
<b>Datatec</b>	8.9 <sup>8</sup>	8.7	Education	Datatec Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg13
<b>Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)</b>	11.6 <sup>9</sup>	9.5	Nutrition, school sanitation	Development Bank of Southern Africa Sustainability Review 2024, pg59
<b>Dis-Chem Pharmacies</b>	34.3	12.5	Social development, nutrition, health, education	Dis-Chem Pharmacies Sustainability Report 2024, pg98
<b>Engen</b>	Not available	33	Education, health, safety, environment, community wellbeing, people who are differently abled	Engen Integrated Annual Report 2022, pg26
<b>Environmental Impact Management Services</b>	32.8 <sup>10</sup>	Not available	Socioeconomic development	EIMS Africa website
<b>EOH Holdings</b>	12.5	6.7	Education, ICT skills development	EOH Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg11

Company name	2023/24 published CSI spend (RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	2022/23 published CSI spend (RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	2023/24 development focus areas (not in order of investment)	Source for 2023/24
<b>Eskom</b>	Not available	63.0	Education, community development, energy and environmental projects	Eskom Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg10
<b>Exemplar REIT</b>	6.3	5.2	SMME development, education, infrastructure, food security	Exemplar REIT Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg47
<b>Exxaro Resources</b>	72.4	167.9	Education, infrastructure, welfare, health, governance, disaster relief, agriculture, sports culture	Exxaro Resources Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg22
<b>Famous Brands</b>	17.2	16.9	Health, education, environment, sport, social environment	Famous Brands Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg126
<b>FirstRand</b>	Not available	474.0	Education, capacity building, financial inclusion, community development, agri-systems, climate change, gender-based violence, healthcare	FirstRand Report to Society 2023, pg102
<b>Glencore</b>	2 029.5 <sup>11</sup>	1 472.0	Community development, enterprise and job creation, health, humanitarian relief, education, capacity building	Glencore Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg70
<b>Gold Fields South Africa</b>	68.3 <sup>12</sup>	88.0	Infrastructure, education and training, health and wellbeing, economic diversification, conservation, environment, charitable giving	Gold Fields Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg32
<b>Grindrod Limited</b>	15.1	6.7	Education, conservation, food security	Grindrod Limited Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg4
<b>Growthpoint Properties</b>	62.0	50.0	ECD, education, entrepreneurship development, community development	Growthpoint Properties Environment, Social and Governance Report 2024, pg49
<b>Harmony Gold Mining Company</b>	Not available	27.0	Infrastructure, SMME development, sports and recreation, youth development, education	Harmony Gold Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg84
<b>HomeChoice International</b>	Not disclosed	8.6	ECD, community development	HomeChoice International Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg94
<b>Impala Platinum Holdings</b>	352.0	207.0	Education, health, infrastructure, environment, skills development, enterprise development	Impala Platinum Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg51
<b>Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa</b>	60.2	52.3	Education and skills development, entrepreneurship development, consumer education, humanitarian relief	Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg74
<b>Investec</b>	235.4 <sup>13</sup>	218.9	Education, entrepreneurship, community development, environment	Investec Sustainability Report 2024, pg43
<b>Italtile</b>	33.0 <sup>14</sup>	85.2	Education, sport, conservation	Italtile Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg27
<b>Johannesburg Stock Exchange</b>	9.9	9.8	Education, social welfare, gender equality, skills development, conservation	JSE Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg112
<b>KAL Group (formerly Kaap Agri)</b>	5.6	5.9	Education, community development, food security	KAL Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg7
<b>KAP Industrial Holdings</b>	24.0	25.0	Community development, education, nutrition	KAP Industrial Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg69
<b>Kumba Iron Ore</b>	376.2	399.5	Health, education, infrastructure	Kumba Iron Ore Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg89
<b>Landbank</b>	6.4	5.1	Education, food security, environment, sports and culture	Landbank Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg240
<b>Libstar Holdings</b>	16.1	18.1	Food sustainability, food security, healthy nutrition	Libstar Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg46
<b>Life Healthcare Group</b>	122.7	107.0	Healthcare, education, community development	Life Healthcare Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg136
<b>Mediclinic International</b>	74.2 <sup>15</sup>	55.0	Furniture and equipment donations, emergency medical services and transport for indigent patients, pro bono surgeries	Mediclinic 2024 Corporate Profile, pg88
<b>Merafe Resources</b>	21.9	27.8	Education, skills development, entrepreneurship	Merafe Resources Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg38
<b>Metair Investments</b>	18.6	18.6	Community development, skills development, health, education, sports and wellbeing	Metair Investments Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg35
<b>Momentum Metropolitan Holdings</b>	35.5	43.5	Education, skills development, employee volunteering, job creation	Momentum Metropolitan Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg11

Company name	2023/24 published CSI spend (RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	2022/23 published CSI spend (RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	2023/24 development focus areas (not in order of investment)	Source for 2023/24
<b>Mondi Group</b>	145.1 <sup>16</sup>	153.1	Health, environmental protection, education, local enterprise, infrastructure	Mondi Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg39
<b>Motus Holdings</b>	24.7	26.5	Community upliftment, education, primary health, youth development, road safety, disaster relief	Motus Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg163
<b>Mpact</b>	13.6	11.8	Skills development, education, enterprise development, health, environmental sustainability, unemployment	Mpact Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg5
<b>Mr Price Group</b>	29.5 <sup>17</sup>	23.0	Education, skills development, disaster relief	Mr Price Group Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg8
<b>MTN Foundation</b>	54.0	63.6	Education	MTN Foundation Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg65
<b>MultiChoice South Africa</b>	301.0 <sup>18</sup>	284.0	Education, sports, community development	MultiChoice South Africa Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg20
<b>Murray &amp; Roberts Holdings</b>	1.8	6.9	Education, skills development, community development	Murray & Roberts Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg21
<b>Nampak</b>	6.7	7.0	Community development, education, youth employment	Nampak Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg71
<b>Nedbank Group</b>	154.0	127.0	Education, skills development, entrepreneurship (green economy), sports, arts and culture, community development, health, employee volunteering	Nedbank Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg81
<b>Netcare Limited</b>	29.0	35.0	Healthcare, disaster management	Netcare Limited Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg129
<b>Northam Platinum</b>	55.3	299.0	Community development, education, health	Northam Platinum Sustainability Report 2024, pg43
<b>Oceana Group</b>	5.2	4.7	Food security, maritime safety, community development, environmental sustainability	Oceana Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg45
<b>Old Mutual</b>	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Financial education and inclusion, entrepreneurship, education, skills development, humanitarian and disaster support	Old Mutual Sustainability Report 2023, pg61 and pg63
<b>Omnia Holdings</b>	50.0	46.0	Education, food security, agriculture, skills development	Omnia Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg2
<b>Pan African Resources</b>	46.8 <sup>19</sup>	30.2	Education, health, infrastructure, community development	Pan African Resources Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg73
<b>Pepkor Holdings</b>	62.9 <sup>20</sup>	64.6	Education, ECD, health, nutrition, economic development	Pepkor Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg2
<b>Pick n Pay Stores</b>	29.2	39.1	Education, food security, environment, sports and culture	Pick n Pay Stores Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg65
<b>Rand Water Foundation</b>	72.0	90.0	Sanitation and hygiene, water quality, community development	Rand Water Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg4
<b>Raubex Group</b>	5.4	6.0	Education, health, community development, sports	Raubex Group Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg2
<b>RCL Foods</b>	20.7	10.9	ECD, community development, nutrition	RCL Foods Sustainable Business Report 2024, pg94
<b>Redefine Properties</b>	5.1	7.2	Community development, environmental awareness, skills development, youth development	Redefine Properties Environmental, Social and Governance Report 2023, pg9
<b>Remgro</b>	36.0	26.0	Community development, cultural development, sports, environment, entrepreneurship, education	Remgro Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg9
<b>Reunert Group Limited</b>	10.0	8.0	Education, food security	Reunert Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg79
<b>RFG Holdings Limited</b>	7.1	5.1	Feeding programmes, nutrition	RFG Holdings Sustainability Report 2023, pg11
<b>Santam</b>	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Community disaster	Santam Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg24
<b>Sasol</b>	693.2	857.3	Skills development, environment, education, community development	Sasol Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg37

Company name	2023/24 published CSI spend (RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	2022/23 published CSI spend (RSA, unless otherwise stated) Rm	2023/24 development focus areas (not in order of investment)	Source for 2023/24
<b>Shoprite Holdings</b>	437.6 <sup>21</sup>	409.0	ECD, community development, hunger relief, skills development, education, youth unemployment	Shoprite Holdings Sustainability Report 2024, pg46
<b>Sibanye-Stillwater</b>	605.0	362.0	Health, education, arts and culture, sports, conservation and environment	Sibanye-Stillwater Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg219
<b>South African Reserve Bank</b>	40.5	36.9	Education, research, employee volunteerism, MPC Schools Challenge, arts and culture	South African Reserve Bank Integrated Annual Report 2024, pg66
<b>South32</b>	187.1 <sup>22</sup>	231.0	Education, health, economic development	South32 Sustainable Development Report 2024, pg29
<b>Spar Group</b>	23.0	29.0	Crime prevention, food security, education, disaster relief	Spar Group Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg42
<b>Stadio Holdings</b>	44.0	32.5	Education, community development, sports, disaster relief	Stadio Holdings Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg49
<b>Standard Bank Group</b>	142.2	125.4	Education, humanitarian relief, employee volunteering and donation matching, combating gender-based violence	Standard Bank Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg73
<b>Sun International</b>	32.9	27.6	Education, sports, arts and culture	Sun International Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg61
<b>Super Group</b>	26.4	21.1	Food relief, education, healthcare, youth development, job creation	Super Group Integrated Report 2023, pg17
<b>Telkom SA SOC</b>	71.0	64.0	Education, digital skills, social development	Telkom Integrated Annual Report 2022, pg9
<b>Tiger Brands</b>	70.8	26.0	Food security, community development, employee volunteerism, education, enterprise development	Tiger Brands Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg59
<b>Transnet</b>	127.6	109.0	Health, education, sport, employee volunteerism and socioeconomic infrastructure development, Covid-19 relief	Transnet Annual Report 2023, pg19
<b>Truworths International</b>	Not available	4.9	Community development	Truworths International Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg14
<b>Umgeni Water</b>	Not disclosed	6.2	Community development, education, health, conservation, employee volunteering	Umgeni Water Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg100
<b>Vodacom Group</b>	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Education, people with disabilities, gender equality, financial inclusion, poverty	Vodacom Group Limited Environmental, Social and Governance Report 2024, pg34–38
<b>Wilson Bayly Holmes-Ovcon (WBHO)</b>	5.0	5.0	Health, education, environmental impact	Wilson Bayly Holmes-Ovcon (WBHO) Integrated Annual Report 2023, pg30
<b>Woolworths</b>	973.0 <sup>23</sup>	1 031.0	Food security, education, health, environmental awareness	Woolworths Good Business Journey 2024, pg28

<sup>1</sup> Includes bursaries

<sup>2</sup> Includes non-RSA operations

<sup>3</sup> Sum of reported spend on various initiatives

<sup>4</sup> US\$80 million @ 18.48 spent in Africa

<sup>5</sup> US\$18.8 million @ 18.45

<sup>6</sup> Includes spend on enterprise and supplier development

<sup>7</sup> Includes bursaries

<sup>8</sup> Through the Datatec Foundation

<sup>9</sup> Sum of reported spend on various initiatives

<sup>10</sup> Sum of reported spend in areas of operation

<sup>11</sup> US\$110 million @ 18.45 including non-RSA operations

<sup>12</sup> US\$3.7 million @ 18.45 in RSA

<sup>13</sup> £10 million @ 22.54 including non-RSA CSI

<sup>14</sup> Through Italtile and Ceramic Foundation Trust

<sup>15</sup> Southern African spend

<sup>16</sup> €7.3 million @ 19.95

<sup>17</sup> Through the Mr Price Group Foundation

<sup>18</sup> Includes non-cash advertising contributions of R61 million

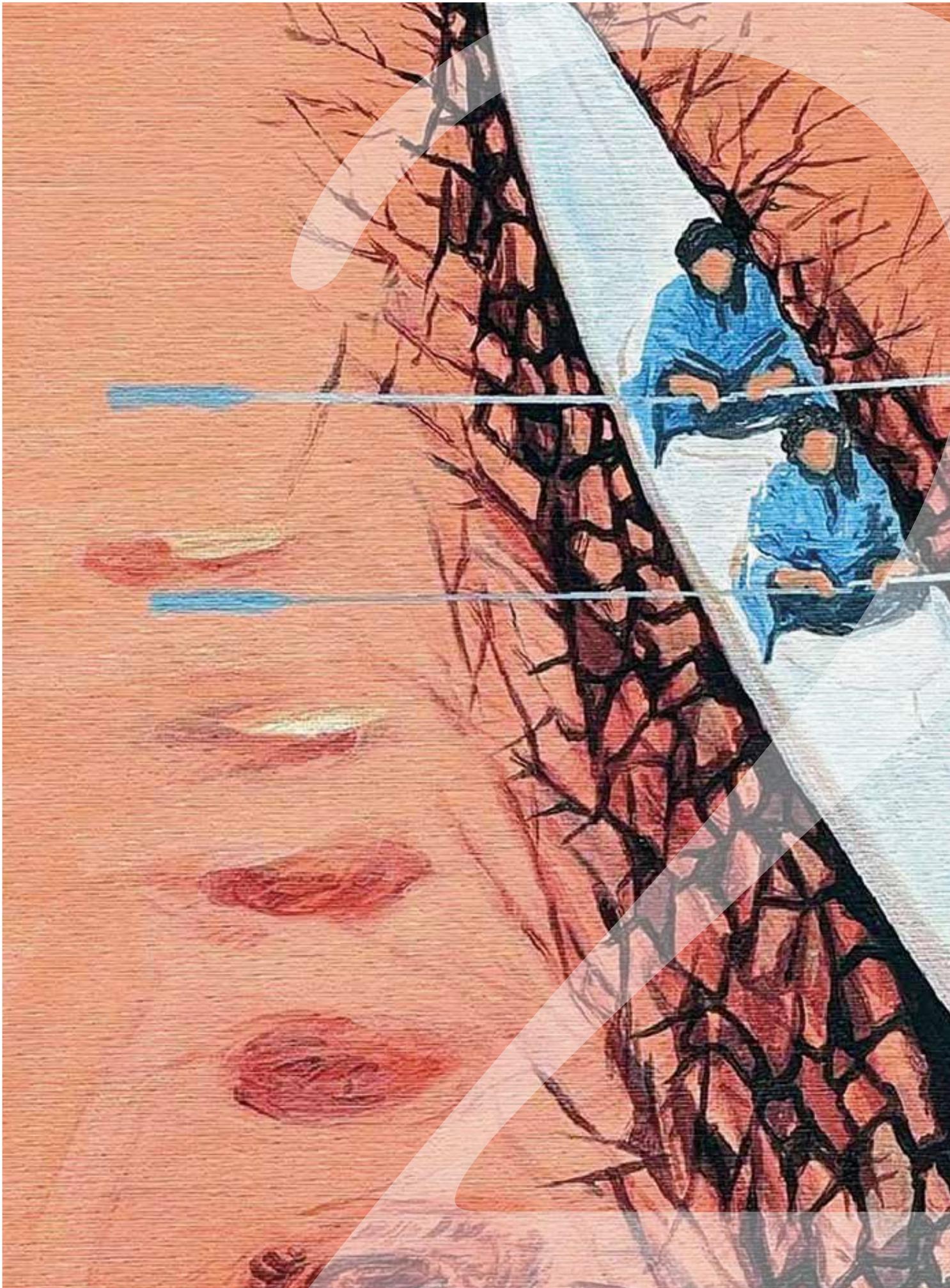
<sup>19</sup> US\$2.5 million @ 18.71 on CSI and LED initiatives

<sup>20</sup> Total spend includes non-RSA operations

<sup>21</sup> CSI spend includes R233.9 million worth of surplus food and goods donations. It excludes subsidies on R5 meals and products, staff training and bursaries, SMME payment terms and Shoprite Foundation interventions. Total spend includes non-RSA operations.

<sup>22</sup> US\$23.6 million @ 18.71 total spend, 42% spend in South Africa

<sup>23</sup> CSI spend includes R816 million of surplus food donations. Total spend includes non-RSA operations.



# SPOTLIGHT ON COLLABORATION

## 2

Research findings on collaboration from companies and nonprofit organisations (NPOs), followed by practical guidance on establishing collaborations, the role of business associations in fostering collaboration and case studies showcasing different collaborative models.

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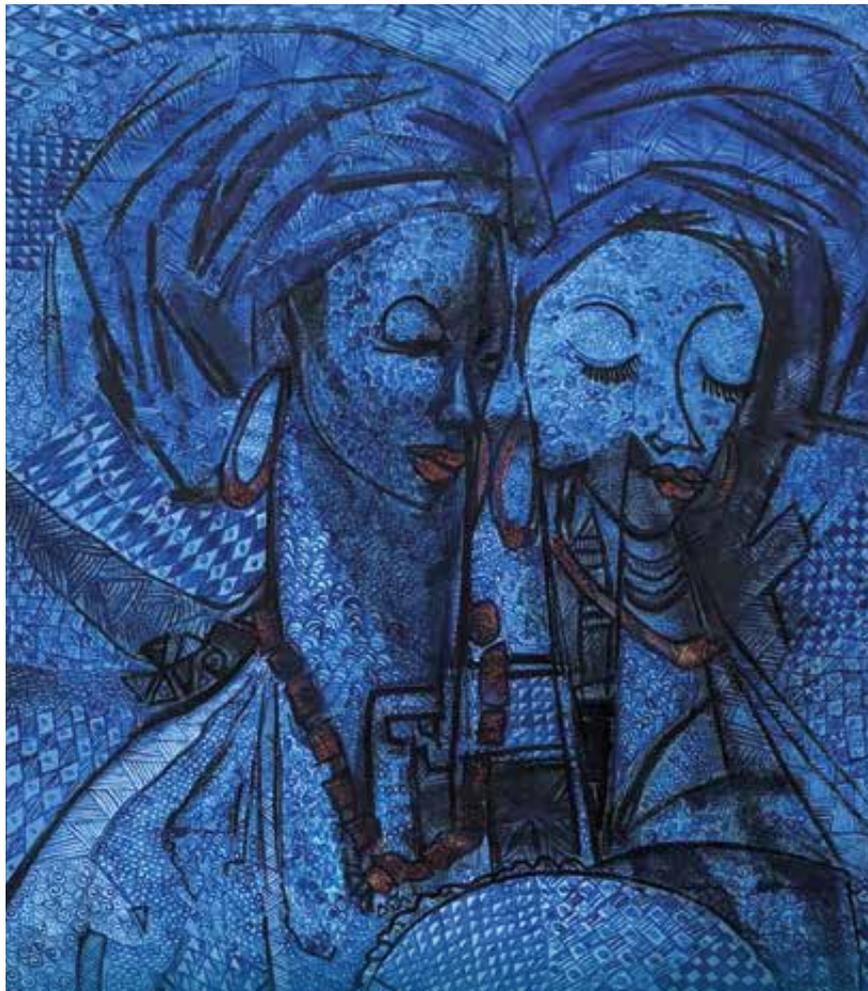
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Photo credit: *#El Barco del Desierto*, Mohamed Moulud Yeslem. 2021. Algeria.  
A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.



The extent and complexity of modern global crises are beyond the reach of any single entity. Creating meaningful, lasting change in the form of social justice and environmental sustainability demands shared intentions, collective effort and combined action. In a word – collaboration. As a key player in the global landscape business has a responsibility to embrace collaborative efforts. We explore how working together is playing out in the world of corporate social investment (CSI) and how companies can leverage collaboration to achieve positive impacts.

# CO-CREATING THE FUTURE: Collaborating to amplify change

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SDG 17 aims to strengthen global partnerships to support and achieve the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It focuses on collaboration between governments, the private sector and civil society, ensuring no one is left behind. The goal addresses finance, technology, capacity building, trade and systemic issues, fostering inclusive partnerships at the global, regional and local levels.

Photo credit: *The Female Drummer/Áyánbinrin*, Nike Monica Okundaye. 2020. Nigeria.  
A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.

## AN ANTIDOTE TO POLYCRISIS

Our world faces an unprecedented confluence of global challenges. International conflicts, accelerating climate change and the aftermath of a global pandemic have converged with other events to create a complex tapestry of present and future risks. The World Economic Forum describes this situation as a polycrisis – an intricate convergence of economic, political, geopolitical and environmental crises whose combined impact exceeds the sum of its parts.

This polycrisis demands a paradigm shift in problem-solving. Its interconnected nature requires solutions that are equally integrated, drawing on diverse perspectives, resources and expertise across sectors and borders.

Against this landscape, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are more than aspirational targets. The 17 interlinked objectives identify the root causes of multiple global issues, providing a blueprint for a more equitable and sustainable world. They cannot be realised without significant, coordinated, collaborative action, an ambition that is specifically articulated in SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

The Covid-19 pandemic served as a stark reminder of our global interdependence and capacity for rapid, coordinated response. While exposing systemic vulnerabilities, it also demonstrated the power of cross-sector collaboration.

This collaborative spirit is essential for addressing the polycrisis and advancing the SDGs. No single entity, regardless of its resources or influence, can tackle these multifaceted challenges alone. Instead, we must usher in a new era of strategic partnerships that bridge traditional divides between governments, nonprofit organisations (NPOs), communities and the corporate world.

## THE COLLABORATIVE FUTURE OF GIVING

‘Collaboration’ is a growing buzzword across the giving world as governments, philanthropists and businesses recognise that systemic, scalable change will need more collective effort. Private philanthropy has largely been leading this charge. Bridgespan Group research shows how philanthropy has seen a rise in collaborative efforts over the past decade. *Releasing the Potential of Philanthropic Collaborations* explores how the process of pooling funding to create change, which has been practised for more than a century, is experiencing a rapid surge. This trend follows the rise in global wealth accumulation and increased interest in new ways of giving. The Bridgespan Group’s 2023 report *The Philanthropic Collaborative Landscape* notes that US collaboratives currently collectively direct between US\$4 billion and US\$7 billion to a variety of grantees annually. While this is a small portion of the overall value of philanthropic giving, the trend is growing and not just in the developed world.

According to the Bridgespan Group’s 2024 report *Philanthropic Collaborations in Africa and Their Unique Potential*, collaborative

giving in Africa has gained significant momentum over the past two decades. A sample of philanthropic collaborations involving African and non-African donors, found that these initiatives are bringing together diverse stakeholders, including governments, businesses and NPOs, to address pressing issues such as education, health, gender equality, climate change and economic development.

African funders see collaboration as a powerful tool for developing and implementing distinctly African solutions to local challenges. This approach has led to the emergence of many formal collaborations co-created by at least three independent actors, including philanthropists, with shared visions and strategies.

A key characteristic of African collaboratives is their emphasis on partnering with governments and the private sector. This approach recognises that systemic change often requires government involvement, especially in areas such as education and healthcare where extensive public infrastructure exists. Additionally, including private sector partners helps address the scope, scale and complexity of developmental challenges.

As wealth continues to grow across the continent, with increasing numbers of African millionaires and billionaires, there is the potential for further expansion of collaborative giving initiatives.

With this trend comes the potential for greater social impact. The Bridgespan Group’s 2024 report *Want to Fund in the Global South? Philanthropic Collaboratives Can Help* notes that Global South collaboratives are good at channelling resources to ‘proximate’ leaders – those with lived experience and local knowledge – and local communities. The report notes, however, that collaborative funding in the Global South is woefully under-utilised considering its potential for social impact. Collaborative funds offer efficient solutions for donors by handling due diligence, leveraging local networks and focusing on capacity building, often employing trust-based philanthropy principles. They also tend to provide access to specialised knowledge and local expertise, supporting donor engagement in a way that allows donors to quickly gain insights into unfamiliar geographies and solutions.

The Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa (IPASA) has witnessed the growing need for deeper and more effective collaboration as well as increasing awareness from South African funders that the philanthropy sector needs more collaboration to meet its potential. Its 2023 *Collaboration Case Studies* report considers the need to explore and reinvent the power relations between funders, implementers, communities and beneficiaries.

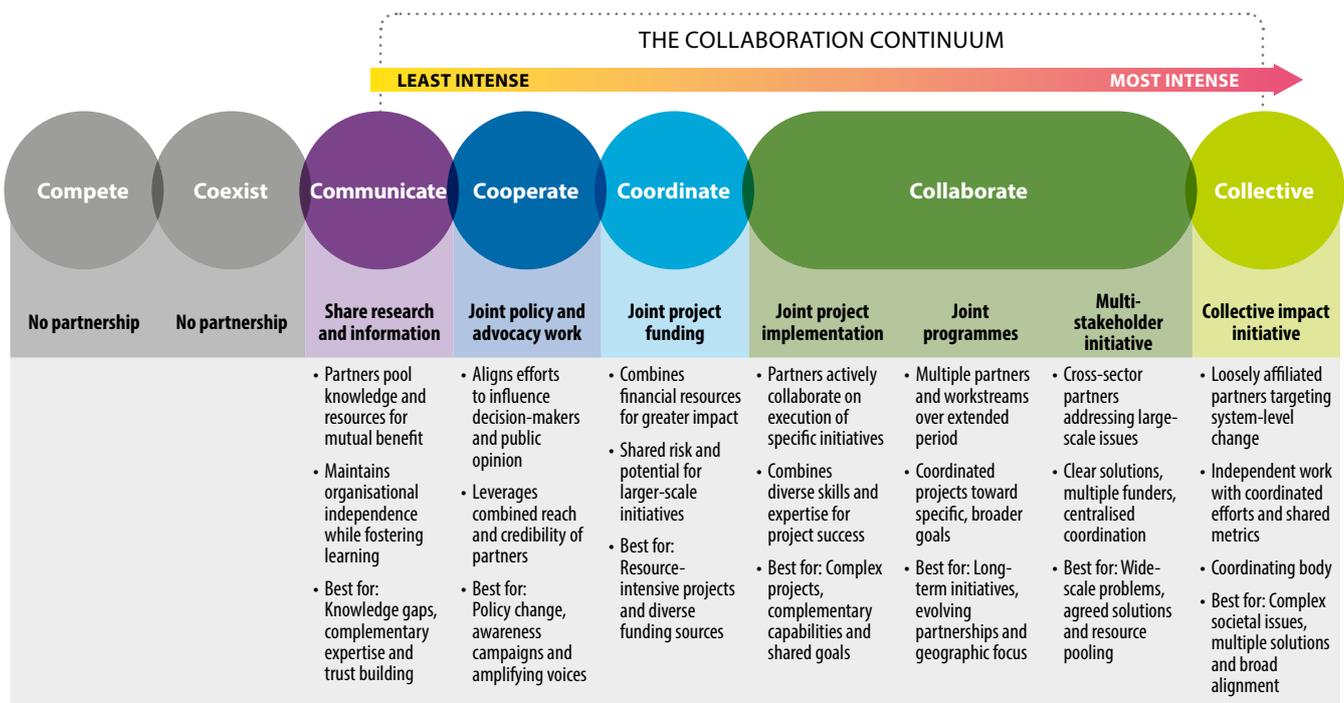
The growing body of evidence of the effectiveness of collaboration in delivering social change holds potential learning for companies looking to amplify their CSI impact.

## UNPACKING COLLABORATIVE MODELS

Multiple models of collaboration exist, each suited to different contexts and goals. These range from the sharing of research and information to collective impact initiatives. Within these structural models, collaborations can take many forms, such as technical partnerships that address specific organisational needs (e.g. fundraising), relationship-based collaborations that leverage complementary strengths (e.g. networking or expertise in a particular area), sector-specific alliances tackling industry-wide challenges, geographic collaborations focusing on local development, and ecosystem-wide initiatives bringing together diverse stakeholders to address a systemic issue. Collaborations can range from the least intense joint efforts that involve little more than information-sharing to more intense collective impact initiatives.

As organisations move across the collaboration spectrum, the nature of partnerships becomes increasingly demanding. This progression requires a greater investment of time, resources and commitment from all parties involved. At the less intense end of the spectrum, collaborations are often straightforward, with clear boundaries and limited shared responsibilities.

However, as efforts move towards the most intense, or collective, end of the collaboration spectrum, partnerships become more intertwined, necessitating sophisticated governance structures, aligned goals and shared accountability. This evolution demands not only more resources but also a shift in organisational culture, fostering trust, open communication and a willingness to share both risks and rewards.



Sources: Trialogue analysis, Tamarack Institute, Resonance Global

## THE STATE OF COLLABORATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN CSI

Broader collaborative effort holds enormous potential for CSI. Collaboration with other businesses, philanthropic organisations, NPOs, government agencies and communities would enable companies to leverage their unique strengths and resources to create a more significant, lasting impact. Effective partnerships that pool diverse resources, perspectives and experience, and share knowledge and best practices to deliver innovative solutions have a greater chance of building more resilient, sustainable systems capable of withstanding future crises.

Despite widespread acknowledgement of the potential value of collaboration from CSI practitioners, collaboration in its broader

sense remains an under-exercised strategy for CSI, with many companies unwilling to invest the time and money required for collective impact.

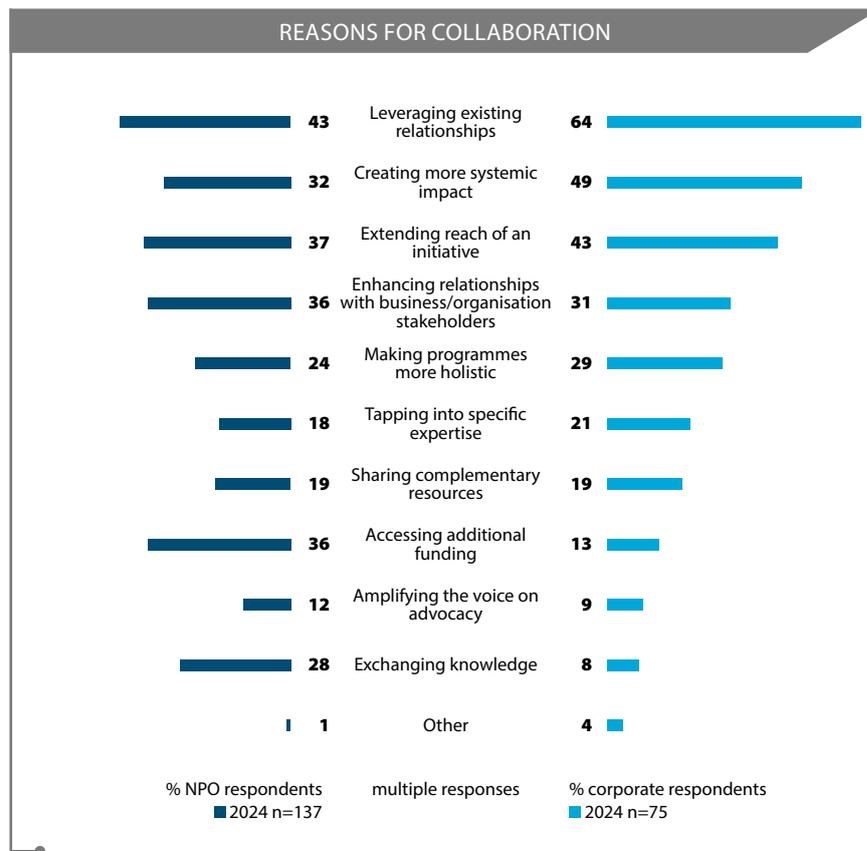
Triologue's 2024 primary research finds that the top motivation for collaboration for both companies and NPOs is to leverage existing relationships. Beyond this, their motivations for collaboration differ, with companies collaborating to create systematic impact and extend reach, while NPOs are more driven by knowledge exchange and access to additional funding. Surprisingly, both sectors show limited collaboration for advocacy purposes.

The research further finds that South African companies predominantly collaborate with NPOs, with 93% of companies partnering with NPOs. The next most common partners are

universities and research institutions, where three-quarters of companies report collaboration. There is a noticeable trend of increased partnerships between companies, both within and across industries, for joint-programme funding. NPOs and community-led groups are the primary partners for joint-programme implementation. While collaboration with universities for research sharing remains significant, it has decreased slightly since 2021.

NPOs demonstrate a strong tendency to collaborate within their sector and with community-led groups, mirroring the corporate preference for nonprofit partnerships. There is also a notable reciprocal relationship between companies and NPOs, with a significant portion of NPOs engaging in joint funding and implementation with private sector companies.

Interestingly, both companies and NPOs report minimal collaboration with regional and international multilateral organisations and aid agencies.



## DEVELOPING A BLUEPRINT FOR COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS

The path to successful collaboration is fraught with challenges. Reconciling profound ideological differences and objectives between businesses, governments and NPOs is no easy task. It is a necessary one, however, if there is to be any chance of addressing complex social issues.

Successful collaborative initiatives consider the following:

**Align goals:** At the heart of any successful collaboration lies a foundation of shared understanding. Partners must come together to articulate clear, common goals that align not just their broad social impact objectives, but also their secondary aims and expectations.

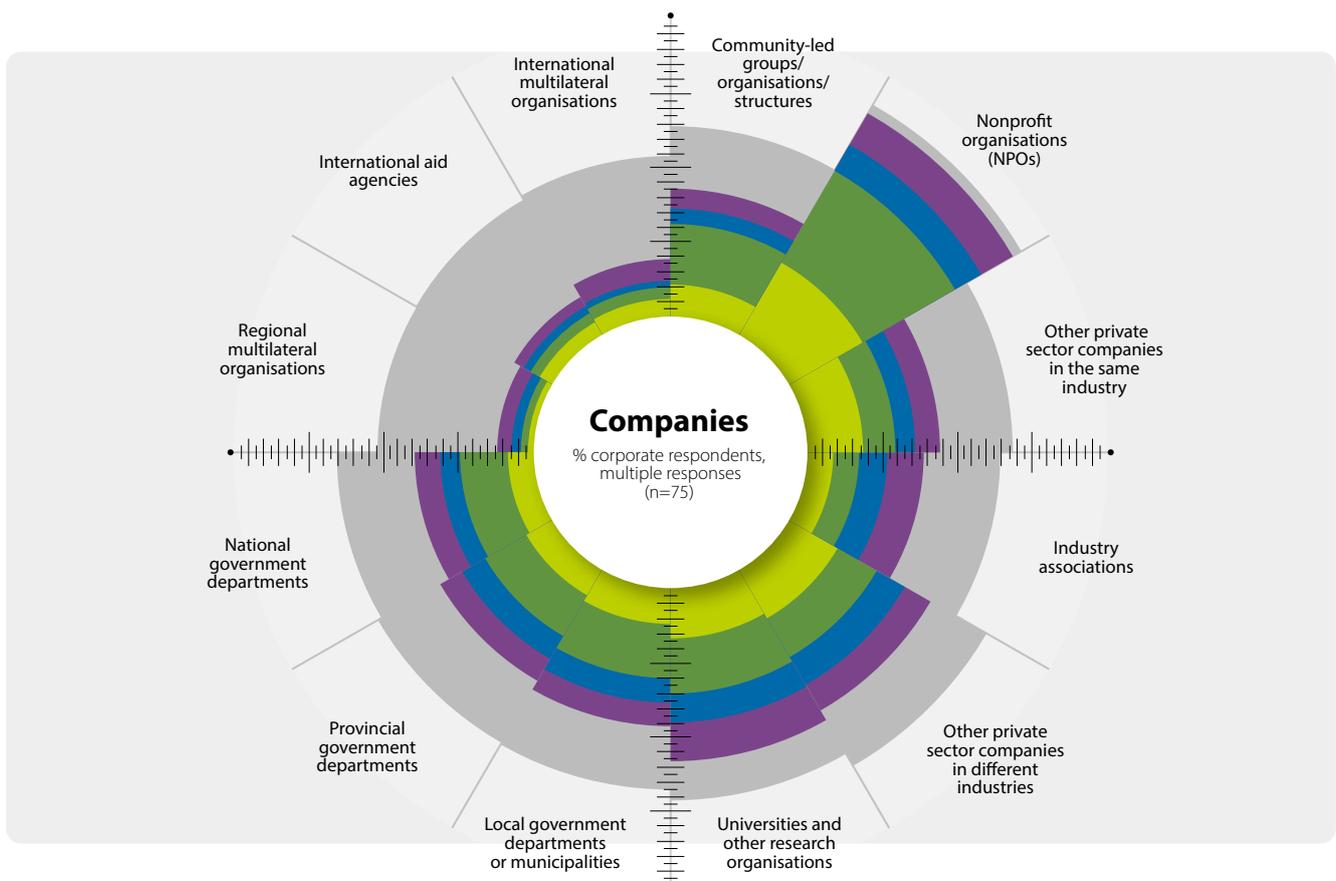
**Foster a spirit of collaboration:** This means moving beyond viewing CSI as a tool for brand differentiation and instead embracing the power of collective impact. This allows partners to pool resources effectively and work towards shared success.

**Develop robust structures and processes:** Clear governance frameworks provide the scaffolding upon which partnerships can build, offering clarity on decision-making, roles and responsibilities. These should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain fit for purpose as the collaboration evolves.

**Allocate resources for the collaborative:** Successful partnerships recognise that resource allocation must extend beyond programme delivery to encompass the management of the partnership itself. Regular assessment and reallocation of resources keep collaborations agile and responsive to changing needs.

**Communicate regularly and effectively:** Successful partners bridge cultural, linguistic and sectoral divides by creating platforms for open, regular dialogue. They foster a mutual understanding of one another's organisational cultures and adapt their communication styles accordingly, ensuring that corporate formalities do not clash with nonprofit grassroots approaches and that the intricacies of government decision-making do not become roadblocks.

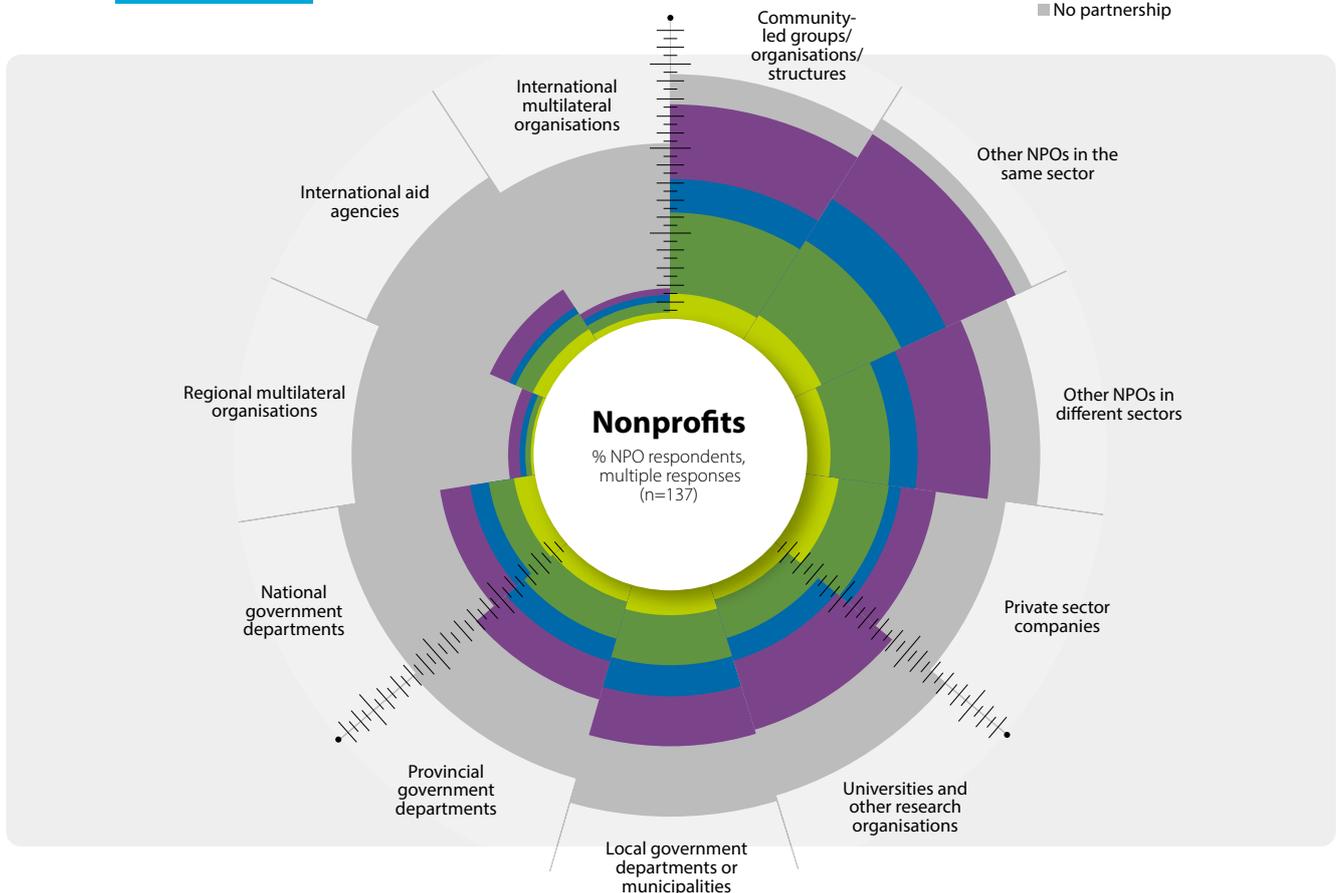
**Measure and evaluate:** Rather than focusing solely on measuring and reporting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes should prioritise learning and improvement. They should consider the interests of all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, using evaluation results to drive continuous enhancement of both programmes and partnerships. The Bridgespan Group's 2024 report *How Philanthropic Collaboratives Measure, Evaluate, and Learn* explores the value of good measurement and evaluation as a means to deliver long-term impact and improve the collaborative giving process.



COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

Type of organisation

- Jointly fund programmes
- Jointly implement programmes
- Joint policy and advocacy
- Share research and information
- No partnership



## COLLABORATION CONSIDERATIONS

Successful collaboration requires careful planning. Depending on the intensity of the collaborative effort being established, the following elements may need to be considered:

### Goal setting and measurement

- Collaborative strategic planning
- Development of shared metrics
- Joint M&E systems

### Cultural integration

- Development of a shared partnership culture
- Cross-cultural training and sensitivity

### Governance and decision-making

- Formal agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs)
- Joint steering committees or boards
- Consensus-building and conflict-resolution processes
- Opportunities for more stakeholders and exits

### Resource allocation

- Shared budgets and financial management
- Joint fundraising efforts
- Allocation of staff time and expertise
- Funding for the collaborative process (coordination, staff, workshops, shared technology, etc.)

### Communication and coordination

- Regular partner meetings and updates
- Shared communication platforms and tools
- Cross-organisational working groups

### Risk management

- Shared risk assessments
- Joint contingency planning
- Collective problem-solving mechanisms

### Knowledge management

- Systems for shared learning and best practices
- Joint research and publication efforts
- Intellectual property agreements
- Maintaining legacy knowledge

### Stakeholder engagement

- Collective stakeholder mapping and engagement strategies
- Joint community outreach and participation mechanisms
- Shared reporting and accountability to stakeholders

### Technological infrastructure

- Integrated data management systems
- Shared digital platforms for collaboration

### Sustainability and exit strategies

- Long-term funding models
- Capacity building for sustained impact
- Planned transition or exit strategies.

## TAKING THE FIRST STEPS TO COLLABORATION

There is a compelling case to be made for widespread collaboration as a tool to address some of South Africa's complex social challenges.

Companies looking to enter or grow their collaborative efforts might consider exploring existing initiatives through industry associations and platforms such as the National Business Initiative (NBI), IPASA and the Triologue Knowledge Hub. Opportunities for collaboration might also be found through networking at sector-specific forums and CSI events, or by tapping into NPO networks and community forums.

It may be better to start small, with less intense forms of collaboration such as information-sharing, before joining existing or starting new collaborative initiatives. This would give companies time to better understand the sector and build trust while reviewing their capacity and internal policies that might affect collaborative partnership involvement. Companies should consider what value their organisation might bring to potential partnerships and identify champions within the organisation to drive collaborative efforts.

Collaborative approaches offer a promising path forward for companies seeking to amplify their social impact and contribute to more systemic impact. ■



### Sources and further reading:

- 'Philanthropic Collaborations in Africa and their Unique Potential'. Bridgespan Group 2024.
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- 'The growing momentum behind philanthropic collaboratives in India'. Bridgespan Group 2024.
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Scan for the online version of this article with sources.

## CASE STUDY

# A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK EMPOWERS INDIA'S MICROENTREPRENEURS

Samhita's THRIVE initiative addresses the critical challenge of growth and digital transformation for India's micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Through a collaborative network of public, private and financial organisations, THRIVE aims to empower 10 million entrepreneurs and workers by 2030. Its innovative solutions demonstrate how partnerships can tackle complex socioeconomic issues.

MSMEs in India struggle to access finance and other business support services, which has hampered their growth and stalled inclusive development in the world's most populous country. For example, only 14% of all MSMEs have access to formal credit currently, with 92% of women-owned MSMEs operating informally and unable to access formal financing.

The International Finance Corporation estimates that nearly 60% of credit demand from microenterprises and 70% from small enterprises remains unmet by formal financial institutions. In fact, a large majority of MSMEs form part of the 'unorganised' sector of the economy and are new to credit (NTC), which means they are 'high risk' to formal financial institutions.

In 2023, Samhita – an impact consulting firm based in India – collaborated with its nonprofit wing Collective Good Foundation (CGF) to launch the THRIVE initiative. The collaborative venture, which involves public, philanthropic, corporate and financial organisations, aims to improve outcomes for 10 million entrepreneurs and workers by 2030.

THRIVE's key objectives are to:

- 1 Provide a holistic suite of interventions to microentrepreneurs, including access to credit, financial literacy, digital skills, market linkages and entrepreneurship development
- 2 Develop and scale innovative financial instruments such as returnable grants and credit guarantees to serve NTC borrowers
- 3 Create a pre-credit score (PCS) as a public good to enable financial institutions to better underwrite NTC customers
- 4 Build a sustainable, scalable and replicable model that can support not just 10 million entrepreneurs by 2030, but empower the next 100 million individuals in underserved communities who face similar challenges globally.

MSMEs face other challenges that stunt their growth, including poor economic resilience, skills gaps and low financial literacy.



This severely limits their opportunities to earn an income.



## THE GENESIS OF THE COLLABORATION

As a precursor to THRIVE, Samhita formed a coalition with REVIVE Alliance (REVIVE) in 2020 at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, to provide financial and other capacity building support to low-income households, which were most severely affected by the pandemic disruptions.

“Early responses from REVIVE’s interventions confirmed our underlying hypothesis that the sector did not want donations, but an opportunity to build their capabilities and provide for increased economic stability for their families – they wanted to be active ‘participants’ in their progress and journey towards economic self-reliance,” says Priya Naik, Founder and CEO of Samhita.

## PARTNERS IN COLLABORATION

Forging a multi-intervention pathway for participants to graduate to the world of formal finance and organised sectors of the economy has meant carefully selecting partners that can best support these outcomes.

CSI funders include the 360 ONE Foundation, which provides support in designing and operationalising the financing instruments such as returnable grants and credit guarantees, and supports the development of PCSs. The 360 ONE Foundation is the CSI arm of 360 ONE, India’s leading wealth and alternates-focused asset management firm.

It also includes Walmart Foundation, which engages in supporting farmers and farmer producer organisations (FPOs) through access to finance and non-financial support. In addition, there are other multiple funders such as Accenture, S&P Global, Bajaj Finserv and Vinati Organics, which support skilling in green jobs and creating climate-resilient farmers.

Government and quasi-government organisations in India play a major role as well. Samhita has partnered with Common Services Centres which has 550 000 centres spread across India and are run by the village-level entrepreneurs (VLEs). These VLEs offer various government services and schemes through such centres.

Samhita is also developing a one-stop registry and accelerator network for informal microentrepreneurs in collaboration with the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), two nodal government agencies for supporting MSMEs in India.

Samhita has also received support from philanthropy and multilateral funders such as United States Agency for International Development and the Gates Foundation. With the support from the Gates Foundation, specifically, Samhita has collaborated with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), a nonprofit established by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade in India to develop e-commerce for local, informal MSMEs. ONDC is part of the burgeoning digital public infrastructures in India. Samhita is also exploring a partnership with Open Network for Education and Skilling Transformations which supports the delivery of training, jobs and scholarships.

## INNOVATING BLENDED FINANCE USE CASES WITH 360 ONE FOUNDATION

360 ONE Foundation, in collaboration with Samhita-CGF, SEWA (a women’s collective) and Appreciate (a fintech firm), is driving two impactful projects to promote financial inclusion and livelihood enhancement for under-banked women and small-scale entrepreneurs across India. The first project, based in Gujarat, integrates more than 5 000 unbanked and under-banked women entrepreneurs into the formal credit system by providing PCSs and working capital loans, backed by a 10% first-loss default guarantee, to help these women grow their businesses. The second project spans pan-India, enabling 3 450 small-scale entrepreneurs to serve as business correspondents and facilitators through returnable grants, fostering financial access and inclusion for under-banked populations. Both projects use blended finance as a key tool for empowerment.

## EMPOWERING FPOs FOR CLIMATE-RESILIENT FARMING, WITH WALMART FOUNDATION

Supported by Walmart Foundation in the Indian state of Maharashtra, Samhita-CGF addresses the ecosystem-level challenges smallholder farmers face by providing a comprehensive multi-intervention ecosystem approach to enhance the income and climate resilience. Maharashtra’s agricultural sector faces deep-rooted inequalities, with 78% of farmers owning less than two hectares of land. Farmers in Maharashtra are grappling with significant agricultural challenges, primarily due to unseasonal rains and hailstorms, which in March 2023 alone damaged over 18 000 hectares of crops, plunging farmers into financial distress. Samhita’s initiative currently empowers 12 FPOs, impacting 10 000 farmers of whom 70% are women, by tackling low working capital through a returnable grants model designed for farmers, along with credit guarantee-backed loans for those needing larger financing. Additionally, the focus is on enhancing farmers’ climate adaptation capacities through climate-resilient training and by providing access to social security schemes. To build the capacities of FPOs, financial support through grants and infrastructural support is provided to FPOs, along with market linkages to secure large buyers for farmers. This initiative is empowering farming communities for a sustainable future.

Finally, more than 20 financial institutions are helping to unlock access to credit at scale, with a focus on women in the NTC segment, while a network of more than 75 nonprofits across the country are involved in sourcing participants and delivering interventions (including Mann Deshi, Tisser, the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), the Digital Empowerment Foundation and others).

## GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Samhita-CGF executes and delivers outcomes for CSI funders (including 360 ONE Foundation) with the support of all its partners. It has acknowledged experts on its board of trustees and a dedicated network team to incubate and grow the THRIVE network.

CGF initiates formal commitments with all partners through MoUs that outline milestone-based commitments. It had partnered with 26 funders and 78 impact partners by mid-2024.

The collaboration is funded as follows:

- 1 **Secretariat funding:** Raised from large foundations to forge collaboratives, develop partnerships and create public goods
- 2 **Programmatic funding:** Raised from donors who fund specific programmes, with a 5% to 10% programme management fee
- 3 **Fee-based services (forthcoming):** Monetising services to financial institutions and creating sustainable fee-based models on e-commerce work and loan origination and PCSs.

THRIVE operates through a network model, connecting isolated efforts and bringing together private, public, philanthropic and financial sectors through a technology backbone. This approach allows for:

- Unlocking vast amounts of resources through multiple partner contributions
- Creating significant economic value for participants, graduating them from beneficiaries to fee-paying customers
- Ensuring long-term sustainability through multiple philanthropic and revenue models
- Embracing an interoperable and scalable design, enhancing integration capabilities.

## THRIVE'S ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Until 2023, REVIVE impacted 716 000 workers and entrepreneurs, including farmers, artisans, street vendors, beautypreneurs, edupreneurs, construction and sanitation workers, truck drivers and owners, and more. Around 70% of these were women. More than 45 000 participants were supported through innovative instruments such as returnable grants, and more than 90% of them have repaid in part or full, although they are not legally obligated to do so as per the design of the instrument. These participants are now eligible for formal loans, thanks to the high repayment rates, ensuring a blended finance continuum.

THRIVE is co-creating PCSs in partnership with some of India's largest financial institutions as well as the government's nodal agencies. The scores will enable more than 40 lenders to develop an underwriting mechanism to unlock over a billion dollars in loans for informal and NTC borrowers, particularly women.

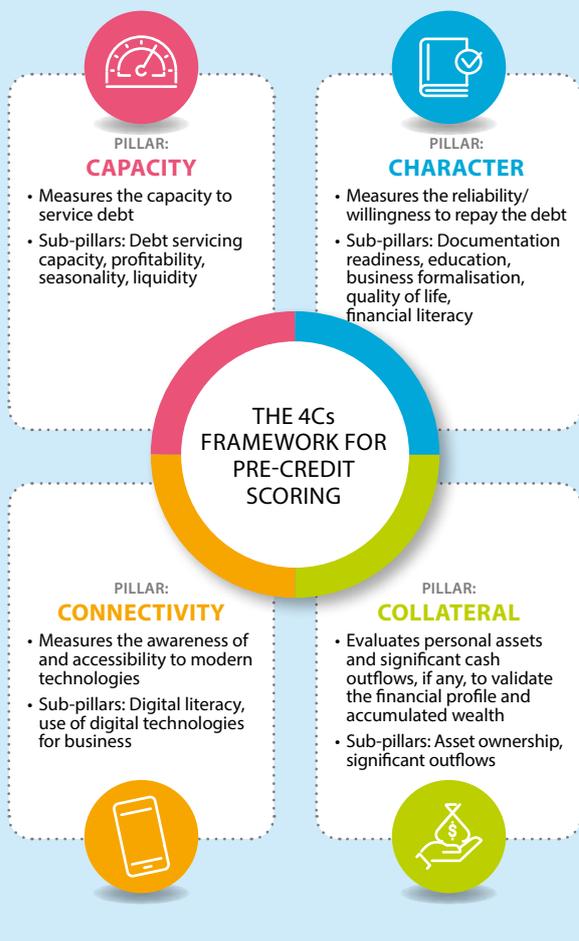
## PCSs AS A PROXY FOR FORMAL CREDIT RATINGS

Developing a first of its kind PCS is just one of the interventions that will make it easier to bring MSMEs into the formal economy over time.

The 360 ONE Foundation is providing programmatic funding to Samhita over three years to support the development of a PCS with SIDBI, banks, non-banking financial companies and credit rating agencies. PCS is an alternate tool which can be adopted as a proxy to formal credit rating by financial institutions to gauge the creditworthiness of NTC participants.

The 360 ONE Foundation provides credit guarantees for loans provided to NTC MSMEs, allowing PCSs to be modelled based on repayment behaviour.

Developing the PCS model meant navigating regulatory complexities, particularly around financial risk and compliance, but THRIVE's partnership with SIDBI and other financial institutions ensured the model adhered to financial regulations. This made it possible to extend credit to MSMEs while staying within the regulatory framework.



In addition, around 150 000 women aged 19 to 29 have been supported with health awareness and access to health products and services, and 10 000 women entrepreneurs have received e-commerce linkages. Credit has been unlocked for almost 10 000 women farmers in rural India.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

A major challenge that had to be overcome at the outset was designing a financial model that complied with corporate social responsibility (CSR) regulations. CSR is akin to the CSIs and are mandatory contributions that need to be funded from a corporate's net profits to comply, as per the Indian laws.

CSR requirements often encourage companies to execute projects with quick, tangible outcomes due to the annual cycles of CSR reporting, but THRIVE aimed for a long-term, systemic approach that will affect millions of underserved MSMEs over time. THRIVE therefore had to design a framework aligning with CSR regulations but also supporting long-term goals, such as building financial literacy, developing skills and providing ongoing access to market. The 360 ONE Foundation played a critical role by providing strategic funding and deploying funds in a CSR compliant way that could unlock additional capital, such as co-funding, capital recycling and commercial loans.

Working with more than 25 funding partners, 75 NGOs and social enterprises, and government and quasi-government institutions has not been without its challenges. Some of the challenges experienced included aligning different funder priorities and timelines, overcoming the problem of less-than-efficient service delivery across India's diverse geography by partnering with 'last mile' service providers, and ensuring two-sided market development by allocating resources with care.

Having the government as part of the collective ensures everything comes together, but government decision-making can be elaborate and evolutionary as there are detailed deliberations at policy level.

A crucial way to overcome these additional challenges has been to engage in continuous dialogue and advocacy. This is critical

because the long-term nature of the initiative requires sustained support. There has been a need to nurture enduring partnerships with preferred partners – but, at the same time, reaching out to other interested funders has helped to further the aims of the collective. "Multi-intervention sequential pathway design" is complex but worthwhile, says Abhishek Gupta, Associate Director, Measurement, Analytics and Products at Samhita, particularly with the right set of on-the-ground partners who are empathetic and able to solve problems creatively.

THRIVE aims to sustain its mission of designing interventions and programmes with sustainable exit opportunities for funders. The focus is on supporting the graduation of participants to the formal economy without the need for additional third-party funding. The initiative also aims to generate evidence and create best practices that can be disseminated across the sector to design scalable interventions.

## ADVICE FOR COMPANIES COLLABORATING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

- 1 Provide participants with choices based on their context and needs, fostering agency and empowerment
- 2 Address the specific needs of women through customised support and focus on enabling women-led collective action
- 3 Create solutions that benefit all ecosystem actors and solve market inefficiencies
- 4 Develop an open network architecture that allows for customisation and interoperability
- 5 Build sustainability into the model from the start, ensuring participant graduation from recipients to active customers and champions.

As THRIVE continues to evolve, it stands as a testament to the power of collaborative action in addressing complex social challenges. By bringing together diverse stakeholders and leveraging innovative financial instruments and technology, the initiative is paving the way for a more inclusive and empowered MSME sector in India, with the potential for global replication. ■

• Samhita and Trialogue are both members of the Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP) Global Exchange.

ALLAN GRAY MAKERS

Allan Gray Makers exists to ignite dignity and meaning in life through accelerating artisanal entrepreneurship.

***"As a result of our partnership with FEMEF, 125 aspiring electrical and plumbing entrepreneurs, of which 58% are female, have been selected for an eight-month incubation programme with an aim of having 120 registered businesses with proof of repeat customers by the end of the programme."***

Seth Mulli, Programme Director



SMARTSTART

SmartStart's focus is to expand access to early learning for children in South Africa's most vulnerable areas while simultaneously creating self-employment opportunities for unemployed women.

***"Over 5 000 franchisees have been set up and supported into growing a sustainable ECD micro social enterprises with FEMEF's support. This group represents 25% of the total SmartStart network of franchisees to date and directly impacted 40 000 of the most excluded children in South Africa. The importance of collaboration in the ECD sector has been highlighted."***

Grace Matlhape, CEO



MAKE A DIFFERENCE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

MAD Leadership Foundation's mission is to empower talented young South Africans from marginalised communities through comprehensive scholarship support.

***"FEMEF has enabled around 250 young people to receive scholarships from MAD which include comprehensive financial, psychosocial and academic support. This includes beneficiaries from SmartStart and Columba. MAD has collaborated with Columba leadership since 2019, realising positive outcomes for both organisations."***

Helette Pieterse, CEO



FEM has been providing workmen's compensation insurance for the construction industry since 1936.

COLUMBA LEADERSHIP

Columba Leadership awakens the potential in young people to change their futures by offering values-based leadership programmes for scholars in government secondary schools serving economically disadvantaged communities.

***"Through FEMEF's support, we have successfully impacted 4 440 learners and 901 principals and educators through our values-based leadership programmes across 103 high schools in seven provinces. Our collaboration with FEMEF has also allowed us to connect Columban alumni with the MAD scholarship programme, enabling youth from under-resourced partner schools to access this opportunity and benefit from the comprehensive support provided by MAD."***

Monique Blyghaut, National Programmes Manager

COLUMBA LEADERSHIP



Leaders. Change. Futures.



RESEP

Resep [Research on Socio-Economic Policy] is committed to conducting high-quality research that not only enhances understanding of policy options to reduce poverty and inequality but also directly influences effective policy decisions.

***"With FEMEF's funding support we organised workshops with provincial education departments and the DBE to address educational challenges. Our collaborative efforts have been able to contribute to shaping budget policies, and planning and fostering a more strategic and sustainable approach to human capital investment in education, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes and a more effective education system."***

Servaas van der Berg, National Research Chair



Citizen Leader Lab is committed to the empowerment of public school principals through a structured leadership development programme and a unique partnership with business.

***"Thanks to our partnership with FEMEF, we've supported 700 school principals become more effective leaders, positively impacting over 14 000 educators and more than 485 000 learners in all nine provinces of South Africa. We are exploring expanding our impact by working with NGOs focused on foundational literacy."***

Komala Pillay, CEO



The Thandulwazi Maths and Science Academy is dedicated to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in schools by implementing innovative and impactful approaches to maths and science education.

***"Thandulwazi and Funda Wande have signed a mutually drafted Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalise and govern their partnership. This collaboration is already benefiting 84 teacher interns and 84 mentors (experienced teachers) in the Waterberg and Capricorn districts of Limpopo Province."***

Dr Manzini Hlatshwayo, Deputy Head



Funda Wande's mission is to ensure that by 2023, all children in South Africa can read for meaning and calculate with confidence by the age of 10.

***"The FEMEF network facilitated a conducive environment for Thandulwazi and Funda Wande to explore a partnership for impact. The two organisations now have a signed MOU for programme implementation in the Limpopo province for 2024 – 2026."***

Zolani Metu, Head of Programmes



KICP is a teacher development organisation that aims to improve the quality of education in South Africa through professional development and experiential learning opportunities for student teachers educators and school leaders.

***"As a result of our collaboration with FEMEF and through representation at the Teacher Internship Collaboration South Africa (TICZA), KICP continues to work towards developing a model of extended student teacher internships which can be institutionalised nationally."***

Sinoxolo Ndlovu, Project Mentor



The Department of Basic Education provides leadership in the establishment of a South African education system for the 21st century.

***"As a result of our collaboration with FEMEF, we have received financial support to develop, design and contribute to learning assessments aligned with the newly developed African language reading benchmarks. Secondly, we have secured organisational engagement with other organisations working in the sector."***

Dr Nompumelelo Nyathi-Mohohlwane, Deputy Director: Research, Monitoring & Evaluation



# EXPLORING THE LEGACY OF BRIDGE

In 2023, Bridge Innovation in Learning (Bridge) closed its doors. The nonprofit had pioneered a collaborative approach to supporting education development in South Africa. In the 14 years it operated Bridge left a lasting impression on the sector. We explore how the organisation's unique approach to collaboration might inform and inspire future joint efforts to tackle complex social challenges.

Post-apartheid South Africa's ailing education sector was a complex and challenging space. Major overhauls to transform the sector and expand access to quality education, while desperately needed, had brought their own complications and money for education support interventions was in short supply. The education support sector reflected a defensive, survival-mode mindset as organisations competed for limited resources.

It was from this fraught space that Bridge emerged to challenge these tensions. The education NPO was established around the metaphor of building a bridge to enable the individuals involved to discover higher levels of possibility in their work and amplify efforts being made in education.

Unlike traditional outcomes-, project- or location-based interventions, Bridge's vision was unique. It sought to transform the education system by focusing on the collaborative process, pioneering multistakeholder communities of practice (CoPs) as its primary tool for change. Adopting a knowledge management role, Bridge

contributed to the systemic improvement of education outcomes and the scaling up of successful national and provincial initiatives through duplication and adaptation.

Where the collaborative process itself might sometimes be overlooked or relegated to an administrative function, Bridge viewed collaboration as a tool for potential radical transformation. Examining Bridge's journey, understanding its achievements, challenges and the impact of its process-oriented methodology, provides an opportunity to uncover important principles for making collaborations work.

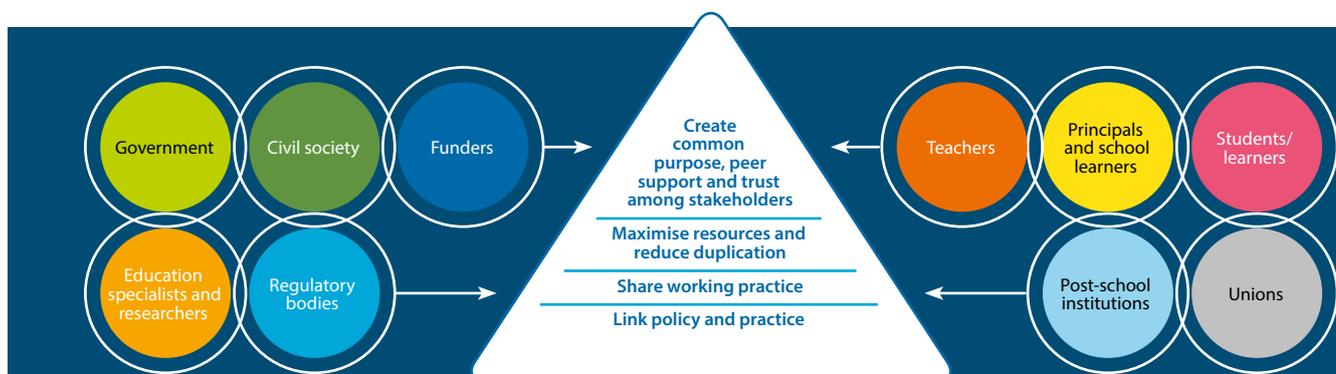
As John Gilmour, one of Bridge's co-founders, reflects, "Bridge was a front-end invitation for the collaboration of a community of practice. It was built around the notion of bringing people together, bringing innovation, focusing on people in education to actually find each other and therefore to be more useful to the world."

## THE BRIDGE STORY

Bridge's novel approach was carefully documented in the legacy document created on its eventual closure. *The Bridge Story – Learning through Communities of Practice* chronicles the organisation's contribution to education in South Africa.

Founded in 2009, Bridge emerged from a series of consultations to try and address the fragmentation and siloed nature of educational initiatives in post-apartheid South Africa.

"The launch of Bridge was timely given where we were in South Africa at the time. It allowed us to start owning our reality and explore opportunities for sharing in a way that we needed to learn how to do. Bridge's intellectual property was in the knowing of how



**While many seed funders, core funders, CoP-specific and project-specific funders supported Bridge during its existence, key funders included:** Anglo American Chairman's Fund, Apex Hi Trust, Barloworld, Convene Venture Philanthropy, CoZa Cares Foundation, DG Murray Trust, Deutsche Bank, Dorper Wind Farms, Epoch and Optima Trust, European Union, FirstRand Empowerment, Gauteng Education Development Trust, Get It Done Foundation, Grindrod Family Centenary Trust, JET Education Services, Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, National Education Collaboration Trust, Old Mutual Foundation, Penreach, Porticus, RMB – FirstRand Bank Limited, Sasol Inzalo Foundation, Save the Children SA, Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation, Telkom Foundation, The Bertha Institute, The LEGO Foundation, The Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, Yellowwoods Social Investments and Zenex Foundation.

to convene from a neutral space, rather than from the space of a single organisation, and to put those learnings together.”

“During the first nine years of Bridge, we were constantly surprised by how people had been waiting for this kind of connecting opportunity. There was a sense of relief as people found themselves able to have difficult conversations and truly express their experiences,” comments Gilmour.

At its core Bridge’s mission was to connect people, foster collaboration and spread successful practices to promote systemic improvements in education. The organisation used CoPs as its primary methodology, creating spaces where diverse stakeholders could share knowledge, solve problems collectively and drive innovation.

Under the management of its board of directors, which included some implementing partner and funder representatives, and an executive team, the NPO operated in five focus areas: school leadership, teacher development, early childhood development, learner support and cross-cutting themes. Within these areas, Bridge convened 26 different CoPs at national, provincial and district levels. The CoPs were designed to be inclusive, non-hierarchical spaces where practitioners, policymakers, funders and other stakeholders could engage in open dialogue and collaborative learning. The long-term goal was for these collaborative and information-sharing CoPs to lead to action in the form of education projects.

The CoP model was characterised by regular – usually quarterly – meetings, facilitated discussions and

activities, knowledge-sharing and co-creation, and reflective practice. Bridge’s approach emphasised the value of process over immediate outcomes, recognising that systemic change often emerges from ongoing dialogue and collaboration.

Zenex Foundation was one of Bridge’s initial funders and its CEO Gail Campbell notes that knowledge management formed a critical component of Bridge’s work. The organisation documented CoP discussions, created knowledge products and disseminated insights through various channels. This approach aimed to make collective learning accessible to a wider audience and prevent the loss of valuable innovations in the education sector.

Over its lifespan Bridge’s CoPs engaged over 750 organisations and 3 500 individuals. The organisation played an important role in normalising collaborative approaches in education, influencing policy discussions and fostering a culture of shared learning among practitioners.

Despite its innovative approach and contributions to the sector, Bridge faced ongoing challenges with sustainable funding. Gilmour explains that the organisation’s focus on process-driven outcomes often conflicted with funders prioritising more tangible, quantifiable results. Additionally, as the concept of CoPs became more widespread, Bridge’s unique value proposition became less distinct.



## THE SUCCESSES

- Bridge **pioneered CoPs**, introducing and normalising this collaborative approach in South Africa’s education sector.
- By creating spaces where all participants’ input was valued, regardless of position or experience, the organisation **amplified voices** that might otherwise have been neglected. This resulted in powerful **professional development**, where expert-led workshops gave way to transformative peer learning and shared experiences.
- The CoP practice delivered invaluable **capacity building**, empowering thousands of education stakeholders and practitioners through non-hierarchical, collaborative learning.
- The organisation’s **knowledge management** approach delivered an effective system for capturing and sharing insights from collaborative work.
- Perhaps most important of all was the **paradigm shift** Bridge ignited, moving the education support sector away from a competitive mindset to one of collaboration and shared learning.
- Bridge excelled in convening **diverse stakeholders** (funders, NPOs, researchers, academics, practitioners and government) and creating space for engagement and building trust.
- CoPs created the foundations for recognition of shared goals that led to some **collaborative projects**.
- Bridge created meaning from a wealth of information, collating that knowledge and making it available to the sector.
- Projects that emerged from Bridge’s CoP processes served burning sector needs and were enabled by access to the right stakeholders and funders. One such project, the M&E CoP inspired several M&E organisations to support the drive for good M&E practice in the education sector, gaining significant traction for M&E in South Africa.

## THE CHALLENGES

- As with many NPOs, securing sustainable **funding** was one of Bridge’s key challenges. Gilmour explains that funders are accustomed to outcomes-based projects rather than process-focused work with harder-to-measure impact.
- As a result the organisation struggled to maintain financial stability while staying true to its core mission, eroding its **long-term sustainability**.
- The urgency of securing basic operating costs diluted Bridge’s capacity to **adapt to change** and dedicate energy to the process of reinventing itself as the landscape evolved and other collaboratives emerged.
- Finally, **measuring impact** proved more difficult than it would with project-based work since available traditional evaluation methods could not capture the full value of Bridge’s process-oriented work.
- Maintaining contextual relevance in a shifting landscape while trying to deliver its core objectives and secure funding sources proved difficult and led to a degree of **‘mission drift’**.
- One of the key difficulties in the CoP model is how to maintain the process through the constant **turnover of individual stakeholder representatives**. This can risk the CoP process devolving into information sessions rather than productive CoPs.
- CoPs did not always evolve organically into **actionable projects** that delivered measurable sector impact.
- Meeting the **diverse expectations of multiple donors** in a network proved difficult to navigate.
- Maintaining a service provision offering that delivered education implementation projects proved a **capacity challenge**.

Other education collaboratives such as the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), the National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE) and the Teacher Internship Collaboration South Africa had emerged, alongside donor organisations such as IPASA. These contributed to an ecosystem shift that Bridge had to navigate.

In its later years, and in a bid to meet financial needs, Bridge increasingly took on project-based work to sustain its operations, which sometimes diverted focus from its core collaborative mission. The Covid-19 pandemic also disrupted the organisation's work, even as it brought about instant acceptance of online engagement that made Bridge's CoPs easier to convene.

Bridge ceased operations at the end of 2023.

"Bridge lived its life. It served a real purpose, activating a sorely needed awareness of process, relational connectedness and coherence rather than competition," Gilmour reflects.

He adds that although the organisation was ultimately unable to recalibrate its operations in response to external factors in a way that would ensure its sustainability, its legacy continues through the numerous individuals and organisations that have adopted and adapted its collaborative methodologies, and through the thorough knowledge resources it left behind for the sector, which are now housed in NASCEE.

## LESSONS FROM BRIDGE ON COLLABORATION

The Bridge story highlights several learnings aspiring collaborative initiatives and funders might consider.

### Collaboration comes with costs

Bridge's CoP process was an innovative approach to collaboration. That they managed to secure funding to do this work for a time was an achievement. Campbell says that funders don't fully appreciate the real cost that collaboration requires.

"Everybody wants to collaborate but it is difficult to source donor funding to support collaboration. Donors mainly provided project funding, however, need to consider funding organisations more holistically to include administration (finance and governance) and ongoing staff development. While donor funding is inevitably time bound, donors should consider multi-year funding and include these additional types of funding to project funding as it contributes to long-term organisational sustainability."

### Expectations need to be aligned

The expectation of measurable milestones and attributable outcomes can also create a mismatch between donors and change practitioners. In the case of Bridge, the organisation's theory of change was difficult to assess and measure in a way that satisfied some funders.

Ideally, CoPs would lead to scaleable projects in the education sector with quantifiable outcomes. While several projects did emerge as a result of Bridge's CoPs, including the Post School Access CoP to support the transition from higher education to the workplace and the M&E CoP, which was influential in improving M&E in education interventions, among others, the evolution of these projects did not

happen organically or spontaneously. Emerging projects require a catalyst, independent drivers and funding to bring them to reality.

That CoPs did not always lead to projects was not an indication of a process failure.

Gilmour explains how the CoP process was a catalyst for the paradigm shifts that bring about complex change. "We can't keep thinking that incremental improvement is what is going to move us forward. The scale of the problem, the huge economic factors and massive inequity demand the exponential thinking that comes from paradigm shifts."

"Working on paradigm shifting is always more difficult because it's more personal. Funders like the safety of structural change. They like the safety of political or policy change, but they forget that the longest lever is actually personal change," he notes.

### Measurement should include personal shifts

Given that transformative change can come from how people work together and not just what they produce, Gilmour highlights the need for new ways to measure this effect. "M&E needs to evolve to find ways to measure personal paradigm shifts."

He notes that the move towards quantifiable wellness and resilience indices is taking place internationally, particularly in the corporate sector. Increasingly, efforts such as The Club of Rome, a platform of diverse thought leaders, are exploring more equitable economic, financial, and sociopolitical models that reflect an inclusive human dimension in systems change.

### The sustainability of collaboratives needs consideration

Funding for development sector support interventions remains a perennial problem. In an ideal world, interventions contribute to resolving a social problem in such a way that the intervention becomes redundant. Donor funds then become available for other interventions.

In reality, social ills are far greater than the funds and resources available to solve them. Donors allocate funding according to their change strategies and donor-reliant organisations must navigate the uncertainty of precarious future funding. In the absence of secure long-term funding, organisations must find ways to become self-sustaining or close.

While Bridge turned to the provision of short-term education project service delivery to supplement its funds, this ultimately proved unsustainable.

Acknowledging the limited nature of long-term donor funding, Campbell encourages funders and partners to consider long-term capacity building. She says donors might do well to reflect on their responsibility for the long-term sustainability of the organisations they support.

### Build flexibility and individual growth into the collaborative

Reacting to financial pressures can prevent organisations and collaboratives from remaining relevant. Gilmour highlights some of the aspects that could ease the way for organisations navigating the sustainability challenge.

He recommends investing in anticipatory leadership that is proactive rather than reactive. This can help the organisation navigate the ever-changing development ecosystem and reinvent itself to continue serving its cause.

He also advocates for a positive attitude towards individual growth and transitions. The loss of skilled staff can have a significant impact on organisations, particularly as nonprofits tend to maintain lean staff complements that meet their budgetary constraints.

Gilmour suggests that active development of internal talent, rather than seeking external professionals, is another avenue through which to exert positive influence on a sector. Celebrating staff graduation to other organisations and leadership positions where they can expand positive influence should be viewed as a success rather than a loss.

### Responsible closure

An often-overlooked consideration is how organisations and their funders can gather to navigate the end of collaborative partnerships responsibly and intentionally.

Campbell says that the closure process should be handled in a way that maintains relationships and manages reputations fairly. This is part of the process of building trust in the nonprofit sector. As legal

entities, nonprofits and their boards carry liabilities that need to be properly managed.

In the case of Bridge, a small collection of donors made funding available to cover staff and service provider costs and to curate the knowledge that Bridge had successfully collated.

### Building collaborative bridges

An organisation's impact can continue through the people and practices it influences. Bridge's legacy lives on beyond the organisation through the many individuals and organisations that have adopted and adapted its collaborative CoP methodologies.

As collaboration rises to the fore in the move towards social change, the Bridge story demonstrates the importance of creating safe spaces where stakeholders can gather to learn from one another and potentially co-create development support initiatives together. It also serves as a reminder as to how influencing paradigm shifts at the individual level is one of the fundamental steps towards systemic change.

"Bridge taught us the value of process and not just outcomes. Transformative change often comes from how people work together, not just what they produce," Gilmour concludes. ■



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# HOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS FOSTER COLLABORATION

Business associations play a vital role in thriving democracies as they promote economic growth, effective policymaking and good governance. We explore how South African business associations collaborate to achieve their goals and drive development in the country.

When the controversial National Health Insurance Bill was signed into law in May 2024, Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) indicated it would consider legal action as the bill was “unimplementable and damaging to the country’s healthcare sector, the economy more broadly and investor confidence”. In September, President Cyril Ramaphosa agreed to meet with BUSA to discuss its objections – a fact that suggests we are in an era of greater cooperation between government and business.

The government’s willingness to engage comes at a time when greater collaboration is being viewed as the country’s way forward. The Government of National Unity brings a new spirit of cooperation and compromise and a generally better working relationship with the private sector – a long-awaited positive development. However, BUSA CEO Cas Coovadia says: “We must assess this on an ongoing basis so that such relationship does not detract from our role of calling the government to account where necessary.”

At the BUSA Annual General Meeting in August 2024, President Ramaphosa indicated that public-private partnerships are vital for the efficient delivery of services. “We need partners who are going to point out in a positive and practical way where the gaps are,” he said. “Your job is to ... make us do the right thing for the sake of our economy.”

He added that the success of the partnership “depends on active and continuous engagement, even in areas where we don’t agree” and said policy disagreements should not “deter us from the work we need to do”. He remarked that we can only rebuild by leveraging our collective resources.

## THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Collaborative partnerships have played a significant role in South Africa’s history and the private sector has been at the heart of many of these partnerships.

From assisting in the transition to democracy to protecting health and fighting hunger during the Covid-19 pandemic, business has provided funds, resources and advocacy at critical moments, working alongside other stakeholders. The Consultative Business Movement played a major role in funding and facilitating the transition to democracy, while Business for South Africa (B4SA) – an alliance of South African business volunteers – used its experience to mobilise business resources and capacity during the pandemic (See ‘B4SA: A case study in collaboration’ on page 109).

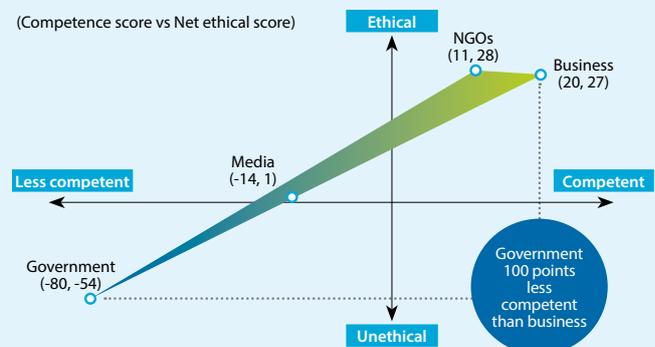
As the largest federation of business organisations, BUSA has frequently facilitated collaboration among its member associations on various issues. As a member of the National Economic Development and Labour Council, BUSA has played a major role in facilitating social dialogue and building consensus on key economic and social issues. In 2019, the Public-Private Growth Initiative was launched at a BUSA indaba to revitalise the economy.

The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) has a long history of collaborating with other business associations on issues such as trade, investment and economic policy. The Business Coalition for Climate Action and NBI have brought businesses from different sectors together to mitigate climate impact and promote sustainable development.

The private sector has made significant contributions to the country’s success and stability, and it continues to be regarded as South Africa’s most competent sector, according to the 2024 *Edelman Trust Barometer*.

The recent turnaround in the country’s fortunes has been partly due to the collective efforts of the private sector, which is supporting the government to tackle national challenges that include energy, transport and logistics, and crime and corruption.

### IN SOUTH AFRICA, INSTITUTIONS OUT OF BALANCE: GOVERNMENT SEEN AS FAR LESS COMPETENT AND ETHICAL THAN BUSINESS



Source: The 2024 *Edelman Trust Barometer*.

## THE ROLE OF BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

Business associations represent the interests of various industries and sectors, providing a unified voice for business and advocating for policies that promote economic growth, job creation and social development. “They allow us to present a more cohesive, coherent, united front when meeting other stakeholders,” says Busisiwe Mavuso, CEO of Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA).

Some of the key roles of business associations include:

**1 Sector development**, where they promote the development and growth of their respective industries through skills development, enterprise development, market research and industry standards. Businesses often collaborate on sector-specific initiatives to enhance the competitiveness of entire sectors.

The Association for Savings and Investment South Africa (ASISA) runs a programme that focuses on black-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It provides funding and business development support, focusing on businesses with the potential to grow and create jobs. The NBI runs a programme with technical vocational education and training (TVET) colleges to improve the quality of education and employability of graduates, driving enterprise development by aligning skills development with the industry needs (also known as ‘demand-led skilling’), improving the quality of the workforce available to business, and supporting the growth of technical industries. The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants Thuthuka Bursary Fund helps to produce more qualified accountants from disadvantaged backgrounds and supports the growth of black-owned accounting firms.

**2 Promoting trade and investment** by organising trade missions, creating market opportunities and facilitating business-to-business meetings. BUSA has organised numerous trade missions to international markets, creating opportunities for South African businesses to expand their exports. It has also worked to attract foreign investment to South Africa by highlighting the country’s competitive advantages.

**3 Advocacy and policy influence** by actively engaging with government officials, policymakers and regulators to influence legislation and policies affecting the business environment. This can have positive and negative effects – for example, advocating for policies that support economic growth, reduce red tape and create favourable business conditions, or opposing certain labour or environmental regulations, such as carbon taxes, advertising restrictions, or delaying the implementation of public health measures. Examples include the Beverage Association of South Africa opposing the introduction of a sugar tax in 2018, arguing it would hurt the economy and cost jobs, or the Minerals Council South Africa (MCSA) advocating for the mining industry in South Africa, engaging with government officials and policymakers to influence legislation and policies affecting the sector, particularly around sustainable mining, mine safety and competitiveness.

**4 Driving social and corporate responsibility** by promoting ethical business practices, contributing towards sustainable development and supporting community development programmes. Business associations also collaborate with government agencies on public-private partnerships such as infrastructure development or social programmes. BUSA, SACCI and BLSA have all been involved in initiatives to promote sustainable development and have collaborated with the government on public-private partnerships and social programmes.

## HOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS CAN FOSTER COLLABORATION

Business associations can foster collaboration in South Africa by leveraging their unique position to unite often very different stakeholders, including businesses, the government and civil society, and devise innovative ways to solve complex socioeconomic challenges.

Key collaboration strategies for business associations include:

**1 Establishing multistakeholder partnerships**, drawing in the nonprofit sector, researchers and other organisations to respond to crises in specific ways. During the pandemic, BUSA, through its B4SA platform, collaborated with the government, NPOs and public health experts to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of South Africans, proving that broad-based cooperation can achieve meaningful goals.

**2 Promoting public-private dialogue and policy advocacy** can improve policy design, promote innovation, drive economic growth, enhance governance and regulatory reform, and ultimately deliver social impact. BUSA’s collaboration with Operation Vulindlela focuses on structural reforms that can improve the business environment, such as improving infrastructure and addressing regulatory bottlenecks.

**3 Facilitating knowledge sharing and capacity building** can be done in two ways – industry forums, where members can share best practice and learn from one another’s experiences, and training and development programmes that help members improve their skills and knowledge. NBI holds regular workshops and conferences on topics such as water risk and collective action. It has convened CEO Roundtable discussions, green economy dialogues for businesses that explore sustainable business practices, skills development forums to discuss skills development strategies and partnerships between business and educational institutions, and SDG workshops. Its Energy Efficiency Leadership Network events share best practices and discuss energy-related challenges, and its transformation and social cohesion dialogues promote inclusive economic growth and address social inequalities.

In 2022, the Department of Science and Innovation and the Mandela Mining Precinct (MMP) launched the South African Mining Extraction Research, Development and Innovation (SAMERDI) research centre to focus on the longevity of mines and advance orebody knowledge, among other things. The SAMERDI strategy was implemented by the MMP and co-funded by the MCSA to help modernise the mining industry and ultimately create jobs. In 2024, SACCI collaborated with Absa Group on the inaugural Absa-SACCI Women-in-Business Directors Training Programme, to identify and nurture women with the potential to excel in board roles.

## CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATING WITH THE GOVERNMENT

While business associations have laid a good foundation, acceleration is needed, particularly as regulatory compliance prevents the government from being agile. “BLSA had hoped that the Electricity Regulation Amendment Bill would have been passed in November 2023, but it was only signed in May 2024. Implementation is not always at the pace we’d like to see,” says Mavuso.

She says 80% of BLSA’s current work focuses on capacitating the state. “We can’t achieve the more than 3% gross domestic product

(GDP) growth we need without a capable state,” Mavuso points out. However, she adds that there is a thin line between capacitating and influencing the state, and the latter should be avoided. “If one company had deployed 20 engineers to assist Eskom, it could have been accused of state capture – but if business works as a unit intent on closing delivery gaps, for example, it gives us legitimacy.”

Other challenges include the fact that the government is not always receptive to private sector expertise and may not implement the resolutions taken – but Mavuso believes there will be greater buy-in from the government as the partnership’s successes become apparent. Both Coovadia and Mavuso believe the private sector needs to be more vocal about government accountability. “Our partnership isn’t about hugging and singing ‘Kumbaya,’” says Mavuso. “When the government is doing well, we will give the president kudos, but we will also highlight problems.”

Coovadia says the current partnership will work as long as business has a credible interlocutor in the government who is prepared to work with the private sector. “The president has consistently done what he has set out to do,” says Coovadia, but not everyone in the government is as receptive to working closely with the private sector.

“The NHI is a case in point,” says Coovadia. “Health minister Aaron Motsoaledi wasn’t open to discussing the Bill, but the president has been willing to talk. The government is not homogeneous – we have struggled to make headway in Gauteng, for example, because we’re unsure who we should talk to.”

## HOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS CAN FOSTER COLLABORATION AMONG THEIR MEMBERS

Business associations foster collaboration among members in the following ways:

- 1 Setting up local networks** to promote the development of regional and provincial business groups to address local challenges and opportunities. Both the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce and Gauteng Business Forum represent local businesses and focus on job creation, skills development, infrastructure improvement and promoting tourism.
- 2 Managing joint programmes between members**, for example, NBI’s installation, repair and maintenance (IRM) programme, a joint initiative with partner companies, focuses on technical skills for the renewable industry and ASISA’s enterprise development programme brings member companies together to fund the development of small businesses in the sector.
- 3 Organising information sharing and networking events** to connect business leaders and using online platforms, including social media, to connect members and share information. BLSA hosts council meetings approximately every six weeks – the council is the entire membership of BLSA, represented by their CEOs and chairpersons. BUSA convenes regular online sessions of its members on various topics, including competition policy, energy, skills and other relevant topics.

Companies should actively participate in industry and business association forums to share and learn from one another. In turn, business associations should foster collaboration among their members to improve collective problem-solving, increase bargaining power and improve operational efficiency across the industry. Such collaboration can also see a more rapid development and

adoption of innovative solutions for society. By working together, companies and business association members can help to develop and promote sustainable practices that will ultimately improve our country in the long term.

## NBI: COLLABORATING FOR LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATION

Unlike B4SA, which exists to fill service delivery gaps and extricate the country from a national crisis, the NBI focuses on long-term, sustainable development. The independent business movement consists of close to 100 South African and multinational member companies and focuses on social transformation, economic inclusion, environmental sustainability, and institutional and government capacity building.

“There are a few areas concerned with the social transformation and sustainability of the country in which business needs to play a role,” says NBI CEO Shameela Soobramoney. “We have a vision of what the long-term future should look like, and we reverse-engineer this into our projects.”

The voluntary coalition of companies works with other entities to achieve ambitious outcomes. It partnered with BUSA and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to launch its Just Transition Pathways Project, a collaborative effort championed by 30 CEOs across various sectors and aimed at mobilising cross-industry collaboration towards a low-carbon economy. It also created a unified voice for South African business at COP26, held in Scotland in 2021. Soobramoney said around 400 stakeholders in government, business, industry associations and civil society were involved in the project, the aim of which is to drive the necessary shift to a low-carbon economy.

The NBI is developing initiatives to make young South Africans more skilled, employable and entrepreneurial. This is an offshoot of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative under the banner of ‘IRM skills’. The NBI has Memorandums of Agreement with more than a dozen TVET colleges to deliver demand-led skills development programmes. These programmes develop pathways for young people to access IRM occupations wherever such artisanal skills are relevant (e.g. appliance maintenance, property sector, renewables, etc.).

In April this year, endorsed by the Just Energy Transition Project Management Unit (JET PMU) in the Presidency, and partnering with BCG, it launched the JET Skilling for Employment Programme which aims to support the skills needed to power the transition and understand what jobs will be needed – where and in what time frames – over the next decade and longer. “If we are to ensure that a transition is just and allows for the localisation of value chains and growth of SMEs, we need to be deliberate and focused in our effort,” says Soobramoney.

Supported by over two dozen CEO champions from various sectors and working with the JET PMU, Presidential Climate Commission (PCC), Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), relevant Sector Education and Training Authorities and others, the initiative released its first report in late October. The report, titled *Powering Futures: The Green Skilling Opportunity*, offers leading insights at a granular (municipal) level as to what skills will be needed where and when, and will be the basis for recommendations on initial efforts to deliver the transition.

## B4SA: A CASE STUDY IN COLLABORATION

Cas Coovadia, the outgoing CEO of BUSA, says business associations have not diverged from their mandate – to represent business in different forums, both locally and globally, advocate for an appropriate legislative, policy and regulatory environment, and promote economic growth – but capacitating the government, both during and after the pandemic, entailed doing something different.

“During the pandemic, we established Business for South Africa – an alliance of South African business leaders working with the South African government and other social partners – to mobilise business resources and capacity during the Covid-19 pandemic. We mobilised not just BUSA members but all business associations and CEOs.”

B4SA partnered with the government to work quickly and flexibly, on a project management basis, to help save lives and livelihoods. It provided essential support to businesses and communities, including distributing information about government regulations and health impacts, providing financial assistance and advocating for policy measures to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic. It also helped ease some of the supply chain disruptions that led to a shortage of essential goods and raw materials and played a critical role in the distribution and provision of vaccines.

“A couple of years after the pandemic, we approached the government to see if it was interested in partnering on other pressing issues,” says Coovadia. “Although we suspended B4SA after the pandemic, because we had achieved our objectives, we saw the potential of using the platform once again. We made it part of our mandate to provide resources and expertise that would advance the interests of both partners and increase business confidence among investors.”

B4SA has been tasked with supporting the government to address bottlenecks impacting economic growth and social development, focusing on three priority areas: energy, transport and logistics, and crime and corruption. The partnership was contracted between BUSA and the government and is a focused initiative with clearly identifiable time frames and deliverables. The BUSA board decided to utilise the B4SA platform to undertake this work, with a broad mandate and regular report-backs to the board.

B4SA’s project management approach allows us to work quickly to avoid lengthy regulatory processes, but good governance and reporting are essential. Martin Kingston, the Executive Chairman of Rothschild & Co, chairs B4SA’s steering committee, and around 15 CEOs from different companies attend meetings with the Presidency every six to eight weeks, according to Coovadia. He adds that BUSA board members Adrian Gore, Mxolisi Mgojo and Mavuso also serve on the steering committee, with himself as the BUSA CEO designate.

“We use the B4SA platform to raise funds from companies specifically for the partnership – this is over and above how members fund BUSA, which is the contracting authority administering the funds,” Coovadia explains. Funds are mobilised to capacitate the government – but if the government’s commitment were to wane, and there was reputational risk to business, the BUSA board would review the partnership.

It is not a multistakeholder partnership largely because it has focused on crisis interventions, but Coovadia says there is no reason why the two most trusted sectors in South Africa today – business and NPOs – should not enjoy a more structured relationship that can bring about greater change.

Mavuso says the amount of progress made in energy and logistics would not have been achieved without business coming to the party. However, there is still significant work to be done. “Our most critical task is to build an inclusive economy that generates sustainable growth, creates jobs and eradicates poverty. Such effort requires collaboration with all our social partners,” she notes.

“Our initial rudimentary calculations indicated we could save billions simply by averting load-shedding, improving ports and rail performance, and tackling crime and corruption,” Mavuso says. The suspension of load-shedding since 26 March 2024 is testament to the partnership’s efforts to stabilise the grid.

She admits there is a limit to what the private sector can achieve in the area of crime and corruption, since “companies can’t prosecute”, but a key aim includes capacitating the National Prosecuting Authority, with which BLSA has a memorandum of understanding, allowing for the flow of skills and resources to the embattled organisation. Another aim is to dismantle the parallel economy caused by organised crime. Business, through Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA), is working closely with the National Priority Committee on Extortion and Violence at Economic Sites and has recently issued guidelines on how construction firms can respond to extortion, for example. In addition, BACSA has partnered with the South African Police Services, the Private Security Industry, and members of the private sector on the Eyes and Ears Initiative.

### B4SA’s next steps

Coovadia says the next task the private sector will help to tackle is reducing unemployment, although its ability to do so depends on the extent to which significant GDP growth can be achieved.

“At first, B4SA resisted expanding beyond the three specified priority areas – there’s always a danger that you’ll end up expanding into 30 areas and achieve very little,” he says. “However, the President is very passionate about employment, so we’ve put together a separate structure with the Presidency, Department of Labour, Department of Small Business Development, DBE and DHET to set about reducing youth unemployment. There are a number of organisations already engaged in this, such as the Jobs Fund and Harambee, and we want to scale their efforts.” B4SA will once again report directly to the president.

Other critical areas that could receive attention in the future include the water crisis and municipal capacity. “The second phase of our partnership was launched in October 2024, and we are discussing whether it will be possible to intervene in these areas. We can only do so if we have the resources and capacity,” Coovadia points out. He believes that by the end of 2025 the government should be sufficiently capacitated to institutionalise the skills and knowledge currently being transferred. “It’s not business’s job to continuously support government – it’s just not healthy,” he says. ■

# SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS COMBINE GOOD WITH GAIN

Social impact bonds (SIBs) encourage collaboration between governments, private investors and service providers towards a common impact goal. We explore how one of South Africa's first two SIBs has paved the way for a new, collective approach to addressing youth unemployment in a way that also delivers financial returns.

SIBs marry private investment with public service delivery towards common goals. Leveraging results-based financing, they offer investors a financial return tied to the successful outcomes of development initiatives. Globally, these bonds are increasingly used to tackle complex issues such as homelessness, unemployment and healthcare, offering a fresh approach that brings together governments, investors, service providers and civil society.

South Africa's first two SIBs were launched in 2018 to address two of the country's most pressing social challenges. The Inclusive Youth Employment Pay for Performance Platform, or Bonds4Jobs (B4J) fund, focused on reducing youth unemployment, while the Impact Bond Innovation Fund (IBIF) sought to improve early childhood learning and development (ECLD) outcomes in the Western Cape.

The Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation, which contributed funding to both bonds, commissioned assessments of the financial and social performance of the two SIBs in 2021, including a series of three reports by Intellidex (now Krutham), exploring the value of SIBs as tools to combat our many social challenges.

Tutuwa CEO Zanele Twala says the collaborations were an opportunity for stakeholders to explore an alternative funding model to grantmaking and to test if it was possible to derive financial and social returns on social outcome-oriented programmes. "The two SIBs have triggered innovation in the social impact space, not just because the model has worked, but also through extensive knowledge-sharing about impact investing."

## WHAT ARE SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS?

SIBs are not conventional bonds. Instead of guaranteeing a fixed financial return, SIBs pay investors based on the achievement of predefined social outcomes. The model works by providing upfront capital to service providers, typically NPOs or social enterprises, that deliver interventions to a targeted group. Governments or other outcome funders only repay the investment if the agreed-upon outcomes are met, as verified by an independent auditor.

At their core SIBs offer a mechanism to shift the focus of social programmes from inputs, or how much money is spent, to outcomes, or what is achieved. This structure incentivises efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, as providers are rewarded for actual results rather than activities. SIBs also distribute risk between the government and the private and social sectors, allowing governments to explore social development solutions without needing to invest public money upfront.

The first SIB was launched in the UK in 2010 to reduce the incidence of released prisoners to re-offend. Since then, SIBs have gained traction globally, including in countries such as the United States, Australia and South Africa. The model has been applied to various social issues.

Twala notes that both B4J and the IBIF encouraged collaboration by aligning incentives across different sectors and integrating the expertise of the government, private investors and service providers. The structure of the SIBs requires all stakeholders – outcome funders, investors, service providers, intermediaries and auditors – to work together towards clearly defined outcomes. Within this partnership, the private sector drives innovation and financial discipline while the public sector and NPOs focus on social outcomes.

## BONDS4JOBS AS A COLLABORATION PLATFORM

South Africa's chronic and escalating youth unemployment problem is a cause for serious concern. The inability to secure and retain employment erodes the fabric of society as it limits access to nutrition, housing, education and healthcare. According to Statistics South Africa, youth unemployment was reported at 45.5% for the second quarter of 2024, compared to the national average of 33.5%.

B4J, despite being cut short due to the Covid-19 pandemic, offers some hope for how private sector collaborative funding might contribute to meaningfully reduce youth unemployment.

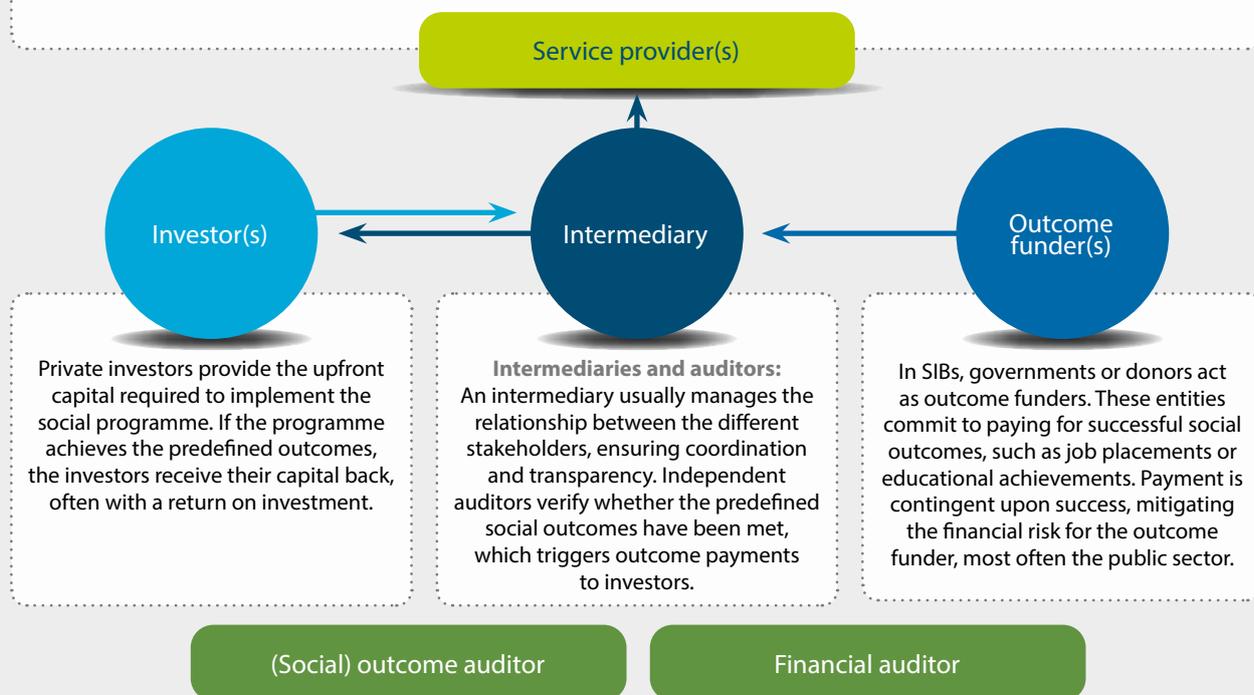
Developed by the investment group Yellowwoods and implemented by nonprofits Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, WeThinkCode\_ and Explore Data Science Academy, B4J aimed to address youth unemployment by providing skills training to disadvantaged young people and connecting them with formal job opportunities.

Intended to run for four years, B4J's focus was on placing economically excluded youth, aged 18–35, into long-term formal employment in three key sectors: business process outsourcing (BPO), IRM, and information and communication technology (ICT).

The programme not only focused on the number of placements but also on the quality of the jobs. The targeted sectors – BPO, IRM and ICT – were chosen based on their potential to offer medium- to

## HOW SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS ARE STRUCTURED

Service providers are typically nonprofits or social enterprises tasked with delivering the intervention.



Source: Krutham

high-complexity jobs, providing better-than-average employment opportunities for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. Providing short-term, targeted training in these sectors made it possible for B4J to bypass the lengthy and expensive formal education system, making a real difference in the lives of young people who otherwise would have faced significant barriers to entry into the job market.

Set up as a special purpose vehicle, nonprofit company B4J brought together a mix of private commercial and foundation investors, government entities, intermediaries and service providers to deliver on this goal.

Three types of investors – capital preservation (Brimstone Legacy Fund), senior investors (Clientele and Hollard) and first-loss investors (Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation, Oppenheimer Generations Philanthropy and UBS Optimus Foundation) – provided the upfront capital for the intervention. The different investors carried different risk profiles and expected returns. While the senior investors earned up to 11% returns, first-loss investors were willing to accept lower returns due to their focus on social impact over financial gain. Foundations are generally able to invest more and take larger risks than commercial investors who need to be accountable to their shareholders for returns.

The outcome funders – the Gauteng Provincial Government, National Treasury via the Jobs Fund, Yellowwoods, FirstRand Empowerment Foundation and Allan Gray Orbis Foundation – were responsible for repaying investors based on verified job placements.

Twala explains that the intermediaries (B4J and Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator) were responsible for overseeing outcomes (measured by PwC) and financial auditing as well as for coordinating learning exchange platforms to guide stakeholders in this new way of working together.

“In addition to taking responsibility for ensuring all the pieces of the puzzle fit together – from the legal contracting, the financing of the bonds, how the money flows through the whole transaction and design – the intermediary also managed the collaborative process between the different role players.” For example, investors had their own platform to discuss how to channel the funds, the design of the structure, dispersals, legal contracting, return on investment expectations and so on.

Twala notes that while the focus, approach and investment terms may differ from one bond to another, SIBs would broadly follow this same structure. B4J and the IBIF had structural similarities, differing in terms of focus and outcomes. It was these outcomes that made the difference when the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

## B4J PERFORMANCE AMID EXTERNAL CRISIS

Since the IBIF delivered home-based training, implementation was able to continue virtually despite Covid-19. B4J, however, required face-to-face interaction to connect young people with job opportunities. This was impossible during the pandemic. After a

## BENEFITS

- Funding innovations such as SIBs addresses a pressing need for social upliftment, drawing together private finance and social organisations to provide outsourced public services.
- There is a zero cost to the taxpayer should the development initiative fail.
- SIBs draw on private sector and nonprofit expertise that the government may lack to achieve outcomes.
- The process demands evidence-based, quality social outcomes.
- The process drives positive relationships between the public and private sectors.
- Private investors carry the risk rather than the government or the taxpayer.
- SIBs drive efficiency and experiential learning of all participating stakeholders.

VS

## CHALLENGES

- SIBs and their outcomes measurements are time consuming and complex to set up.
- Setting the price of a SIB requires a thorough and quantifiable understanding of the savings the outcomes would realise for the government.
- Evidence-based outcomes can be difficult to define and measure.
- The focus on outcomes requires a shift from traditional funding models for many nonprofit service delivery organisations.
- Macro and microeconomic, social and cultural impacts can make it difficult to draw a direct relationship between the intervention and the outcomes, requiring an additional layer of evaluations to confirm.
- Legal ambiguities, high legal costs and administrative issues can be a barrier for service delivery organisations facing limited resources and capacity.

successful pilot and first cycle, B4J had to be abandoned in 2020, halfway through its planned duration.

Despite its early termination, B4J achieved notable social and financial outcomes. The Harambee Academy placed over 1 800 young people into formal employment, with 600 placements in the first year and an additional 1 209 in the second year, representing 86% of the target. Furthermore, these placements were in relatively well-paying jobs, with a mean monthly wage of R5 500.

The bond had been structured such that investors were not required to wait the full three-year duration to receive their return. Capital was paid back on a six-monthly basis with the relevant interest. Even though B4J had to be abandoned, investors received their investments back in full.

## INFORMING FUTURE SIBS FOR SA

Twala says that the two SIBs have attracted interest from both the private sector and government as a potential mechanism to address social issues in different sectors. Among the SIBs currently in the design phase is the Education Outcomes Fund (EOF), in collaboration with South Africa's Department of Basic Education (DBE).

Other related funding mechanisms are also emerging. For example, Jobs Boost is a R300 million pay-for-performance model being piloted in South Africa. The outcome fund works in a similar fashion to a SIB, with investors collaboratively pooling their resources to address youth unemployment.

## SIBS DRIVE COLLABORATION, AMPLIFY IMPACT

Twala comments that the involvement of private investors in solving complex social problems is novel to the public sector. There is a concern that SIBs may raise the perception that private companies are financially benefiting from the misfortunes of others while the government is passing on its responsibility for social development to the private and social sectors.

She notes, however, that it is important to communicate the benefits of SIBs more widely and to demonstrate their value as a new vehicle for social service delivery. "B4J offered a real-time solution to grow entry-level, non-tertiary jobs for growth sectors. Making available opportunities to poor communities where the salaries [from employment] are transformative for those young people changes their home circumstances entirely. Beyond the SIBs' quantifiable, predetermined outcomes, the wider impact of its effects are immeasurable."

SIBs represent an innovative way of thinking about social service delivery. They shift the focus from inputs to outcomes while bringing together diverse stakeholders. This spirit of collaboration has the potential to drive and amplify more effective and sustainable social change. With the right framework and continued commitment from all sectors, SIBs could play an important role in driving collaboration for social change. ■



### Sources and further reading:

- 'Social Impact Bonds in South Africa'. *The Intellidex SIBs Research Series 2021.*
- The Impact Bond Innovation Fund. *The Intellidex SIBs Research Series 2021.*
- The Bonds4Jobs Social Impact Bond. *The Intellidex SIBs Research Series 2021.*



Scan for the online version of this article with sources.

## Future-ready youth – skills for jobs



Triologue and the Telkom Foundation partnered to present the themed segment ‘Future-ready youth – skills for jobs’ on the second day of the Triologue Business in Society Conference 2024. The theme looked at how collaboration can unlock youth employment.

The future of work is digital and Telkom is making a concerted effort to address the unemployment crisis by upskilling youth and providing them with crucial digital skills to improve their prospects in the labour market. In her executive overview, **Judy Vilakazi**, Executive of Corporate Social Responsibility at Telkom, pointed out that the telecommunications company was providing connectivity and devices to schools before the Covid-19 pandemic. It has since expanded its digital education strategy with zero-rated learning platforms and its digital skills programme, which teaches learners coding, web development, cybersecurity and more. “Unlocking the potential of our youth can create a brighter future for them – but no one company can solve these problems alone,” Vilakazi said, adding that the solution is to work with “like-minded partners” who can help to scale Telkom’s efforts.

### Rethinking skills

**Nicola Galombik**, Executive Director at Yellowwoods Holdings, delivered the themed keynote address and pointed out that the weak economy has made it difficult to create jobs. In addition, young people are not always capable of filling existing positions as they lack maths skills. Telkom has made an effort to provide extra tuition in maths and science, which will go some way towards making a difference – but there are additional remedies, Galombik said.

The Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator has developed an assessment tool that allows young people to discover their capabilities beyond the classroom, including problem-solving, critical thinking and interpersonal skills. “We need new skilling solutions that build on the potential of our young people, find out what they are really good at, and bridge them quickly and effectively into jobs the economy actually has, with the skills and competencies our economy

actually needs,” Galombik pointed out. She also noted that around 20% of young people using the South African Youth Platform – which links job seekers to opportunities – meet or exceed expectations in terms of cognitive capability.

In addition, young people should be directed towards “sunrise sectors” of the economy that are experiencing huge growth, such as global business services, the green economy and the digital sector. This provides opportunities for entrepreneurs and a key priority is to grow informal and township economies, allowing people to sell their services to people in their communities as well as into corporate value chains.

### Success stories in job creation

The panel discussion that followed Galombik’s keynote address highlighted successful job-creation programmes but also indicated there was a lot more work to be done. The panellists were Vilakazi, Harambee CEO **Kasthuri Soni**, Senior Finance Specialist at The Jobs Fund **Nazeem Hendricks** and Head of the TsAfrika Foundation and TsAfrika ICT Learnership Programme **Cynthia Motau**.

Telkom works closely with training providers to build a pipeline of skilled youngsters who can be absorbed into the company later. One of these skills providers, TsAfrika, has been able to place around 20% of its learners – but founder Motau said there was always more applicants than learners placed in jobs. She added that the learnerships should ideally run for two years to fully upskill youth.

The Jobs Fund exists to test and develop new models that lead to job creation and Hendricks stressed it was not a “mass employment programme” but helped to overcome demand-side

constraints to employment. It has rolled out 163 projects in collaboration with other stakeholders, including Harambee, and has helped to create 220 000 jobs and support 75 000 SMEs and emerging farmers. Importantly, 53 000 jobs have been created beyond the completion of projects, meaning they have not relied on donor funding.

Soni said Harambee has spent 13 years collaborating with partners to co-create employment solutions. Soni is most proud of the SA Youth Network. “This is a game-changer that serves nearly four million young people who get free access to aggregated earning and learning opportunities and work-seeker support,” she said. “The SA Youth Network also provides employers with access to a young talent pool ready to be matched with opportunities, not just via their CVs but via a line of sight to their problem-solving capabilities. It’s a hassle-free, cost-free way to source quality talent.”

She stressed that Harambee’s programmes keep young people productively engaged, allowing them to increase their employability and progress from one pathway to the next. “All opportunities matter, even short-term ones, but we need pathway management to keep young people economically active for as long as possible, earning a resilient income,” she said.



# COLLECTIVE VISION RESTORES THE LUSTRE TO THE CITY OF GOLD

Johannesburg, or Jozi as it is more fondly known, is a far cry from the continental powerhouse of commerce, culture and history it once was. Dilapidated infrastructure, hijacked buildings and uncontrolled crime have tarnished the famed City of Gold. In this article, **Laura Tyrer** explores how the Jozi My Jozi collaborative initiative is transforming the inner city.

Many companies that inhabited the inner city have decamped to the safer northern suburbs, leaving behind a city that has been steadily spiralling into disrepair, poverty and crisis.

But those who love this cultural melting pot, who understand how important it is to restore it to a place of opportunity, prosperity and hope, know that all is not lost. For at the centre of the city pounds a golden heartbeat – its people.

The nonprofit coalition Jozi My Jozi is dedicating its efforts to reviving the city for these enduring communities – and those yet to come. This place-based collective of committed individuals, organisations and companies is working tirelessly to rebuild the inner city of Joburg.

## THE MAKING OF JOBURG'S PLACE-BASED COLLABORATIVE

The ambitious urban renewal project was initiated when mining giant Anglo American decided to relocate from its Marshalltown precinct property in the former Johannesburg central business district (CBD) to Rosebank.

Unable to find a developer to buy the precinct, the board instead imagined a vision which would enhance the city. For this, it had three directives for the use of its property. The first two, protecting the heritage of the buildings and avoiding any long-term liabilities for the company, were relatively straightforward. However, the final directive, to leave a lasting legacy for both Anglo American and the mining industry on which the city was established, proved more of a challenge.

After extensive consultation and studies of urban revitalisation efforts worldwide, the team tasked with this challenge identified a crucial element. "We needed an anchor," explains Jozi My Jozi acting CEO Bea Swanepoel. "We had the strong presence of the banking sector, but banking is not the anchor we needed. Instead, we turned to education."

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) were approached to consider establishing

satellite campuses in the inner city. While both ultimately declined out of concern for the safety of their students, the engagement attracted the attention of several South African change-makers. Nando's Co-founder Robert Brozin challenged the team to explore a broader vision of leaving a legacy of a transformed inner city. Wits Business School Head Maurice Radebe suggested approaching major businesses in the inner city to be part of the process in a 'coalition of the willing'.

Outreach to banks and other companies to pitch the idea of turning the city around was greeted with an overwhelmingly positive response. We Are Bizarre Founder and Creative Director Melusi Mhlungu's proposal that the project draws inspiration from successful city branding campaigns like 'I love New York' led to the creation of the 'Jozi My Jozi' brand, capturing the spirit of ownership and pride the team hoped to instil in stakeholders and residents.

With the name and brand in place, Jozi My Jozi was formally registered as a nonprofit and "The coalition of the willing quickly became the coalition of the doing," says Swanepoel. The initiative expanded its focus beyond the inner city, reaching out to a broader range of companies and stakeholders.

*"This is not a business-as-usual situation. The private sector has to do more than pay rates and taxes if we want to see real change. It doesn't have to be forever, but we need a step-change to take Joburg out of the hole it is in at the moment. This is an exceptional situation."*

**Bea Swanepoel**, Jozi My Jozi

## EDUCATION ANCHORS THE INNER CITY

Jozi My Jozi achieved its goal of creating an educational anchor in the former CBD. In 2023, Anglo American handed over its iconic 45 Main Street building to the Maharishi Invincibility Institute, a nonprofit private education institution dedicated to empowering under-privileged youth in the inner city and surrounding areas.

The building enables the institute to grow its impact. Now able to serve up to 5 000 young people, it has more than doubled the number of students it can support. The institute provides access to on-the-job training and assists graduates in securing sustainable employment.

Supporting education and training is a key component of Anglo's directive to leave a lasting legacy. Together with health and employment opportunities, education contributes to building and maintaining thriving communities.

## TRANSFORMING WILL TO ACTION

Initially established in 2022 as an NPO, Jozi My Jozi gained traction in 2023 when private sector partners began to join the cause. The initiative currently includes more than 60 signatory partners, including companies, other NPOs and city improvement districts. Formal collaboration agreements were established with the City of Joburg and Gauteng Province, ensuring alignment with government strategies.

The collaborative employs a simple theory of change. The Jozi My Jozi movement restores hope for the inner city to attract inspirational ideas and initiatives. Successfully delivered, these initiatives restore pride and a sense of ownership, generating a self-sustaining momentum to restore and maintain the area.

“We want this movement to get traction to bring hope back to the people so that they get inspired to love and reimagine their city,” explains Swanepoel. “In the precincts where the project has been active, this approach is already delivering the end goal.”

The collaborative has identified five focus areas:

- Improving safety and security with the installation of solar streetlights, the repair of potholes and reinstating the pavements, among other activities
- Encouraging social engagement to address the overwhelming rate of homelessness in the city by fully understanding the extent of the problem, providing day service centres and night shelters
- Restoring commerce to the CBD by bringing business back to the city and creating job opportunities
- Using education as an anchor to uplift the city and support social upliftment
- Employing sports, arts and culture to create an environment where businesses could thrive and communities could rebuild.

## UPLIFTMENT IN ACTION: JOZI MY JOZI'S ACHIEVEMENTS, VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

### Refurbishment of the Nelson Mandela Bridge:

A key link to the inner city has been restored. The graffiti-strewn walls have been cleaned, the surfaces repaired and the 81 damaged glass panels replaced. New colour LED lights have been installed and the streetlights upgraded to solar. Security interventions have created a crucial social and commercial link between the Braamfontein and Newton communities on either side of the bridge.

**Solar lights for security:** More than 535 solar lights have been installed in targeted areas to address security issues and connect different precincts.

**The collaboration process:** Jozi My Jozi's most important achievement thus far has been the critical work of getting the collaborative partnership between the public and private sectors to work effectively.

**Ellis Park Precinct enhancement:** With eyes on the city for a key international rugby game, the collaborative undertook to repair and enhance this pivotal precinct, installing solar streetlights; upgrading the parks around the stadium; repairing roads, water leaks and potholes; and beautifying the major precinct gateway.

**Adopting inner-city parks:** Three inner-city parks have been adopted by the private sector for upgrades and maintenance, transforming them from high-risk areas to spaces for residents to enjoy.

### Jozi My Jozi partners

Absa	BUSA	FNB	Johannesburg Heritage Foundation	Nando's	Standard Bank
Accenture	CAP	Fortress	Johannesburg Inner City Partnership	Nedbank	Tennant Metals
AFHCO	Care for Education Foundation	Future Trust	JPOMA	New Spirit	Transnet
African Youth Development Agency	City of Johannesburg	Gass Architects	Lions Rugby Club	Novo Nordisk	Trevor Noah Foundation
Ahead marketing	City Property	Gauteng Precinct Management Association	Local Abode	PG Glass	Tsikululu
Altron	Corobrik	Gauteng Provincial Government	Maharishi Invincibility Institute	Plitvest	TUHF
Anglo American	Discovery	Genesis	MES	Prasa	Turner and Townsend
Anglo American Foundation	Diversity	Heineken	Microsoft	Primedia	UJ
Bad Boyz	Doxa Deo Group	Hollard	MODA	PRs	Vumacam
Blue Lever	Ellis Park	IQ Business	Momentum	Rand Club	We Are Bizarre
BrandSmith	Fidelity-ADT		Nahana Group	Relativ Media	Wits
	FIRM			Sigma	Youth Chamber of Commerce and Industry
				South Point	

## OPERATING A MOVEMENT BUILT ON PASSION AND COMMUNICATION

The Jozi My Jozi brand remains independent, surrounded by a loose coalition of willing and capable partners, united in their desire to revitalise the Joburg inner city.

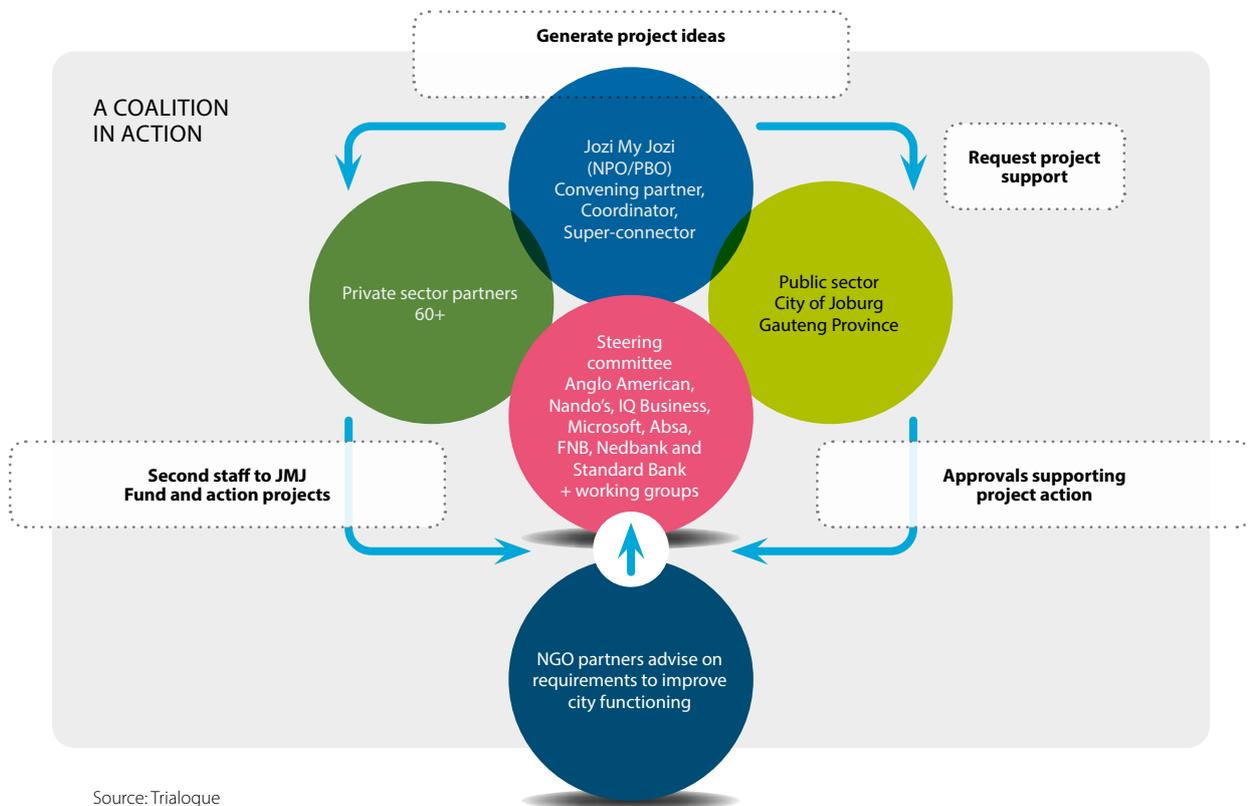
The organisation acts as a convening partner, coordinator, idea generator and 'super-connector'. One of its key functions is offering its private sector partners ideas to elevate their CSI strategies.

"Companies have run out of ideas on how to spend their CSI budgets and can be disheartened by the lack of impact that billions of rands worth of investment have had. A big part of the project is giving them suggestions for projects that will deliver big impact," comments Swanepoel.

Jozi My Jozi and the private sector propose infrastructure projects requiring government input and approval. Project tasks are shared cooperatively and organically, with private sector partners providing funding, materials, expertise or support for work to be done.

Other partners contribute to the success of the collective in a myriad of ways. For example, Wits and UJ students contribute their masters and doctoral research to understanding the extent and nature of the problems that need resolving and the solutions to achieve this.

The collaboration is built on constant and transparent communication with all partners. Quarterly meetings with private sector partners are held to share updates, align projects and avoid duplication of efforts. Weekly meetings with essential City of Joburg representatives from key entities such as Joburg Water and



Source: Trialogue

SAFETY, SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION	SOCIAL	COMMERCE	SPORTS, ART AND CULTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical security</li> <li>Perceived safety                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lighting</li> <li>Cleanliness</li> <li>Potholes and sidewalks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education city</li> <li>Positioning education as the new 'mining' in JHB</li> <li>Maharishi, WITS, UJ, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobile outreach (including baseline assessment)</li> <li>Homeless service and drop-in centres (day service), shelters/safe space (night service)</li> <li>Psychosocial services (rehabilitation/mental health/occupational therapy, social work)</li> <li>Work readiness and opportunities (job creation via on-the-job training)</li> <li>Public awareness on compassionate versus responsible giving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business back to the inner city</li> <li>CIDs</li> <li>SMMEs</li> <li>Digitalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The creative heart of the city</li> <li>Integrate our culture and heritage</li> <li>Self-employment</li> </ul>

City Power convene key decision-makers, building efficiency and ensuring swift action and accountability. Similar monthly meetings are held with Gauteng provincial leadership to facilitate high-level coordination.

Swanepoel says building trust is the central requirement for partnerships of this nature. And it is achieved through consistent delivery of promises and open communication about both successes and challenges. This approach fosters strong relationships and alignment across private sector partners, city authorities and provincial government, creating a collaborative environment and a 'collaboration of unity' for urban renewal efforts.

"We understand that we need each other and that we need to complement each other."

As an NPO Jozi My Jozi is managed by a steering committee of corporate partner representatives from Anglo American, Nando's, IQ Business, Microsoft, Absa, FNB, Nedbank and Standard Bank.

Directors meet weekly, while the day-to-day functions, including communications and marketing, project management and stakeholder engagement, are fulfilled by 12 full-time individuals seconded by the partner organisations to Jozi My Jozi. Auditing, legal and secretarial functions funded by the corporate partners ensure the organisation's strict adherence to good governance.

The organisation is in the process of registering as a public benefit organisation (PBO). Swanepoel notes this is a requirement of the international funders with whom the organisation is engaging rather than an expectation from partners who would receive tax benefits under the PBO status. "None of our partners have requested this. They're doing it for the right reasons."

### SHOWCASING PARTNER IMPACT

Jozi My Jozi's work and impact are meticulously measured and tracked with resources supplied by partners, including IQ Business and Nedbank. In addition to measuring all projects and outcomes against the 17 SDGs, Jozi My Jozi tracks the organisation's collective carbon footprint and carbon reduction measures. It also tracks crime statistics in the area.

### SETTING IN MOTION A SNOWBALL EFFECT

Built on the strong mandate of its initial partners and operating under strict adherence to good governance guidelines, the Jozi My Jozi initiative is accelerating rapidly. "The more we grow, the faster we can implement and make an impact," Swanepoel enthuses.

Swanepoel says the process has revealed the incredible spirit of the inner city and the soul of Johannesburg's people, who are where the city's real value lies.

She describes the hidden gems to be discovered in the inner city's vibrant venues, restaurants and businesses that have

### LEARNINGS FROM A PLACE-BASED COLLABORATION

- Take the time to **engage** the communities who live in and use the area, **listening** to their needs and suggestions and treating them with dignity and respect.
- Look for **creative** ways to involve local communities in **crafting solutions**, e.g. students contributing research or residents participating in projects.
- **Persevere.** When the cause is important, difficult challenges can be overcome with enough will and action.
- **Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.** Ensure that channels of communication remain open for the sake of maintaining trust, managing misunderstandings, retaining efficiency and creating more opportunities for inspiration and collaboration.
- **Think beyond the funding box.** Company partners can also provide secondments of the qualified and experienced staff essential for project success.
- Only spend money where it adds **value**.
- **Consider the knock-on effects** of interventions. Projects to enhance one locale should not have an adverse effect on neighbouring areas.
- As important as it is to get things done, they need to be done right. **Practice good governance** and transparency to ensure tasks are executed to the best possible standard.
- Be part of the solution and take responsibility for remedying the issue. If not now, then when? If not us, then who?

held on through the city's decline and the Covid-19 pandemic. She praises the education and training facilities that make an enduring contribution to the economic future of the former CBD and the NPOs working quietly but steadily – sometimes for decades – to respond to homelessness and addiction in the inner city. Swanepoel has nothing but praise for the individuals who make their lives in Joburg's inner city, from the informal community leaders who eagerly engage with the collaborative to reinvent the city to the informal traders who feed its residents.

Jozi My Jozi wants to work with these businesses, institutions, organisations and individuals to strengthen and grow their efforts sustainably. "We are open about our vision for a city where people can feel safe enough to work, live and play. And that is exactly what we are trying to accomplish!"

The collaboration has already attracted national interest and is evolving into a proof of concept that could be rolled out in other metros across the country. ■

# Connect and collaborate: Blazing the trails

**Our trail networks are like economic arteries, bringing life to local communities.**

Since its inception in 2011, the Sappi Trails Programme has been a beacon of connection and collaboration, fostering partnerships with trail custodians and benefiting surrounding communities. This initiative has transformed our extensive plantations into vibrant hubs for outdoor activities, creating a ripple effect of economic and social benefits.

## **Connecting communities through trails**

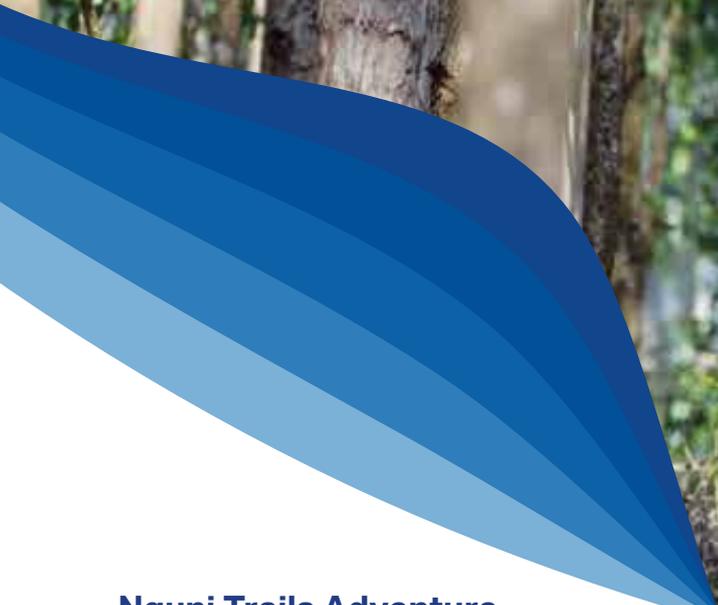
The Sappi Trails Programme was established to provide access for people to pursue healthy outdoor pursuits on our land. By opening our plantations for trail running and mountain biking, we have not only promoted a healthy lifestyle but also created a platform for community engagement and economic growth. Our trails have become a vital part of the local economy, supporting small businesses, creating jobs, and encouraging local spending.

One of our flagship partners, the Karkloof Country Club in KwaZulu-Natal, exemplifies this connection. Offering over 250 kilometres of single-track trails, the club has become a popular destination for both recreational and competitive mountain bikers and trail runners. This partnership has not only enhanced the club's offerings but also brought significant economic benefits to the surrounding community.

## **Collaborating for shared value**

Collaboration is at the heart of the Sappi Trails Programme. By working closely with trail custodians, such as the Karkloof Country Club, Mankele Adventure Tourism and Tranquilitas in Mpumalanga, we have developed a world-class network of trails that are well-maintained and safe for users. These partnerships have been instrumental in growing the sports of mountain biking and trail running, both at recreational and competitive levels.

Our collaboration extends beyond just trail maintenance. We have partnered with local tourism bodies, such as uMngeni Tourism, to conduct business impact studies focused on nature-based tourism attractions and activities. These studies have shown impressive economic impacts, with the Karkloof Classic Trail Festival alone generating a combined direct and indirect economic impact of ZAR234 million in 2017. The recent study with uMngeni Tourism estimated the total direct jobs in tourism businesses at 513 annually, highlighting the significant role of nature-based tourism in local economic development.



## **Nguni Trails Adventure Tourism Incubator**

A shining example of our commitment to community empowerment and economic development is the Karkloof Trails Adventure Tourism Incubator. This pilot project, initiated in partnership with the N3 Gateway Tourism Association and funded by the Industrial Development Corporation and Sappi Southern Africa Limited, aims to create an effective model for skills and enterprise development. The incubator focuses on lifting the standards of the Karkloof trail networks while empowering local communities.

Nguni Trails has been instrumental in maintaining and enhancing the trail networks. The team receives comprehensive training in business management, functional machine operation, ensuring they are well-equipped to manage and grow this enterprise. This initiative not only improves the quality of the trails but also creates job opportunities and supports local economic growth.

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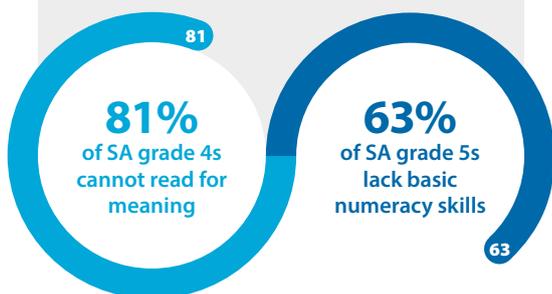
## CASE STUDY

# DONOR COLLECTIVE TO TACKLE SOUTH AFRICA'S FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATION CHALLENGE

Foundational literacy and numeracy skills are crucial for educational success and lifelong learning. South Africa faces significant challenges in this area, with alarmingly low proficiency rates among primary school learners. An emerging donor collaborative aims to respond to these challenges, bringing together resources, expertise and a shared commitment to improve educational outcomes at scale for South African learners.

The state of foundational literacy and numeracy in South Africa is dire. According to the 2021 *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) report, 81% of grade 4 learners (10-year-olds) in South Africa cannot read for meaning in any language. The *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2019* showed that 63% of South African grade 5 learners lack basic numeracy skills. These statistics speak to a crisis in foundational early education that demands urgent and coordinated action.

## THE STATE OF FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN SA



Historically, donors have worked individually, presenting separate plans to the government to address these issues. However, the emerging Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Donor Group, a collective of donors with a long track record of working in the education sector, in partnership with government, has set out to tackle the problem together. Recognising that educational change takes time, the funders have committed to a long-term partnership. Zenex Foundation CEO Gail Campbell and Epoch and Optima Trust Head Sarah Cairns, both FLN Donor Group steering committee members, explain how several factors came together to make this collaboration possible.

“We know how serious South Africa’s education crisis is, but the release of the PIRLS results in 2021 was a stark reminder for the public, igniting renewed private sector energy as well as focus from the DBE to try and address it. With provinces tasked with developing reading strategies and plans, the timing is right to channel resources into targeted interventions that can make a meaningful and lasting difference,” says Cairns.

She notes that the release of these insights on the state of Foundation Phase education coincided with strategic reviews of several major donor organisations, including the Anglo American-funded Epoch and Optima Trusts, the Maitri Trust and the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust. These reviews resulted in the prioritisation of foundational literacy and numeracy in funder strategies.

Campbell adds that the government’s increased openness to working in partnership, together with a growing body of evidence about what works in improving literacy and numeracy added to the impetus. These factors, combined with the global and local move towards donor collaboration as a driver of systemic change, particularly around education, have created fertile ground for the FLN Donor Group.

## POOLING DONOR RESOURCES TO AMPLIFY IMPACT

Multiple funders pooling their resources, expertise and efforts to address complex societal challenges that are too large for any single organisation to tackle effectively are an opportunity for systemic change. The model allows for greater impact, sharing of risk, and the leveraging of diverse skills and networks.

In its article ‘Collaborating to Systemically Address Social Justice in South Africa’, IPASA explores how multisectoral funder collaboration can powerfully bring about much-needed, transformative social change, particularly in the education sector.

“Education remains one of the most powerful tools for advancing social justice, yet many South Africans still lack access to quality education. Collaborative philanthropy can focus on improving education outcomes through addressing underlying inequity and social justice issues in underserved communities by funding teacher training, digital learning platforms and infrastructure improvements,” writes article author and IPASA Executive Director Louise Driver.

The idea is not a new one in the education space. The Global Partnerships for Education (GPE), the largest international fund dedicated to transforming education in lower-income countries,

## LOW ORGANISATIONAL EGOS: A KEY INGREDIENT FOR DONOR COLLABORATION SUCCESS

Donor board support for the collaborative process itself is essential to the success of any donor collaboration. Campbell says that within the donor collaborative, a key success factor is what she calls 'low-organisational ego'.

"As loyal and passionate as one is about one's organisation, when you come into a collaboration you've got to realise that you're coming in to learn from others. It is essential to approach collaboration with an open mindset, the understanding that there is going to be robust discussion on different issues and that it is not about winning or losing but about seeking out consensus."

was established in 2002. The multistakeholder partnership brings together partners invested in education, including donors, international organisations, civil society, the private sector and private foundations, to transform education systems in lower-income countries. GPE has helped partner countries to improve access to education, learning, equity and educational outcomes for millions of children.

Closer to home, South Africa's NECT was established in 2013, also with the mission of mobilising a network of partners to strengthen government capacity to improve education (see pages 133–134 and page 227 for more information on NECT).

## FLN DONOR GROUP COLLABORATION

Donor collaborations can take different forms, from learning collaboratives and giving circles to pooled funds. The FLN Donor Group – comprised of like-minded, strategically aligned donors – combines knowledge and financial resources, pooling the latter into a fund to support foundational literacy and numeracy at a provincial level.

The collaboration, which emerged out of a Zenex-convened session of interested parties in 2022, aims to work closely with South African provincial governments to support the implementation of evidence-based strategies to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes in Foundation Phase education, or grade R to grade 3.

Cairns explains that the collaboration is built on a sound set of general principles and a common understanding of what works in foundational literacy and numeracy, in particular, the research Early Grade Interventions in South Africa: Reading and Mathematics. "The research points to the importance of quality learning materials and working in the classroom with teachers, among other interventions, to make a difference," comments Cairns.

In its planning phase, the FLN Donor Group's organising group, composed of funders and interested parties, has established the necessary structures to support additional funders and stakeholders coming on board later.

Fortunately the convening donors understood early on that the collaborative process itself requires funding and several participating funders provided seed funding to make this possible, comments Campbell. The Gates Foundation provided resources to commission a review of existing literacy interventions reaching more than 50 schools to ensure that the collaborative's deliberations were informed by evidence.

In 2023, the convening group developed a concept note and a steering committee with three working groups to manage the complexities of setting up such a large collaboration.

*"Collaborations work where co-ownership and co-governance are established early on. The focus needs to be on the collective."*

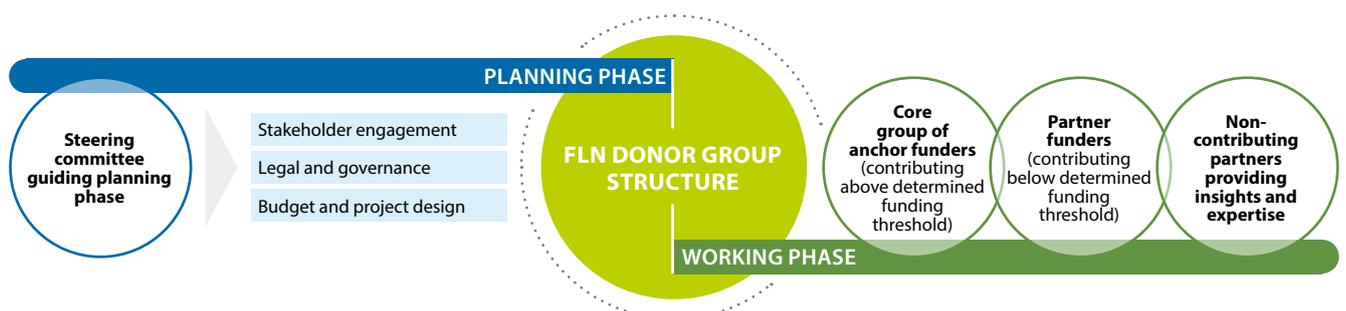
Gail Campbell, Zenex

The stakeholder engagement working group was tasked with identifying the relevant stakeholders, potential donors and other interested parties and establishing engagement processes and protocols. The legal and governance working group focused on establishing the collaborative structure and decision-making processes. The budget and project design working group set out to establish exactly what the collaborative would do and the associated costs.

Balancing inclusivity and efficiency, the collaborative's decision-making power will be based on funding contribution in a tiered structure. Funders that have committed above a defined threshold will comprise core or anchor funders, while those contributing

less than the threshold will be considered partner funders. A third tier will comprise associated parties that contribute neither to finance nor decision-making but are represented in discussion and provide insight.

Organising the collaborative's decision-making this way was based on research into the functioning of local and international donor collaborations. "While driving consensus is the goal of collaboration, it is necessary to decide early on how decisions will be made in the absence of consensus. The general feedback from our survey of successful collaboratives found that financial contributions seem to



be the best way to manage a complex set of donors with layers of decision-making," explains Campbell.

The decision was made early on that the collaborative would not establish itself as a separate legal entity. Instead, it is in the process of selecting a fund administrator to manage the pooled funds and make disbursements to service providers for the various provincial interventions. A project management office will oversee day-to-day operations.

## DONOR COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



### OPPORTUNITIES

- Pooling of resources allows for larger-scale interventions
- Shared expertise from diverse partners enhances the quality of interventions
- Collective engagement with the government increases the likelihood of systemic change
- Long-term commitment enables sustained impact beyond typical grant cycles.

### CHALLENGES

- Balancing diverse partner opinions and agendas
- Navigating different organisations' protocols and mandates
- Navigating the tension between inclusive decision-making and the need for efficient progress
- Ensuring equitable representation and voice for all partners, regardless of financial contribution
- Developing a governance structure that allows for growth and onboarding of new partners.



## FROM PLANNING TO ACTION

The FLN Donor Group collaboration will provide about R100 million a year from 2025 to 2027, to support and co-create effective provincial foundational literacy and numeracy interventions.

Beneficiary provinces will be expected to take a strong role in the process, leading the governance and communication components of interventions. "We are inviting provinces to apply for funding to support their existing literacy or numeracy, or both, strategies.

## M&E PLANNING

The FLN Donor Group initiative will commit 10% of its budget to M&E to ensure rigorous impact measurement. While specific metrics are still being developed, these will likely include improvements in literacy and numeracy rates, teacher competency and the scalability of interventions, among other measures.

We have requested evidence to show that whatever they're doing will work," explains Cairns.

Limited funding means that the collaborative will not be able to support all the provinces. To ensure equitable distribution of resources and impact, the FLN Donor Group will employ a structured and phased approach to supporting provinces. The first cohort of provinces will receive balanced support relative to the provinces' resources. M&E will inform what works best in different contexts.

Throughout the process, the collaboration maintains a strong focus on government engagement. "It's completely unrealistic to think that you can work outside of government if you want to do something systemic," Cairns emphasises. The group leverages existing relationships and expertise to navigate government protocols and ensure buy-in at all levels.

From the initial proposal conversation in 2022 to planned implementation in 2025, the FLN Donor Group illustrates the significant time, engagement, funding and resources required to set up a collaboration. As the FLN Donor Group begins its journey, its progress and impact will provide essential learnings for future donor collaboration. ■



### Sources and further reading:

- 'Find Greater Strength Through Donor Collaboration'. The Philanthropic Initiative 2021.
- Global Partnership for Education.
- *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2021: South African Preliminary Highlights Report*. Department of Basic Education 2023.
- *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study South Africa 2019*. TIMSS SA 2023.
- 'Early Grade Interventions in South Africa: Reading and Mathematics'. Oxford University Press 2022.



Scan for the online version of this article with sources.

## VIEWPOINT



# A climate commitment for South African funders



**Louise Driver**, Executive Director of the Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa (IPASA), shares the rationale for IPASA's South African Funders Climate Commitment. IPASA wants to encourage funders to display bold leadership in this space through risk-taking, innovation and collaboration, and by giving voice to those who are marginalised in the climate discourse.

**What is the global context in which the South African Funders Climate Pledge is being developed?**

IPASA became the South African ambassador for the International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change in 2021 as part of the #PhilanthropyForClimate global movement that encourages philanthropic organisations to take decisive action on climate change. This is within the context of the Paris Agreement, which says global greenhouse gas emissions need to be reduced by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050. The commitment provides a framework for foundations to integrate climate considerations into their work, regardless of their primary mission. Some 800 foundations globally, including two IPASA members – the African Climate Foundation and the Lewis Foundation – have signed the international pledge. Stemming from this, many country climate pledges have been developed to make climate commitments more relevant and accessible to local funders. Brazil, Canada, Spain, France, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom have all developed pledges, while IPASA, India and the Arab Foundations Forum are currently developing theirs.

**Who is involved in the climate pledge – who are your partners and how did they become involved in this initiative?**

Twelve IPASA members, who reflect the diversity of our membership and are actively involved in integrating climate considerations into their work, have formed a task team which will co-create the climate pledge together with IPASA. Our local and international partners, including the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) and Presidential Climate Commission, are equally important contributors as part of the climate philanthropy ecosystem.

**What is the objective of the pledge and what implications will it have for broader philanthropy in South Africa?**

A pledge tailored to the unique context and challenges of South African funders will enable them to find appropriate ways to respond to climate change, in line with their unique positioning, capabilities and objectives. We have observed that once funders start on their climate journeys, they can incrementally step up their climate responses with remarkable agility – with some funders now leading climate initiatives in their funding sectors within a couple of years of starting.

**Why is philanthropy uniquely positioned to respond to the climate crisis and what gives it an advantage?**

Independent philanthropy can be the forerunner in uncharted territory because it can take risks that other stakeholders cannot and have the latitude to think out of the box and pilot new ideas. By foregrounding these characteristics, philanthropy can play to its strengths. Philanthropy has the capability to shift the narrative to one that regards climate change as the context in which we operate – a context with immense potential for fresh thinking, innovation and growth. Because climate change has disproportionate impacts on the Global South and vulnerable people, especially funders can assist the communities they support to adapt, be resilient and become active participants in the climate conversation to find localised solutions for ever-changing climate impacts.

**Is the pledge relevant to South African companies?**

IPASA's membership includes independent corporate foundations, some of which are represented on our pledge task team and others that are

likely to become pledge signatories due to their corporate entities' strong focus on climate. South African private foundations committing to the pledge could have a ripple effect on their companies. Funders who are interested to get involved are encouraged to contact IPASA.

**Why is collaboration vital when it comes to climate solutions and how can the proposed solutions help to improve the lives of those South Africans most affected by the climate crisis?**

Collaboration is essential to leverage resources that include financial capital, expert knowledge and networks, particularly because the scale and complexity of the issue is too much for one funder to address alone. Collaboration is also key in sharing knowledge and expertise in the climate space. IPASA places significant value on the benefits of our knowledge partnerships with global climate philanthropy networks and we aim to create the same value locally.

**What resources are available to assist nonprofits?**

IPASA has developed various resources to assist funders in supporting their NPO partners. Furthermore, we provide a connection between funders and other stakeholders who work to address the climate crisis through working with intermediary funders who assist communities and social justice organisations; funders who integrate climate considerations into their sector-specific funding; funding for environmental and ecosystem health initiatives; and funders who advocate for responsible investment. IPASA's convening platform provides opportunities for ongoing discussion and networking on this important topic.

### LOUISE DRIVER

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# Driving Corporate Social Responsibility in Growthpoint's Western Cape Developments

In the ever-changing world of construction, where unpredictability is often the norm, businesses have begun to emphasise corporate social responsibility (CSR) to ensure their own sustainable growth and the development of host communities to their projects.

Property Point, an organisation devoted to economic inclusion and sustainability of client operations through local economic development, has played a pivotal role in supporting Growthpoint's CSR initiatives, particularly in the Western Cape. Property Point defines local economic development as the facilitation of economic opportunities for local small, medium and microenterprises (SMMEs) and local labour. It has demonstrated a commitment to nurturing SMMEs, promoting local employment and fostering enduring community relationships.

Property Point's journey in promoting local economic development is a testament to its dedication to create meaningful and sustainable connections between Growthpoint and its stakeholder communities.

**Through meticulously planned interventions, Property Point aids clients in forming sustainable relationships that address societal issues while bolstering local communities. This strategy enhances business continuity and mitigates the myriad challenges that can arise in the construction sector.**

One of the cornerstones of Property Point's initiatives is the identification of procurement and employment opportunities for

SMMEs and local labour within the communities where construction projects are under way.

This approach ensures that the economic benefits of these development projects are **shared with the local population**, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and pride among community members.

Effective stakeholder engagement is crucial for the success of local economic development, and Property Point excels in facilitating communication between Growthpoint and various community stakeholders, including local business forums, municipal representatives and community leaders. This process helps manage societal challenges and nurtures sustainable relationships, which are vital for the smooth progression of any construction project.

The Western Cape has been a focal point for Property Point's efforts, with several key Growthpoint developments benefiting from their expertise. These projects, which include the Arterial Blackheath Industrial Estate, Chain Avenue Industrial Development, Beacon Bay Park alterations and Bayside Mall refurbishments have all seen significant community participation and local economic impact.

Property Point's involvement has been particularly noteworthy at the **ARTERIAL BLACKHEATH INDUSTRIAL ESTATE**. As the project nears completion, it has provided employment for 132 local labourers and contracts for 13 local SMMEs, with a cumulative local spend of R20 236 485.30. Property Point's engagement has been instrumental in mitigating site disruptions and ensuring continued community participation, which is essential for the project's success.

**132**  
LOCAL  
LABOURERS

**13**  
LOCAL  
SMMES

**R20m**  
CUMULATIVE  
LOCAL SPEND



Similarly, the **CHAIN AVENUE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT** project has employed 65 local labourers and appointed 10 local SMMEs, with a reported local community spend of R2 387 945.35.

The **BEACON BAY RETAIL PARK** alterations project has completed its first and second phases, with a cumulative total spend of R6 250 938.69 on local SMMEs.

Property Point's rigorous audits ensure the reported local spend is valid, aligning with Growthpoint's local economic development policy which Property Point had assisted in formulating.

The tangible benefits of Property Point's initiatives are evident in these projects' successful completion and ongoing progress. Property Point helps reduce unemployment and foster economic growth within the communities by focusing on local procurement and employment. Their continuous engagement with stakeholders ensures that societal challenges are addressed promptly, reducing the risk of project delays and disruptions.

A proactive approach to stakeholder management and community engagement is crucial for mitigating risks associated with societal unrest and project disruptions. For instance, Property Point's intervention in the Arterial Blackheath Industrial Estate project ensured minimal disruptions and smooth project completion.

**By cultivating sustainable relationships with local communities Property Point ensures that Growthpoint's projects are well received and supported by the community. This enhances the projects' success and contributes to the overall positive perception of Growthpoint's CSR efforts.**

Regular audits and reporting on local spend and participation are key to maintaining transparency and accountability. Property Point's dedication to this process helps maintain trust with stakeholders and demonstrates Growthpoint's commitment to local economic empowerment.



**Looking to the future**, Property Point aims to strengthen performance metrics, expand community offerings and explore new collaborations with private and public stakeholders. Property Point seeks to further enhance its local economic impact by creating links with various municipalities and building contractors.

Among assorted initiatives is the collaboration with Growthpoint Procurement in hosting costing and pricing workshops for local economic development businesses across various regions. These workshops aim to improve the market access and pricing capabilities of local SMMEs, thereby increasing their chances of securing contracts with Growthpoint. To date, workshops have been held in Johannesburg and Cape Town with 130 attendees representing over 60 different companies.

Additionally, Property Point is developing frameworks to better record and report the local economic development policy's successes. This includes frameworks for existing assets and new developments, ensuring consistency and effectiveness in local economic development efforts.

**Strengthening community engagement remains a priority for Property Point. By continuing to engage with local communities and stakeholders, they aim to identify areas of improvement and implement systems to address challenges. This ongoing engagement will help sustain the positive impact of Growthpoint's developments on local communities.**

As Growthpoint continues to expand its developments, Property Point's efforts will remain crucial in creating shared value and sustainable community relationships.

The success of Property Point's initiatives underscores the importance of CSR in modern business practices. Growthpoint and Property Point set a benchmark for other organisations to follow by prioritising local economic development and community engagement. Their collaborative efforts demonstrate that businesses can achieve economic success while positively impacting society, paving the way for a more inclusive and sustainable future.

**In conclusion**, Property Point's story involves dedication, innovation and community empowerment. Their work within Growthpoint's Western Cape developments showcases the tangible benefits of strategic local economic development.

By ensuring that economic opportunities are shared with local communities and addressing societal challenges head-on, Property Point exemplifies the true essence of CSR.

## VIEWPOINT



# The Climate Change Act: Does it go far enough?



President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Climate Change Act 22 of 2024 into law in July 2024. However, it remains to be put into operation via a separate proclamation. As a legal and institutional framework for implementing South Africa's national climate change response, the Act's success will depend on effective regulations, adequate political will and public engagement. Climate Advocacy Lawyer **Brandon Abdinor** explains.

**What makes the Climate Change Act a necessary piece of legislation and in what way does it take precedence over other environmental laws?**

In the face of the intensifying climate crisis, the Act defines the key climate responses of adaptation and mitigation. It prescribes specific and appropriate measures for implementing these. It also establishes the necessary institutional arrangements to apportion responsibilities across the state institutions. The Act takes precedence over any other climate change-related legislation. Arguably one of the most far-reaching prescriptions is that all organs of state affected by climate change must align and harmonise their policies, measures, laws, programmes and decisions with the objectives and principles of the Act.

**What are the key provisions of the Act and how will it impact companies?**

Firstly, the Act addresses adaptation and climate resilience. The minister responsible for the environment is to publish climate adaptation scenarios which anticipate expected climate change impacts according to the best available science. Then, a national adaptation strategy and plan is to be published after a public consultation process, followed by sector adaptation strategies and plans. Provinces and municipalities are also required to develop and implement climate change response implementation plans. Companies and the way they do business are highly likely to be impacted by the adaptation plans which will address infrastructure choices and management, disaster risk management and response, and many other facets of the economy. They are encouraged to engage in the public participation processes prescribed by the Act to help ensure that inappropriate or deficient adaptation plans are not adopted. On climate change mitigation, carbon budgets are to be assigned to entities and activities that emit

greenhouse gases (GHGs) beyond a certain threshold. Sectoral emissions targets will also be allocated to different sectors to limit emissions from those sectors.

**Will the Act bring South Africa in line with the Paris Agreement and, if so, how?**

To a significant degree, yes. The Act incorporates South Africa's nationally determined contributions – the GHG emissions reduction targets prescribed by the Paris Agreement – into domestic law.

**The Act is a welcome measure to help reduce GHG emissions and achieve net zero by 2050 – but strict penalties for emitters are lacking. How will this affect outcomes?**

The intention is that any exceedance of the budget is subject to a higher, or punitive, carbon tax rate. South Africa's carbon taxes are far below the actual cost of unchecked emissions and emitters may effectively choose to pay these taxes or pass them on to customers instead of actually curbing emissions. This unfortunate loophole results from the failure to make exceeding a carbon budget an offence.

**Without sectoral emission targets and carbon budgets, how should companies proceed and what should they do to decarbonise their businesses?**

Large emitters will have to take steps to remain economically viable and safeguard their reputations in an increasingly watchful market. This pressure will increase over time as carbon penalties are levied by export markets and litigation risk increases. All businesses, including those which are not themselves large emitters, need to gain a very solid understanding of their carbon footprint as well as that of their value chains, and then ensure they become familiar with and adopt best practices when it comes to reducing that footprint. There is a large and growing trend of

innovation in this regard and the potential to elect low-carbon choices around energy, facilities management, manufacturing and distribution practices is ever-increasing. It is also necessary to deeply understand climate risks such as water scarcity, severe weather, rising sea levels, climate migration and so on to adapt proactively.

**Who is expected to monitor targets and budgets, and what will happen if companies fall short of their legal obligations?**

Technically the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment is assigned to monitor targets and budgets, but this is relatively weakly formulated and leaves much in the hands of emitters to report on their progress with emissions reduction. It is hoped that the carbon budget regulations being formulated will strengthen the monitoring functions. Failure to submit a greenhouse mitigation plan is an offence, but failing to adhere to such a plan is not.

**Does the Act go far enough to address the climate crisis? How might existing gaps be filled?**

Because the Act rightly balances the needs of climate response with sustainable development and a just transition that does not penalise vulnerable workers, business ecosystems and communities, space is left open to justify high carbon development in the interests of the greater economic good. While this can be rational and sensible in certain instances – such as allowing the steelmaking sector additional time to develop low-carbon technologies – it is often abused to justify business as usual at the expense of the climate and at-risk communities and individuals. Strong regulations that deter excess emissions and compel adherence to the mandatory mitigation plan from emitters would help to ensure meaningful emissions reduction.

### BRANDON ABDINOR

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**1 Build and institutionalise trust**  
Trust forms the foundation of lasting partnerships. While collaborations often begin through personal relationships, embedding trust at an institutional level ensures sustainability through staff changes and challenges. Create an environment where feedback is welcomed and used constructively.

**2 Manage power dynamics thoughtfully**  
Actively recognise and manage power imbalances between funders, implementers and beneficiary communities. Consider using neutral intermediaries to facilitate collaboration and ensure all stakeholders have a voice in design and evaluation.

**3 Articulate clear shared vision and goals**  
Partners must articulate common objectives that align with broad social impact goals and secondary expectations. Set clear boundaries and be prepared to decline partnerships that do not align with core values.

**4 Create robust governance structures**  
Develop clear frameworks for decision-making, roles and responsibilities. These structures should be flexible enough to accommodate new partners joining and existing ones exiting. Regular reviews ensure they remain effective as the collaboration evolves.

**5 Secure dedicated resources**  
Successful collaboration requires investment beyond programme delivery. Allocate specific resources – funding and capacity – for project management, administrative capacity, M&E, and the collaborative process itself.

# TOP 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

**6 Embrace flexibility and risk**  
Be willing to adapt to changing circumstances and provide flexible funding that allows for pivoting as needed. Accept that innovation often comes with failure and maintain agility in approach.

**7 Maintain clear communications**  
Bridge cultural, linguistic and sectoral divides through regular, open dialogue. Create platforms for sharing information and reporting progress while adapting communication styles to different organisational cultures.

**8 Accept that collaboration takes time**  
Addressing systemic issues requires sustained investment beyond typical grant cycles. Short-term commitments rarely create lasting change. Think in terms of years rather than months.

**9 Engage government strategically**  
For systemic change, involve government stakeholders early. Understand their priorities, timelines and constraints from the outset rather than as an afterthought.

**10 Make learning and evaluation a priority**  
Focus on learning and improvement rather than just measuring and reporting. Establish mechanisms for regular monitoring and feedback that drive continuous enhancement of both programmes and partnerships.

Sources: Triologue research, interviews, and case studies; IPASA collaboration case studies and report; Bridgespan Group collaboration reports



# DEVELOPMENT SECTORS

## 3

An overview of CSI support in 12 development sectors, together with a collaboration case study in each sector.

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Photo credit: **Regeneration**, Issa Diabaté. 2020. Ivory Coast.  
A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.

# The role of companies in repairing the social fabric



The Covid-19 pandemic brought about a mindshift among business leaders in South Africa – one that puts people first, said **Dr Imtiaz Sooliman**, Founder of Gift of the Givers, in his closing keynote address at the Trialogue Business in Society Conference 2024.

Dr Sooliman lauded a change in attitude from business leaders and their organisations to social impact investing and philanthropic efforts. Delivering his closing keynote on the second day of the Trialogue Business in Society Conference, he highlighted the events that catalysed a change in how corporates approached social giving, including the devastating Knysna fires of 2016 and the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said many leaders were “selfless” in their response to the disaster in Knysna.

“There were further examples of selfless assistance when some of the wealthy businessmen in the area, some of whom had lost their homes, said: ‘Our houses have burnt, but we have other houses, it’s not a problem, just tell us what to do.’ These were managing directors, chief executives – but they didn’t say, ‘I’m so clever, I’ve got an MBA’; ‘I’m a chartered accountant’. All they said was, ‘Tell us what to do’. The people who directed them were two women who didn’t even have university degrees and yet those people followed instructions to show what South Africans can do together.”

Dr Sooliman said for a long time large South African companies were only interested in ticking CSI boxes, getting a tax certificate and having positive media coverage for their projects. “The projects weren’t very effective; there was no social impact. They were there to tick the register,” he noted. “But something changed in 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic broke out.”

The humanitarian said this mindshift has endured well beyond the pandemic.

“The chief executives and managing directors of companies started calling. They said, ‘Forget the media coverage, don’t worry about tax certificates; just tell us what you need and how much you need. We need to save our people and we need to save our country’. That sentiment has been running for four years now.”

Citing the work that Gift of the Givers rolled out during the pandemic – which included supporting 210 hospitals, installing around 5 000 oxygen machines and drilling boreholes – Dr Sooliman said the scale of their efforts would not have been possible without the support of local companies.

“When you have that kind of support, when you have that kind of humanity, we can’t fail as a country. We need that spirituality, we need that compassion and we need that care.”

He said companies can pursue profit but, “in making the money, understand that there are those who don’t have”. He reminded conference delegates of the teaching, “What you don’t spend isn’t yours.” He went on to cite new challenges that need to be addressed, including an excessively long list of pending surgeries, and a shortage of psychologists and registrars amid an increasing mental health crisis. To highlight the long wait patients face for relatively simple surgeries, Dr Sooliman told the touching story of a married couple who hadn’t seen each other for eight years as they had each developed cataracts. “For eight years, the husband and wife could not see each other – love, life, romance, happiness gone for eight years. And how long does

cataract surgery take? Eight minutes. They waited eight years for something that takes eight minutes.”

## There is hope for South Africa

Dr Sooliman remains upbeat about the country’s prospects despite the dire socioeconomic environment, saying there is “nothing to worry about”.

“People are very worried about the country – concerns about a failed state, where are we going? But I believe there’s absolutely nothing to worry about. What’s important is for us to remove the labels, to remove the branding and to look at each other as human beings – not to look at each other as government, political party, corporate, NGO sector, public sector, religious sector,” he said.

He ended his address with an impassioned plea for business leaders to join hands with the public sector to build South Africa.

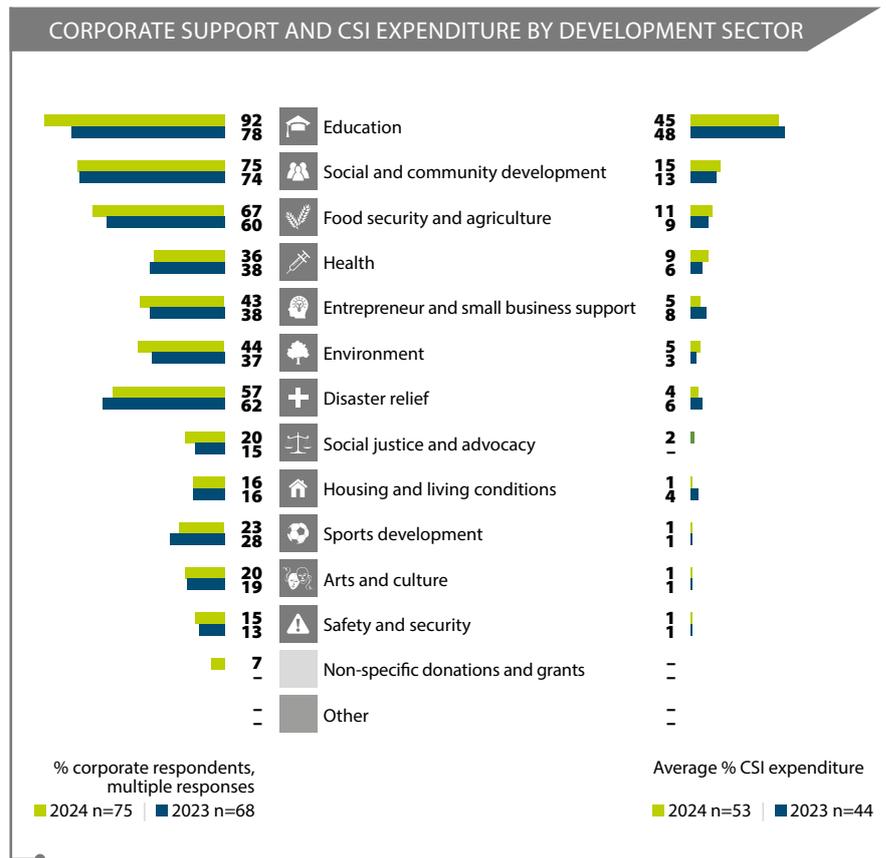
“I urge corporates to join us in building South Africa together. Government can’t do it alone,” he pointed out. “The taxes of 7.4 million people can’t look after 65 million people – it is impossible. We have to add the difference as corporates and individuals; let’s do it together because we could have been on the other side.”



# SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT SECTORS

This chapter provides an overview of the national context, as well as the fiscal and corporate social investment (CSI) spend on 12 development sectors. CSI spend is based on data from the 75 large companies that participated in Triologue's primary research survey. The sectors are reported in order of average CSI expenditure, from highest to lowest spend.

In keeping with the overall theme of the Handbook, this chapter profiles examples of **collaboration** in each sector.



- Similar to 2023, companies supported an average of five development focus areas in 2024, with 30 companies (40%) supporting more than five areas.
- **Education** remains the most popular development area for companies to support. While 92% of companies invested in education – a significant increase from 78% in 2023 – the average CSI spend in this area decreased to 45% in 2024 from 48% in 2023.
- **Social and community development** remains the second most popular cause, supported by three-quarters of companies (75%) in 2024. The average CSI spend on social and community development increased slightly by two percentage points to 15% in 2024.
- **Food security** is the third most popular development focus area, supported by 67% of companies with an average spend of 11%, up from 9% in 2023.
- The percentage of companies supporting the **health** sector decreased marginally from 38% in 2023 to 36% in 2024, continuing to decline from 43% in 2022. However, at 9% on average, CSI spend on health was higher in 2024 than in 2023 (6%).
- The proportion of companies supporting **disaster relief** declined from 62% in 2023 to 57% in 2024, with the average CSI spend on the sector also decreasing from 6% to 4%.
- Support for **environmental** causes increased from 37% in 2023 to 44% in 2024, with the sector receiving on average 5% of CSI spend.
- Although 16% of companies reported support for **housing and living conditions**, consistent with 2023 results, the average CSI spend fell to 1% in 2024 (from 4% in 2023).
- In line with results from 2022 and 2023, a fifth of companies (20%) supported **arts and culture**, but the sector still receives just 1% of CSI spend on average.
- More companies supported the **social justice and advocacy** and **safety and security** sectors in 2024 than in 2023. However, the average CSI spend in these sectors remains at 2% or less.



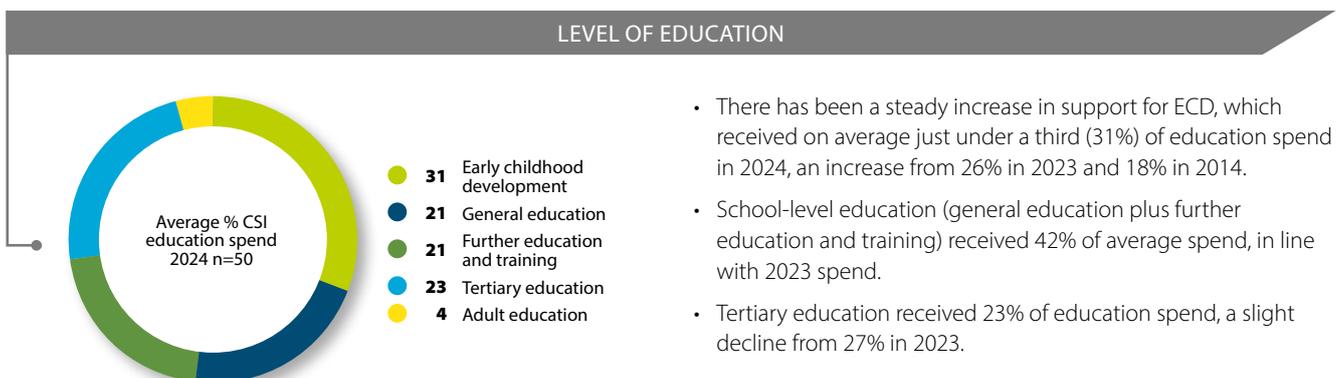
## EDUCATION

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

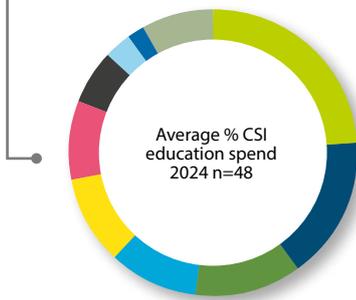
- Government's budget for education, learning and culture in 2024/25 is R480 billion, up from R457 billion in 2023/24, and constituting 20% of the consolidated national government expenditure bill of R2.37 trillion. Of this, R303 billion (63%) is allocated to basic education, R47 billion to higher education, R13 billion to technical vocational education and training (TVET), and R53 billion to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.
- According to 2023 data from the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the government's pro-poor education policies include free nutritious meals served every school day to about 9.6 million children (84% of all learners) and 75% of public school learners that do not pay school fees.
- The 2022 Census found that six out of 10 children aged 0 to 4 years had access to some form of early childhood development (ECD) programme. The DBE has developed 2030 Strategy for ECD and a new service delivery model for ECD – a mixed provisioning model – to achieve universal access to quality ECD, prioritising the most vulnerable children.
- The World Bank reports that South Africa's 2023 gross primary school enrolment rate was 98%, indicating that almost all children at primary school age are enrolled in school.
- According to the Minister of Basic Education, 740 566 out of 1.2 million learners who started grade 1 in 2012 reached matric in 2023 (approximately 61%), indicating a high dropout rate. Of these, 715 719 sat for the 2023 National Senior Certificate examination, achieving a pass rate of 82%, up from 80% in 2022.
- In June 2024, the DBE re-gazetted regulations to compel all schools in the country to meet minimum energy, sanitation and infrastructure standards – or put them in their active plans. In 2023, more than 3 300 of South Africa's 23 000 public schools still used pit latrines.
- In a 2023 report on skills gaps in South Africa, Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) identified soft skills such as reading with comprehension, writing, active listening and learning, and critical thinking to be the top skills gaps in South Africa.
- Phase 5 of the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI), part of the broader Presidential Youth Employment Initiative, was launched in 2024 with an aim of continuing to provide employment opportunities as education assistants and general school assistants to young people aged 18 to 35. By the end of phase 4, the BEEI had provided employment opportunities to over 850 000 young people.
- On 13 September 2024, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill into law, which aims to strengthen governance within South Africa's education sector. The Bill mandates that grade R becomes part of the compulsory education system, imposes penalties for parents who fail to ensure their children attend school, and reinforces the ban on corporal punishment and harsh initiation practices in schools. One of the most contentious aspects of the BELA Bill is the proposal to give provincial heads of departments more control over a school's language and admission policies.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Education** was supported by 92% of companies and received 45% of average CSI expenditure.

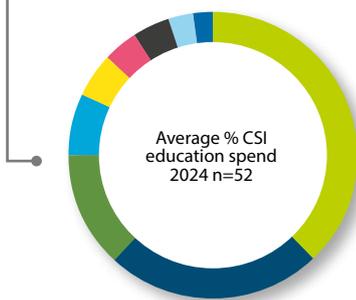


## TYPES OF INTERVENTION



- Bursaries, scholarships and university chairs received the most support, with an average 24% of education spend in 2024, in line with previous years.
- Infrastructure, facilities and equipment, and teacher development received the next highest spend at 16% and 12% of education spend respectively.

## SUBJECT AREA



- In line with 2023 findings, the largest portion of CSI spend in the education sector was not subject specific (38%).
- Maths and science, which for more than a decade to 2023 received the largest portion of CSI education spend, received the second highest portion (24%) in 2024, slightly lower than the 27% in 2023.
- Companies spent on average 13% of their CSI spend on language and literacy, the same as in 2023.
- Vocational and technical education (4% of CSI education spend), and life skills (3%) continue to receive the smallest share of CSI education spend.

## COLLABORATION TO REFORM SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION NATIONAL EDUCATION COLLABORATION TRUST

CASE STUDY

Thirty years of democracy have done little to improve the status of South Africa's education system, one of the lowest performing and most unequal in the world.

South Africa allocates 20% of its government expenditure to basic education. In its 2023 report, *South Africa's failing education system*, the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), likens this budget to that of high-performing Scandinavian countries but with alarmingly poor outcomes. South Africa is identified as the single biggest learning underperformer relative to gross domestic product per

capita among low- and middle-income countries. This stark inefficiency in translating spending into learning outcomes has led experts to describe the situation as equivalent to "a whole generation of schooling loss".

It was in the face of this crisis that the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) was established as a nonprofit organisation (NPO) in 2013. The collaboration was established to serve as an implementation instrument for the Education Collaboration Framework (ECF), also launched in 2013. The ECF's goal is to improve the coordination of civil

## COLLABORATION TO REFORM SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION NATIONAL EDUCATION COLLABORATION TRUST continued

CASE  
STUDY

society and business initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education. It aims to integrate these with the government's reform agenda and increase their effectiveness and value.

The primary goal of this collaborative effort is to implement recommendations from the National Development Plan's (NDP) education chapter and support national education priorities. The NDP aims to ensure that 90% of learners pass mathematics, science and languages with at least 50% by 2030.

The collaborative model underpinning NECT distinguishes it from previous education sector initiatives. Key elements of the collaboration include:

- 1 Building on past improvements driven by various sectors
- 2 Developing programmes directly aligned with the NDP goals
- 3 Integrating programmes into government planning
- 4 Combining government resources with private investments and social capital
- 5 Gaining endorsement from all teacher unions
- 6 Cultivating a culture of accountability.

NECT's board of trustees includes representatives from the government, labour, private sector and civil society. A secretariat, comprising between 100 and 150 staff members, fulfil the NECT's task of mobilising national capacity to support the government in achieving education improvements.

The diverse perspectives of the board and the consultative, strategic and deliberate thinking this enables inspired the introduction of NECT's dialogue programme, Education DialogueSA. This programme of national policy discussion centres around the advocacy dialogue group which meets three times a year.

District steering committees (DSCs) secure district-level representation of all the necessary stakeholders in the NECT process. A key component of NECT's District Improvement Programme (DIP), the DSCs operate across eight districts. Each is a multistakeholder body of about 20 members representing diverse community interests, including local businesses, teachers' unions, school governing bodies, local government, district education offices, religious organisations, youth groups and traditional leaders.

Aligned with the NDP's vision of active citizenship and local accountability, DSCs serve to monitor DIP implementation

and support district education offices in addressing community-based challenges.

By the end of its first year, NECT had brought together 143 organisations and 1 853 people, including labour unions, government departments, businesses, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and volunteers. It has grown in capacity and reach since then, expanding its original focus on five core programmes to a wider range of initiatives. These include the DIP, curriculum development support and crisis response initiatives. In its first decade, NECT's programmes reached over 25% of the country's teachers and principals, and over 91% of schools across all provinces.

The trust's mandate was extended beyond its initial 10-year lifespan in 2023. This was accompanied by a restructuring into three divisions: schools and district system, systems capacity support and advisory, and social compact building and partnerships.

Reflections on the first decade of NECT in *The NECT – A story of collaborations to improve education in South Africa* identified several organisational success factors, including:

- Leadership continuity in the form of long-term commitment of the founding trustees, consistent executive leadership and a strong relationship with government.
- Strategic partnerships, sustained support from key foundations and an effective match-fund model with the government enabling the collaborative to mobilise nearly R2 billion over 10 years.
- Risks were effectively managed through inclusive stakeholder engagement that built social legitimacy, strong governance and programme implementation, diversified funding sources and balanced project-based funding with capacity building investments.

The report suggested that, going forward, NECT will look to maintain its rapid response capabilities to deal with emerging developments, guard against the over-extension of resources and focus, improve stakeholder communication strategies, address gender imbalances at management level and balance crisis response projects with its core education improvement mission.

As NECT moves beyond its initial decade, it is transitioning to a more systemic approach, focusing on district-level interventions to drive broader educational improvements. This shift reflects the organisation's evolving understanding of how to effect sustainable change in South Africa's complex education landscape.

## WE FOCUS ON DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

The EduFeArn Foundation was formed to tackle South Africa's social problems. Our critical focus is to develop solutions to resolve the dire unemployment rate and an educational system in crisis. We have experience and expertise in creating and implementing educational and employment incubators for the development of world-class cutting edge educational content.

## CODING ACADEMY

### PASSION FOR GAMING & VIRTUAL REALITY?

EduFeArn has partnered with Unity (a silicon valley based company) to upskill and train high school and tertiary level learners with carefully guided and step-by-step C# coding curriculum. Unity developers are the #7 most emerging and in-demand jobs across the global market, according to LinkedIn.

## MATHEMATICS INTERVENTION

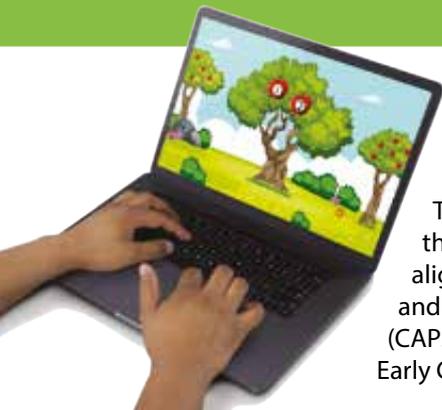
### MATHS MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Identify strengths and weaknesses in mathematics for targeted remediation. Real-time measurement using new technologies, comprehensive analysis of millions of skills, and CAPS/NCS alignment, enabling effective teaching and targeted remediation.

## EDUGAMES

### E-LESSONS ARE FUN

EduFeArn interactive Edugames are fun, engaging educational games for learners in Grade R to 3. The design and development of the interactive eLessons have been aligned to the National Curriculum and Assessments Policy Statements (CAPS) for the Foundation Phase and Early Childhood Development (ECD).



## OUR AFRICAN STORIES

### AUGMENTED REALITY BRINGS STORIES TO LIFE

EduFeArn aims to foster a love of reading. We enhance African traditional story time by bridging the gap between printed media and technology, with integrating augmented reality (AR).

## SUBJECT DICTIONARIES

### MATHS, SCIENCE AND ACCOUNTING DICTIONARIES

Authored subject and content specific dictionaries for Mathematics and Sciences to assist learners in the South African market to understand key concepts and terminology. All books are approved on the education departments catalogue.

**Invest in education  
& shape the future of  
South Africa's youth.  
Your CSI contribution  
can make the change.**



**Unlock your CSI  
potential with us.**



# ABC to CEO: Supporting the learning journey



Triologue and the Vodacom Foundation partnered to present the themed segment 'ABC to CEO: supporting the learning journey' on the first day of the Triologue Business in Society Conference 2024. The theme looked at how to transform the education ecosystem in South Africa and how best to support learners.

By embracing a collective vision for change South Africa's education system could be positioned for a digital leap forward, marked by collaboration between the private sector, government and NPOs.

There is little doubt that the future of the education system in South Africa is digital and Vodacom is one of the companies leading the way, leveraging its expertise and resources to realise a future of equitable learning. Delivering an executive overview at the Triologue Business in Society Conference 2024, **Sitho Mdlalose**, CEO of Vodacom South Africa, told delegates how Vodacom uses technology to shape education from early learning to secondary school and has provided 2 500 schools with access to the internet to date. "We have also rolled out a Schools of Excellence programme to 25 schools so far in which learners are equipped with a computer centre and two information communications technology (ICT) coordinators so they can build their digital skills, learning more about coding, robotics and other future-focused subjects," Mdlalose explained.

Beyond this, the company has eradicated pit latrines and provided on-site psychological counselling to learners at these Schools of Excellence, achieving one of the foundational principles of our Constitution: "to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person".

### Transforming the education system

**Mary Metcalfe**, Professor of Practice at the University of Johannesburg, delivering the themed keynote address for the Vodacom-sponsored session, pointed out that many young people are still not able to achieve their potential. To remedy this, anyone investing in the education ecosystem must "make every cent count" in a resource-constrained environment in which the triple ills of poverty, inequality

and unemployment are proving difficult to eradicate.

Metcalfe said companies tend to shy away from working in provinces where the majority of our learners are found and where poverty is rife. She urged companies to address inequality, rather than focus on "vanity projects" that have a superficial approach. She recommended that companies commit to a rigorous, evidence-based approach to learn what really works and share learnings by collaborating with other stakeholders. This will make it easier to scale for greater impact.

Metcalfe called for better coordination in the sector and greater support of "collaborative learning initiatives, so we do not duplicate our efforts".

### Lessons in collaboration

In the session's panel discussion the importance of collaboration was again reiterated. **Takalani Netshitenzhe**, Director of External Affairs at Vodacom South Africa and Chair of the Vodacom Foundation, said companies need to partner with the government if they want to make a meaningful contribution. "We have 'adopted' schools, but they belong to the government. In partnership with the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Social Development, we use our expertise in ICT to help deliver quality education."

The impact has been notable, said panellist **Khazamula Chauke**, Principal of Dr WF Nkomo Secondary School in Atteridgeville – one of Vodacom's Schools of Excellence. Chauke said two major improvements include the fact that educators are no longer playing the role of social worker and children can explore careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) they may not have considered previously. "Virtual classrooms were a

game-changer for us," he explained. "If an educator is off due to illness, a virtual teacher in an ICT centre can step in and teach more than one class."

### Solving 'wicked problems' in education

Vodacom partners with NPOs to achieve certain outcomes – for example, The Learning Trust delivers quality after-school services, which feeds into the broader aim of improving the education ecosystem. "Such partnerships help to solve some of the 'wicked problems' in education, which are not easily solved and require sustained collaboration," said **Sibongile Khumalo**, Executive Director of The Learning Trust.

**Kanyisa Diamond**, Head of Systems Capacity Support and Advisory at the National Education Collaboration Trust, said capacitating stakeholders can ensure continuity of impact if a funder steps aside from a programme for whatever reason. "We must locate responsibility where it must be maintained in order to sustain," she pointed out.

The panellists agreed that long-term support for schools and learners ensures a 'slow bake' rather than 'microwaving' – the effect of coming into a school and focusing on one area for improvement rather than looking at the entire learning ecosystem. Education requires systemic change and this requires sustained collaboration by a multitude of partners, they noted.





Breadline Africa is committed to equalising opportunities for vulnerable children by co-creating comprehensive programmes in partnership with stakeholders.

We strive to create environments where every child thrives and can contribute to a prosperous future for South Africa.

## WE FOCUS ON PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS THE NURTURING CARE FRAMEWORK



## WHY SUPPORT US?

We implement CSI initiatives that support strong educational impact



HELP A NEW GENERATION TO LEARN



30 YEARS OF SERVICE IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES



THOROUGH MONITORING AND EVALUATION



SECTION 18A TAX RECEIPT FOR QUALIFYING DONATIONS



LEVEL 1 BBBEE: 100% BLACK BENEFICIARIES



MARKETING AND SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



## Using the power of connectivity to drive access to education

While there are thousands of educators in South Africa, and an almost insatiable desire to learn, the main challenge is access. The TelkomLearn & Lightbulb platform address this imbalance – using Telkom’s expertise in digital connectivity to provide those who hunger for knowledge with the resources they need.

Quality educational resources are at a premium. They can be expensive and impractical to access – at every stage of the educational journey. A new Telkom education platform works to address this – through Telkom’s extensive knowledge of the challenges, and of how technology can help to overcome them.

As South Africa’s leading technology and information services provider, Telkom also has a long history supporting the educational aspirations South African students – through the education-focused Telkom Foundation CSI programme, the Telkom Centres of Excellence at almost every South African tertiary institution, and the annual SATNAC technology conference.

Telkom’s latest initiative to help students access the education they need through the democratising impact of digital technology is TelkomLearn. This innovative digital learning platform offers quality courses through accredited partners, bringing educational excellence within reach for all.

TelkomLearn empowers learners and parents with a comprehensive suite of digital learning resources. Whether navigating basic education at school level or exploring higher education opportunities, the platform aggregates the offerings of multiple world-class digital education providers to offer unparalleled solutions for education and training.

Telkom has partnered with leading institutions and credible experts on the TelkomLearn project, giving South Africans access to a wide range of quality courses in high-demand fields such as artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, coding, data science, cloud computing, and dozens more.

The idea is to help South Africans future-proof their skill sets for the modern career journey.

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*“Educational excellence should be accessible to all, and TelkomLearn is our commitment to making this vision a reality,”* says Judy Vilakazi, Head of Telkom Foundation at Telkom. *“Empowering every parent and learner is the cornerstone of TelkomLearn.”*

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For school learners, TelkomLearn offers daily interactive live classes with dedicated tutors who are ready to assist with any subject queries, as well as gamified courses designed to support understanding and exam revision in a way that is relevant to student tastes and lifestyles.

The TelkomLearn basic education offering is offered in partnership with Lightbulb Edtech, which has created an advanced online learning portal, tailored specifically for high school learners.

The portal is a cutting-edge mobile learning management system and service, designed to empower educational institutions to provide customised online support services to their students. Lightbulb facilitates access to subject matter experts and digital resources, augmenting the learning experience and fostering academic excellence.

Lightbulb covers a wide array of subjects, including English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Natural Science, Physical Science, Geography, History, and Accounting, ensuring comprehensive support for high-school students.

Once learners leave school and transition to the higher-education space, TelkomLearn is able to offer a range of online courses and qualifications – in areas that are in high demand in the modern work environment.

TelkomLearn partners with industry leaders such as Google, IBM, HP, Duke University, Alibaba and Microsoft, ensuring that the skills and online qualifications offered on the platform are relevant and directly meet the needs of modern employers and leading businesses.

Courses cover several new-generation fields and offer valuable skills for the modern workplace, including project management, cybersecurity, network engineering, data analytics, enterprise architecture, cloud integration and automation.

Many of the courses are highly interactive, and include built-in user evaluation. Some courses, such as the Alibaba Cloud ACA Business User Certification Exam Preparation Course, are geared specifically to helping users prepare for industry certification exams.

TelkomLearn offers a digital gateway to superior education, a direct expression of Telkom’s core mission of seamlessly connecting South Africa’s people to a better life.

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*“We’re proud to be able to offer a platform that allows South Africa’s students the chance to improve their school performance, enhance their employability, and positively impact the world around them,”* says Vilakazi.

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Explore the future of education by visiting [www.telkomlearn.co.za](http://www.telkomlearn.co.za).



## TelkomLearn: Connecting learners to better education

Digital platform's virtual classrooms and subject experts allow students to access educational support, experienced tutors and better opportunities.

South Africa's school learners face challenges accessing the high-quality education they deserve. Schools often lack resources; teachers are overworked and subject-matter experts are based in major centres far from students' homes.

TelkomLearn, an initiative by Telkom is aimed at addressing this unjust gap between the supply of world-class education and the enormous demand.

The TelkomLearn platform is aimed at redefining education, by providing better access to online learning and skills development. It consists of a higher education and a basic education offering.

The basic education programme is produced in partnership with Lightbulb EdTech, and features daily interactive live classes in a virtual learning environment (VLE) led by dedicated tutors, as well as gamified courses for engaging revision.

The portal is a cutting-edge mobile learning management system and service, designed to empower educational institutions to provide customised online support services to their students.

Lightbulb facilitates access to subject-matter experts and digital resources, augmenting the learning experience and fostering academic excellence. Already, innovative partnerships have been forged with schools in underserved communities, to help support learners on their academic journey.

The nationwide educational initiative has made significant strides in provinces such as Limpopo, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape.

In Ga-Maake village, Limpopo, for instance TelkomLearn, Telkom Foundation and Lightbulb are already helping to fast-track students' mathematics education.

This initiative involved Telkom Foundation donating 100 smartphones to enable learners to access the Lightbulb platform. The launch event included a taste of the expert tutor services available on the platform – special lecture to emphasise a geometric interpretation approach to mathematical concepts.

Learners right across the country have access to Lightbulb's online virtual learning environment, thanks to the partnership with TelkomLearn.

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*"TelkomLearn is dedicated to providing a comprehensive online learning solution and filling a gap in online education by offering learners a robust platform for supplementary support," says Dr Mmaki Jantjies, Group Executive for Innovation and Transformation at Telkom "It's user friendly, customisable and interactive, and offers a three-tier support system. The primary focus is to simplify the learning experience and eliminate any potential obstacles that our customers may encounter."*

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Lightbulb offers comprehensive support for high-school students studying English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, Natural Science, Physical Science, Geography, History, and Accounting, among other subjects.

As an online platform, TelkomLearn transcends the limitations of location, bridges geographical divides, and offers a kind of educational liberation for students, parents and teachers alike. Irrespective of location they can leverage TelkomLearn to access the tools needed to succeed in today's digital world.

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*"Our goal is to facilitate transformative change through online education and training," says Allan Mushabe, CEO of Lightbulb EdTech. "We firmly believe in the power of education to change the world, and we see technology as the key to providing equitable access."*

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Digital learning has brought hope to young people across the planet, offering an opportunity to grow their skill set, expand their horizons, and gain qualifications in a practical, efficient way.

TelkomLearn and Lightbulb are at the forefront of this movement, forging strategic partnerships to deliver rich and diverse learning experiences. Their platform offers a range of subjects, and a virtual classroom feature that facilitates real-time interaction between students and teachers.

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*"We invite parents and learners across South Africa to join us in empowering themselves – and connecting seamlessly to a better future through Telkom Learn," says Dr Jantjies. "It's a digital gateway to superior digital education."*

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Explore the future of education by visiting [www.telkomlearn.co.za](http://www.telkomlearn.co.za).

Telkom



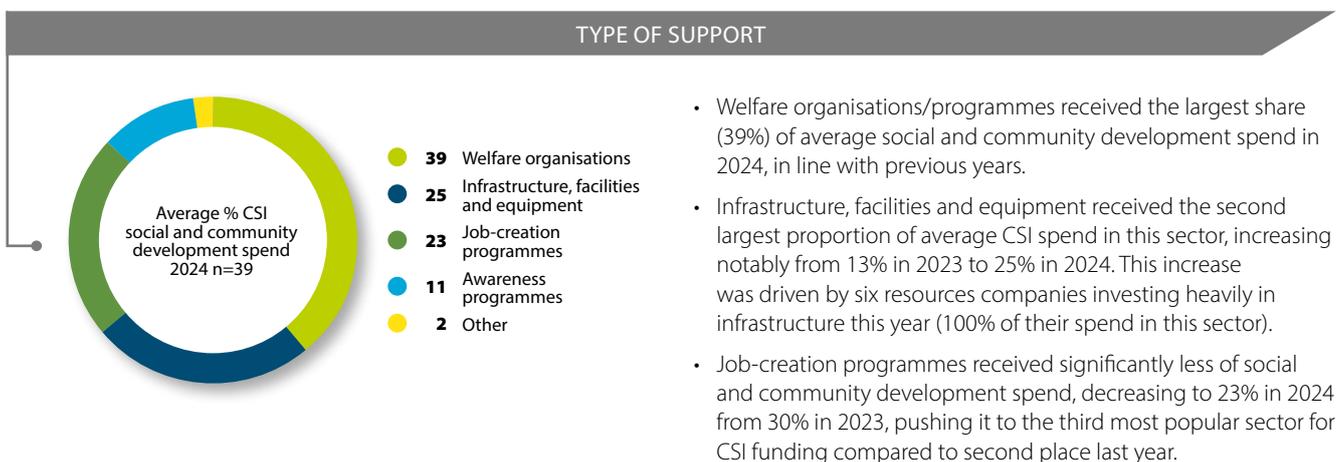
## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

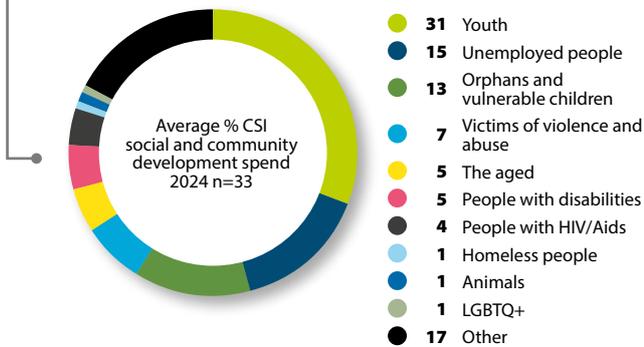
- Government's budget for social development increased from R378 billion in 2023/24 to R387 billion in 2024/25, constituting 16% of consolidated government expenditure of R2.37 trillion. Of this, R107 billion was allocated to the old age grant, R89 billion to social security funds, R85 billion to the child support grant, and R105 billion to other grants, provincial social development and policy oversight and grant administration. The budget for community development is R265 billion for 2024/25, constituting 11% of the consolidated government expenditure bill. The majority of this is earmarked for local municipalities, public transport and human settlements.
- According to the South African Social Security Agency, the total number of grant recipients as at 31 March 2024 was 19.1 million, an increase from 18.8 million in March 2023, of which around 13 million received the child support grant (R530 per child per month), 3.8 million the old age grant (R2 185 per recipient per month), and 1 million the disability grant (R2 185 per recipient per month). Additionally, more than 17 million people received the Social Relief of Distress grant which was introduced during Covid-19 in 2020 and extended to 31 March 2025. The grant was increased in April 2024 from R350 to R370 a month.
- According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), the national poverty lines for 2024 are R796 per person per month for the food poverty line, R1 109 for the lower-bound poverty line, and R1 634 for the upper-bound poverty line. World Bank data showed that in 2023, over 37 million people in South Africa (62% of the population) lived below the international upper middle-income poverty line (US\$6.85 per day).
- Stats SA's *Quarterly Labour Force Survey* for the second quarter of 2024 indicated that the total number of unemployed people increased to 8.4 million during the second quarter of 2024, equating to a national unemployment rate of 33.5%, with a youth unemployment rate of 45.5% (individuals aged 15–34 years). The expanded unemployment rate, which includes those who are not looking for work, increased to 42.6% overall and 60.8% for youth.
- The Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES), launched in October 2020, was allocated R7.4 billion in 2024/25. Of this, R4 billion is earmarked for hiring teacher assistants, R1.1 billion for the Social Employment Fund, R750 million for the Food Security and Livelihoods Programme, R650 million for the cities' public employment programmes, R250 million for the National Youth Service, and R250 million for the National Pathway Management Network. The PES has created 1.5 million work and livelihood support opportunities since inception.
- In 2024, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) marked its 20th anniversary, having created more than 14 million work opportunities across the four EPWP sectors – infrastructure, social, environment and culture, and non-state. The programme is currently in its fifth phase (2024–2029), which aims to create another five million work opportunities.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Social and community development** was supported by 75% of companies and received 15% of average CSI expenditure.



## TARGET BENEFICIARIES



- Youth (people aged between 15 and 29) continue to be the main beneficiaries of CSI spend on community and social development, receiving an average of 31% of spend in 2024 – although this represented a notable decrease from 40% in 2023.
- Average CSI spend on unemployed people decreased to 15% in 2024 from 19% in 2023, in line with the decline in support of job-creation programmes, although this still remains the second most supported group of beneficiaries.
- Support for orphans and vulnerable children, which in 2014 was the largest category in this sector receiving an average of 33% spend, has fallen to an average of 13% in 2024.
- Support for victims of violence and abuse constituted an average of 7% of social and community development spend in 2024, similar to 2023.
- All other groups of target beneficiaries continued to receive 5% or less of average CSI sector spend in 2024: the aged, prisoners/former prisoners, people with the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/Aids), homeless people and the LGBTQ+ community. The same was true of animal welfare organisations.

## LEVERAGING COLLABORATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT DO MORE FOUNDATION

CASE STUDY

Given that early childhood forms the foundation for an individual's entire life and that early deprivation has an irrevocable impact on a child's brain and body, improving the circumstances of the 11.1 million South African children living below the poverty line is key to building a thriving future generation. It is for this reason that the Do More Foundation (DMF) positions young children and their caregivers at the heart of its social and community development.

Established as an independent NPO in 2017 by South African food manufacturer RCL Foods, the DMF aims to improve the lives of young children across South Africa, with the understanding that improving the life of a young child has a positive knock-on impact for the household and, in turn, the wider community.

"The foundation takes the view that addressing the complex systemic problems with which South African young children – from conception to five years old – are faced, demands integrated and collaborative solutions because no one organisation can solve these complex

issues. Collaborative partnerships are not only at the core of our organisation's theory of change, but collaboration is also a principle and value baked into the fabric of our organisation," notes Warren Farrer, CEO of DMF.

To this end, DMF works with like-minded partners across the public, private and nonprofit sectors to pool resources, ideas and capabilities to address the many challenges young children in targeted communities are facing.

### The value of backbone support organisations

The DMF has positioned itself as a 'backbone support organisation' within a collective impact framework since 2019, employing staff with the specific skills to create and manage collective impact. It facilitates stakeholder partnerships and coordinates efforts towards a common agenda. This collective impact model, which it has called the 'Everyone Gets to PLAY' (EGTP) model, allows the foundation to leverage the respective strengths and resources of its partners in the interest of sustainable, large-scale systemic change.

## LEVERAGING COLLABORATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT DO MORE FOUNDATION continued

CASE  
STUDY

There is often little appreciation for the time required to coordinate collaborative efforts and this can become the reason collaborative efforts fail. While the DMF was not initially established for this purpose, the necessity of an organisation to take on this role became evident and inspired its positioning as a backbone support organisation.

### DMF as a collaborative coordinator

The organisation's network comprises more than 260 private, public and nonprofit sector partners. DMF's long-term, systems-level EGTP model has allowed the foundation to guide its partners towards sustainable, community-owned solutions. Within this model, households and communities are included as key developmental partners.

The foundation supports its partners to better meet the needs of young children by bringing the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2015) to life for real children in real communities. This helps meet the holistic needs of young children reflected in the 'basket of services' including child and maternal health, nutrition and food security, early learning and stimulation, child safety and protection, infrastructure services, caregiver support and the first 1 000 days, among other needs.

DMF seeks to fill the critical coordination gap, linking policies with grassroots action and mobilising resources to support its vision of creating better tomorrows for young children and their families. By leveraging its unique position, DMF ensures that efforts are not duplicated, resources are used efficiently and the collective impact is greater than the sum of individual efforts for young children in South Africa.

### Partnerships for learning

Collaboration is the heartbeat of the collective impact EGTP model, and it is sustained through trust and mutual respect. DMF invests in relationship-building, understanding that connections are what holds the network together. By fostering strong partnerships at all levels and using platforms such as Young Child Forums, deep-dive sessions and technical committees, DMF brings government departments, caregivers and practitioners to the same table with a unified agenda for young children.

DMF also deepens its relationships with implementation partners through its Synergy Summit, which provides an opportunity for more in-depth engagement and strategic alignment. This inclusive approach ensures that everyone involved remains committed to the shared vision, even as challenges arise, and that diverse perspectives contribute to their collective efforts.

"We have implemented the EGTP model in eight South African communities and witnessed how communities mobilised to identify early childhood development needs. We have then linked them with partners to activate a basket of services so that the basic needs of young children and their

caregivers can be met. Engaging in continuous learning and reflection allows us to adapt and improve our practices, ensuring that we are always moving towards greater impact. Whether through formal evaluations or informal feedback, we are committed to learning from our experiences and those of our partners," says Farrer.

*"DMF works with like-minded partners across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to pool resources, ideas and capabilities to address the many challenges facing young children in targeted communities."*



## Older Persons Amendment Bill: Will it expand protections?



The Older Persons Amendment Bill, currently in the draft phase, is expected to strengthen the protection and prevention of abuse of older persons. However, the Amendment Bill is controversial and a lack of implementation mechanisms could mean its good intentions are not realised. **Femada Shamam**, Chief Executive Officer of The Association for the Aged (Tafta), explains.

**Older people attract exploitation and abuse due to their physical and financial vulnerability. How widespread is this abuse and how is it typically dealt with?**

Older people are society's most vulnerable members, which make them easy targets for all kinds of abuse, including financial, sexual, emotional and physical abuse. Since the launch of our national toll-free elder abuse helpline in November 2022, Tafta has received a total of more than 2 000 calls from all nine provinces. This issue demands not only greater awareness but also more comprehensive support systems, stronger protective legislation and a societal shift in how we perceive and value our elders. The fight against elder abuse is not just a battle for justice – it is a fight for dignity, respect and the right to age safely in a society that cares.

**What were the initial aims of the Older Persons Act 13 of 2006 and to what extent has it achieved them?**

The Older Persons Act was introduced to empower and protect older persons, providing a legal framework to uphold their status, rights, wellbeing and security. Though the Act aligns with key international guidelines such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing of 2002 and the African Union's 2002 Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing, its implementation has fallen short. Challenges such as inadequate resource allocation, poor interdepartmental coordination, and a lack of knowledge and human capacity have hindered its full potential.

**What are the key provisions of the Amendment Bill?**

The Amendment Bill has made significant strides, incorporating crucial changes to enhance the protection and wellbeing of older persons. The National Council of Provinces reviewed the Bill before the conclusion of the sixth administration's

term. It now awaits final ratification by the seventh administration. Key changes include:

- **Redefinitions and new definitions:** Updated terminology to ensure clarity and precision in the law's application
- **Strengthening intersectoral collaboration:** Improved coordination across sectors to provide comprehensive services
- **Rights and responsibilities:** Strengthened alignment of older persons' rights with their responsibilities, incorporating the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Older Persons in Africa
- **Registration provisions:** Enhanced registration requirements for community-based care and support services, and residential facilities
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Improved processes for assessing services provided to older persons
- **Protection provisions:** Strengthened protections, including during court proceedings, emergency removal to safe locations without a court order, protections for older persons with disabilities, and better reporting and investigation of elder abuse cases.

**How do NPOs currently help to ensure the protection of older people and what are the greatest challenges they face?**

NPOs play a crucial role in ensuring the protection and wellbeing of older people through a comprehensive range of services across the care continuum. NPOs are deeply involved in advocacy and lobbying efforts to safeguard the rights of older individuals, ensuring that their dignity and respect are upheld. Practically, these organisations provide essential support through accommodation, home-based care, community outreach, counselling,

meal provision and programme service points. There is now a strong focus on actively engaging older adults in designing and implementing programmes that are both relevant and impactful. Despite these efforts, NPOs face significant challenges: financial resources can be limited and NPOs often lack access to affordable municipal services and infrastructure maintenance.

**How can business help support our senior citizens?**

It makes sound business sense to consider the dynamics of ageing and how they impact your operations and long-term sustainability. Tackling ageism within the workplace is the starting point. The way we think, feel and act towards ageing can either enable or hinder our ability to offer meaningful support. Businesses can allocate resources to supporting older people in their communities. This can be done by engaging with NPOs or service providers, or by integrating programmes for older people within business models. Initiatives such as mentorship and lifelong learning programmes can have a lasting impact. Traditionally, NPOs have shouldered the responsibility of supporting older persons in the community, but businesses can step in by supporting the caregivers who look after older persons. Simple acts, such as sponsoring a line item for a year, involving staff in a corporate social responsibility project, painting a home, or covering the cost of water or electricity, can have a profound effect. Investing in research and innovation within this sector is another pathway for meaningful engagement. On a practical level, Tafta supports over 5 500 people, with the cost of care amounting to R15.21 per day, R106.60 per week, or R456.43 per month. Business can adopt an older person or two, contributing to their care costs.

### FEMADA SHAMAM

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# we are one Sibanye Stillwater



## THE POWER OF SHARED VALUE

Sibanye-Stillwater's growth and diversification has been associated with superior value creation for all stakeholders. Our approach is to deliver long-term benefits for the ecosystems in which we operate.

### Contributing to economic growth

Our local procurement has a significant multiplier effect in the communities where we operate, enabling small businesses to grow and create jobs. The support for local suppliers includes business skills development and mentorship.

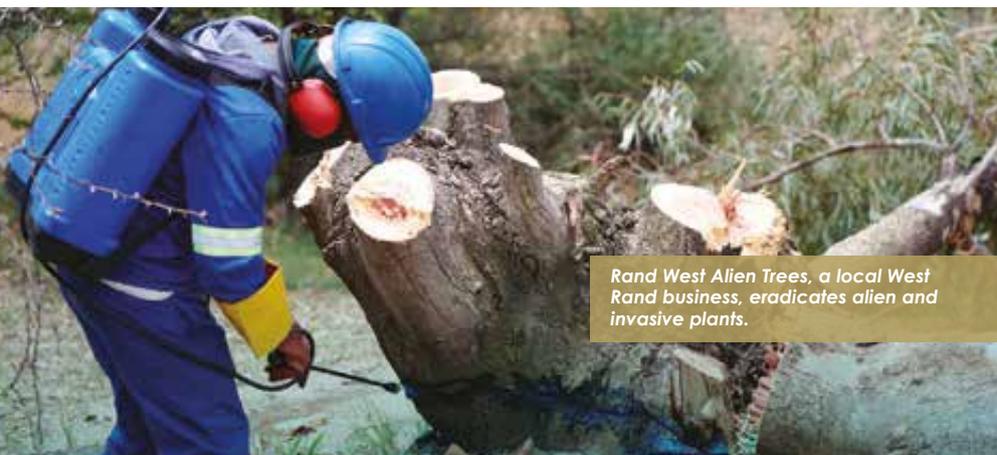
**Rand West Alien Trees (RWAT)**, which eradicates alien and invasive plants, is a local company owned by four directors who are part of the West Rand community. The company started as a beneficiary of the Kloof operation's

Social and Labour Plan (SLP) and, with help from the Group, grew to be a fully-fledged service provider. RWAT employs local people, in line with Sibanye-Stillwater's goal of developing skills and creating jobs within our host communities. The work RWAT undertakes aligns with the group's goal of nurturing the environment and re-introducing indigenous vegetation and trees. In a partnership between RWAT, Sibanye-Stillwater, and industry specialists Agreenco Projects and Badiri and Associates 2,397ha of alien vegetation has been eradicated and controlled since the start of the project, saving an estimated 1 904ML of water.

**Marikana Agri-hub** is a key outcome of the Marikana Renewal Programme and is managed by the Mineworkers Development Agency. The programme aims to advance socioeconomic development in the Marikana community by implementing agricultural activities such as hydroponics, egg production and crop farming using sustainable farming practices.

Our partners also include Rand Mutual Assurance, Epiroc, SafeHub, EC Blaauw, AECI, Afrika Tikkun, Marikana Youth Development Agency, Development Bank of South Africa, Unilever, Alexander Fraser, Petco, Indalo Inclusive, The African Climate Foundation, The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Sam Motsuenyane Foundation, UCanGrow and Garden for Life.

Already the Agri-hub has made great strides with the egg-laying facility currently delivering 2,000 eggs a day. There are plans to expand to 7,000 eggs a day, which will be sufficient to pursue a commercial offtake agreement. A packing shed is soon to be



Rand West Alien Trees, a local West Rand business, eradicates alien and invasive plants.

constructed to enable producers to pack their products for sale to consumers. The partners have also worked with community members to develop backyard vegetable gardens, of which there are currently over 1,000. This programme has promoted food security and will enable many participants through business acumen training to trade commercially at a fresh produce market at the Agri-hub.



## Investing in education

Education is a crucial stepping stone to a more promising and stable future. Over the past decade, Sibanye-Stillwater has invested more than R2 billion into quality education, including bursaries for tertiary studies, learnerships within our operations, graduate internship programmes, portable skills and "cadetships" aimed at enhancing skills in surrounding communities.

### Women in mining

As part of our commitment to advancing Women in Mining and helping young people develop skills and gain employment we offer bursaries to any person who is not an employee of Sibanye-Stillwater to attend higher education studies. We also have a special bursary for top grade 12 performers from disadvantaged schools in areas around our operations. Successful bursary applicants access Sibanye-Stillwaters' internship programmes once they have completed their studies. Currently, of the students who have received bursaries, 32% are women.

In Early Childhood Development (ECD), we trained 72 practitioners and distributed toys and educational materials to 76 ECD centres. We also provided 144 tablets to promote digital learning and skills development in 4IR tools.

Since 2013, Sibanye-Stillwater has invested R32.4 million in educational support at the University of the Witwatersrand. Through Digimine, we have accomplished 42 research projects, installed 34 systems, and produced ten PHD graduates.

### Impact in education - 2023



391

community learners received portable skills



257

community members received Adult Education Training



458

mining cadets are from the local community hosting SA gold

## Prioritising quality health care

We are focused on the health and wellbeing of our employees and their families and have implemented impactful health initiatives in the communities in which we operate. We contribute to infrastructure and resources supporting the Department of Health to provide quality services. We have constructed and upgraded clinics and donated emergency vehicles.

Sibanye-Stillwater has also initiated programmes on gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) and on community health, with projects at Marikana and Rustenburg. Through the GBVF programme 86 faith-based leaders received training and are now implementing GBVF programmes to

bring positive social changes within their local churches, communities, clinics, schools, and other institutions. Out of these, 71 churches have been designated as GBV support centres.

### Sanitation

Sibanye-Stillwater participated in the President's SAFE (Sanitation Appropriate for Education) initiative by building ablution facilities for Eastern Cape schools. In August 2023, new ablution facilities were handed over to seven schools in the Eastern Cape. The R16 million we contributed to SAFE will bring dignity and ensure safety at schools. The Eastern Cape is an important area for many of our employees, who have families there, and as such we support projects in this province. In addition, the Sibanye-Stillwater Foundation has invested R3.9 million in

partnership with Breadline Foundation and Thabo Makgoba Foundation towards the construction of ablution facilities in schools in Limpopo and Eastern Cape as part of its commitment to eradicating unsafe facilities.





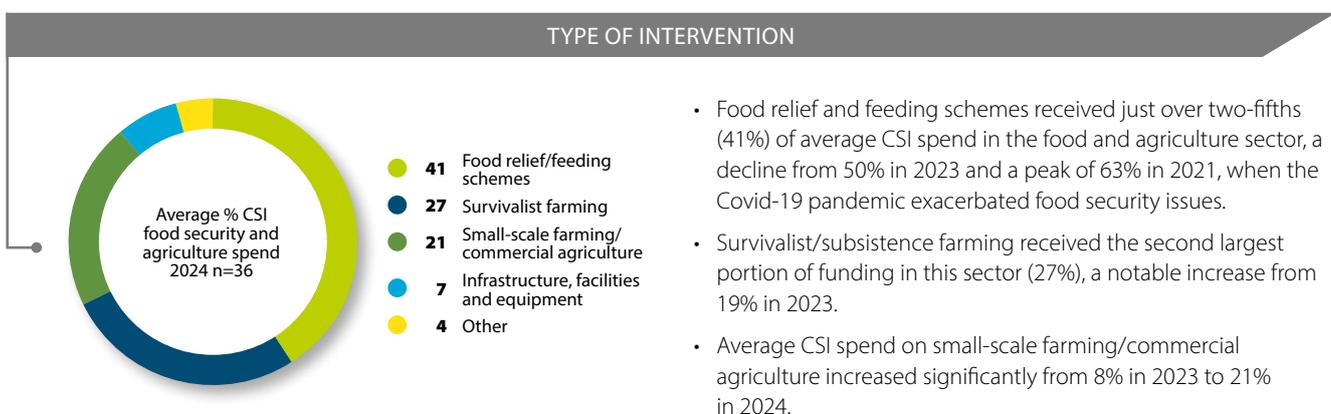
## FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) was allocated R16.7 billion in 2024/25, a decrease of R546 million from R17.2 billion in 2023/24 and constituting 0.7% of the consolidated expenditure bill of R2.37 trillion.
- According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), despite Africa's agricultural potential, 282 million people remain under-nourished and over a billion lack access to healthy diets. The crisis has escalated since the Covid-19 pandemic, with the number of hungry people rising by 57 million.
- The Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) 2023 *National Food and Nutrition Security Survey* revealed that only 36% of South African households were food secure, with the remaining 64% being food insecure. Further, the national prevalence of overall stunting, wasting and underweight in children aged 0 to 5 years were 29%, 5% and 8% respectively.
- UNICEF's 2024 *Child Nutrition Report* called *Child Food Poverty: Nutrition deprivation in early childhood* reveals that South Africa is one of 20 countries that account for 65% of all children living in severe child food poverty globally, with 23% of children in South Africa at risk of life-threatening malnutrition and related health complications.
- The Shoprite South African Food Security Index 2024, which measures four dimensions of food security – availability, access, utilisation and stability – found that food insecurity in South Africa is at its highest levels in over a decade. While South Africa scored 64.9 on the index in 2019, this number dropped to 45.3 in 2023 (zero indicates severe food insecurity).
- The Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP), launched in May 2022, aims to foster agricultural development and transformation and increase food security in South Africa. In 2024, the AAMP entered its implementation phase with various projects initiated, focusing on infrastructure development, farmer support and agro-processing.
- The DALRRD has invested almost R58 billion in settled land claims, grants and financial compensation between 1998 and March 2024. Through this restitution process, a total of 376 976 individuals and communities have benefited, with 3.8 million hectares of land returned to beneficiaries.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Food security and agriculture** were supported by 67% of companies and received 11% of average CSI expenditure.



## COLLABORATING TO FEED SOUTH AFRICA SOUTHERN AFRICA FOOD LAB

CASE  
STUDY

Southern Africa Food Lab (SAFL) was established in 2009. Its aims to promote creative responses to the problem of hunger through multistakeholder dialogue and action. It is a collaborative effort between Stellenbosch University's Food Security Initiative and the Seriti Institute, a registered NPO and public benefit entity.

The SAFL is sponsored by several large corporates, foundations, public entities and international development agencies, including Woolworths, Spar, DG Murray Trust, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Oxfam and Wesbank, among other entities.

Collaboration is fundamental to the SAFL's mission. It brings together local communities, civil society, business leaders and government officials to foster a food system that is equitable and nutritious for all. Over the past decade, the SAFL has positioned its website as a vital repository for current news and research related to the South African food system. According to SAFL director Prof Scott Drimie, "the SAFL provides a platform for social dialogue that brings together different actors in the food security space".

### Effective communication facilitates greater impact

At the heart of the SAFL's work is effective communication and dialogue. It facilitates discussions through learning journeys, workshops and dialogues. These spaces are designed to bridge social divides, bringing together

scientific experts, laypeople, policymakers and social practitioners. By fostering open conversations, the SAFL aims to translate dialogue into tangible actions that promote just and sustainable food systems.

*"Collaboration is fundamental to the SAFL's mission. It brings together local communities, civil society, business leaders and government officials to foster a food system that is equitable and nutritious for all."*

One of the key strategies employed by the laboratory is the development of local demonstration projects. These initiatives empower communities to create and maintain their food systems, showcasing innovative practices that can be scaled and replicated in other areas.

### Collaborating for impact at scale

One example of how the SAFL is collaborating for impact is its partnership with the eThekweni Metro. Since 2019, the organisation has been working with the municipality to develop an agro-ecology hub as a proof of concept that can be replicated. The SAFL works with farmers, health officials

and nutritionists to set up practical agricultural and nutritional linkages that aim to improve the diversity and quality of people's diets.

Another example is the SAFL's ongoing engagement in the Breede Valley in the Western Cape. It coordinates learning journeys for local government to actively engage the food system by providing support for local ECD centres. Beyond providing support regarding food gardens, the SAFL also helps them register as ECD centres and gain access to subsidies.



# Driving transformation in agri-ecosystems



Triologue and FirstRand partnered to present the themed segment 'Driving transformation in agri-ecosystems' on the second day of the Triologue Business in Society Conference 2024. The theme explored how to achieve sustainable farming in Africa and how to secure a better future through agri-initiatives.

"At FirstRand we believe that large systemic financial institutions like ourselves are uniquely placed to unlock and enable inclusive economic activity and positive societal impact," FirstRand Group CEO **Mary Vilakazi** told delegates in her pre-recorded executive address, which prefaced the session on agri-ecosystems. "We are already intentionally leveraging the core business activities and operational capabilities of our leading brands such as FNB, RMB and WesBank to add value to society profitably and at scale."

She proudly noted the impactful role of the social investments made by the FirstRand Foundation and FirstRand Empowerment Foundation.

FirstRand's efforts were showcased as part of the session, which brought together industry experts, thought leaders and farmers to discuss the future of sustainable and transformative agriculture in Africa. The sector is vital as it generates employment and helps people mitigate poverty, according to **Kone Gugushe**, FirstRand Group's Head of Social Investing. However, it is crucial to help black farmers commercialise and participate more meaningfully in the sector – something the FirstRand Empowerment Foundation sets out to do.

## Sustainable agriculture needs a ground-up approach

Renowned soil scientist and environmental sustainability specialist **Dr Siviwe Malongweni** presented the theme's keynote address in which she emphasised the critical role of sustainable farming in addressing food security.

While sustainable farming methods that use less energy, produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions and promote biodiversity make practical sense, they are less accessible to small-scale African farmers who face limited access to resources, knowledge and training as well as challenges related to climate change, insecure land tenure and governance issues. Malongweni highlighted

the urgency of overcoming these barriers to ensure future food security that will meet Africa's population growth, which is set to double in the next 30 years.

She noted that true transformation begins with soil, explaining how better soil management practices, such as using organic residues, minimising soil disturbance, increasing plant diversity and integrating livestock into cropping systems can improve water filtration and storage capacity while enhancing soil health, carbon capture and crop yields. Malongweni called for more collaborative effort, greater accountability, proactive land acquisition for agricultural purposes, and the strengthening of market access and value chains for small-scale farmers as some of the interventions needed to deliver change.

## Driving transformation in South African agriculture

Similar sentiments on the importance of collaborative efforts to create value in agriculture and ensure food security emerged from the panel discussion with Gugushe, Mohair Empowerment Trust (MET) Head **Beauty Mokgwamme**, Geluk Farm Manager **Johnson Mandlendoda**, and independent partnering and systems change practitioner **Andrew Boraine**.

The panel demonstrated how the FirstRand Empowerment Foundation supports emerging farmers through strategic partnerships such as the MET. The programme has assisted small-scale farmers to access interest-free loans, improve angora goat genetics and adhere to international standards, supporting their efforts towards commercialisation.

Mokgwamme says FirstRand's intervention has enabled, among other things, the supply of interest-free loans to emerging farmers to be paid back over a five-year period. Their support has helped to speed up the work of the MET, leading to an overall improvement of the angora goat genetics in the local industry, capacity building through training and increasing attention to

adherence to the internationally recognised responsible mohair standard.

Mandlendoda, who has benefited from the work of the MET and FirstRand's support, noted the importance of support from industry stakeholders in assisting farmers through the long profit turnaround times and external shocks that challenge farmers.

FirstRand's involvement has also helped the trust reach small-scale angora goat farmers who, while they do not qualify for commercialisation, can benefit from value-adds that improve their profits. "It's a meaningful impact that we've seen in the lives of the people we are serving in this trust," Mokgwamme commented.

## South Africa's food system needs better governance

The panel also addressed the broader challenge of food security in South Africa, with Boraine highlighting the imperative for a greater focus on access to sufficient, nutritious food. One in four South African children is malnourished, pointing to a systemic problem with the nation's food system.

Boraine called for a more collaborative and coordinated approach to address the many facets of national food security, from production to consumption, and emphasised the need for systemic change in governance and stakeholder engagement. He reinforced the need for collaborative efforts to support South African food systems, calling for more "transversal work" and the transformation of the system as a whole with a better governance framework to coordinate the food system rather than leaving it to market forces.



# FIRSTRAND'S VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

EMPOWERING SOCIETY  
THROUGH AGRICULTURE

The FirstRand Empowerment Foundation's (FREF) vision is to reduce poverty and inequality by undertaking and/or public benefit activities that result in B-BBEE. This is achieved by empowering organisations that serve as the Foundation's implementing partners.



THE FREF STRATEGY COMPRISES OF FIVE KEY FOCUS AREAS THAT ARE NOTED BELOW:

**1. Agri-systems:** aims to transform and strengthen the Agri-value chain, unlock the value of assets, and improve the meaningful participation of black people in the sector.

**2. Climate Change Response:** recognizes the impact of climate change on the development agenda, and the need to invest in a climate change response to mitigate effects on livelihoods.

**4. Healthcare Value Chain:** aims to provide support throughout the healthcare value chain to enable the meaningful participation of black people.

**3. Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF):** aims to support the fight against GBVF, through the support of initiatives that promote the prevention of GBVF, rebuilding social cohesion, promoting economic empowerment of vulnerable women, and supporting research and information systems.

**5. Quality Education:** focusing on tertiary education and training to enable access to quality education, enable the improvement of skills and earning opportunities, and improve institutional capacity for tertiary education.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE FIRSTRAND EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATIONS AGRI-SYSTEMS PILLAR

The FirstRand Empowerment Foundation has identified agriculture as a sector to focus its support given its multidimensional impact on socio-economic development and black economic empowerment transformation in South Africa.

Transformation in the South African agricultural sector is largely because of market failure however the impact of climate change and global nutritional challenges requires that a systems approach be adopted that recognises the importance of agricultural value chains.

In line with its objective, FREF's intention to achieve black economic empowerment (including personal empowerment) and approach to the agricultural sector is intended to identify and solve for market failure and barriers to entry for black people, whilst learning about pathways to empowerment that could be scaled for national impact. The primary objective for FREF is to increase the number and levels of participation of black individuals and firms in a competitive, growing, and sustainable agricultural sector.

The definition of a success for FREF would include an increase in the number of black people, especially young people and women who own and manage commercially viable, competitive, and sustainable agricultural enterprises that contribute to economic growth, increased income earning opportunities including jobs, and national food security.

FREF's notable achievements over the past two years has been an investment of R200 million to implementing partners that deliver on the FREF Agri-systems objectives.

# SIYASIZANA

## CULTIVATING HOPE

Mxolisi, Loyiso, and Mzwandile's Journey From Unemployment to Agri-Entrepreneurship



In the rural landscape of Gobodweni, a village in the Amadiba region of the Eastern Cape, the story of three determined young men — Mxolisi Ngongoma, Loyiso Dinga, and Mzwandile Hagile — unfolds as a powerful testament to the transformative impact of the Young Farmers Development (YFD) programme. Run by the Siyazisiza Trust and sponsored by the FirstRand Empowerment Foundation, the YFD programme has been pivotal in shaping their journey from unemployment to thriving agri-entrepreneurs.

This story highlights not only personal growth but also the potential of an 'eco-system' approach to rural agri-enterprise development, which guides Siyazisiza's work in unlocking the potential of young farmers and driving positive change in rural communities.

### FINDING PURPOSE IN THE SOIL

In mid-2021, Mxolisi returned to his rural village after a stint in the city, only to find himself unemployed. Rather than giving in to despair, he questioned why his family was buying vegetables when they had land to grow their own.

This reflection led him to start a home garden, sparking a passion for farming that would soon shape his future. In 2022, Mxolisi joined the local Farmers Forum, where he met Loyiso Dinga. Recognising the power of collaboration, the two decided to pool their resources and start an agri-enterprise focused on potato farming. Their efforts were soon joined by Mzwandile Hagile, who returned to the village with a similar vision.

Together, they invested their time, money, and energy into the venture, overcoming early setbacks that included the loss of a business partner and a poor harvest due to unfavourable weather conditions. Despite these challenges, their determination to succeed remained unshaken.

### EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SIYASIZANA'S YFDP

The turning point in their farming journey came when all three partners — Mxolisi, Loyiso, and Mzwandile — enrolled in the YFD programme. This programme, a cornerstone of Siyazisiza's efforts to empower rural youth, provided them with essential tools and knowledge to transform their informal venture into a structured business.

They learned about market identification, strategic business planning, and the power of social media in promoting agricultural products — skills that were previously foreign to them.

Through the YFD programme, the trio also gained a deeper understanding of the need to anticipate challenges and adapt to changing circumstances. Siyazisiza's focus on hybridising enterprise models for sustainability is grounded in the realities of rural life, and this was particularly impactful on the trio, especially after experiencing the effects of unpredictable weather on their crops.

Armed with this knowledge, they began diversifying their offerings and reducing input costs, leading to the establishment of a seedling nursery. This project not only serves their needs but also fills a critical gap in the local farming community, where access to quality seedlings had been a persistent challenge.



## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The partnership between Mxolisi, Loyiso, and Mzwandile has grown stronger through their shared experiences and education. The YFD programme did not just equip them with technical skills but also instilled a sense of purpose and community responsibility. Their business, "Ithemba Liminathi Agri-Enterprise," now includes market gardening, a seedling nursery, poultry production, and beekeeping — all of which are still in various stages of development but hold great promise for the future.

Siyazisiza's commitment to ongoing mentorship and support has been instrumental in the trio's success. The Trust's field-based follow-up ensures that graduates of the YFD programme continue to receive guidance as they apply their training in real-world settings.

This continuous support has helped Mxolisi, Loyiso, and Mzwandile overcome the fear of failure that often hinders young entrepreneurs, giving them the confidence to pursue their ambitious goals. Their journey is also about empowering others. With the knowledge and confidence gained from Siyazisiza's YFD programme, they are now actively involved in a youth movement that works with local schools to educate the next generation about the importance of agroecology. By sharing their story and experiences, they hope to inspire other young people to view farming not just as a means of survival but as a viable and fulfilling career path.

Looking ahead, Mxolisi, Loyiso, and Mzwandile envision a community that thrives on agricultural innovation.



Front Row: Nonkoliso Patience Tamba (DRDAR), Nidele Else (Samil), Beauty Mokgwamme (MET), MEC: Nokqubela Peters

Back Row: Siphwe Fani (Farmer), Michael Canter (Samil), Ayanda Mehlo (Farmer), Bryan (FNB), Mthozami Wiseman Goqwana (DRDAR), Mfundo Macanda (DRDAR)

# MOHAIR

## THE MOHAIR IMPACT

Mohair South Africa was established to assume the responsibility to develop and maintain industry standards in order to ensure ethical and sustainable practices and provide ongoing support for the South African mohair sector. Mohair, known worldwide as the noble fibre, is sought after for its exclusive qualities such as lustre, resilience and colour retention, which have been the key to its success. The South African mohair industry has grown into the global leader, producing the world's best quality mohair.

*'Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.'*  
- Edward Everett Hale



This is very much evident as we have witnessed over and over again the success of our different partnerships with different stakeholders in helping bring change into our farmers lives. The journey with 'Siyavuya Community Development Projects' of 'Lifford Farm' hasn't been long as it only began towards the backend of 2022 whereby, they were one of the farmers who benefitted from the financial support we the 'Mohair Empowerment Trust' received from 'FirstRand'.

When we entered the project they had +-200 Angora Goats on foot which they'd acquired through the 'Livestock Improvement Scheme programme' from the department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, thereafter we built on that by adding 300x kaptaters (castrated rams) in 2022/2023, beginning of 2024 we further added 300x ewes and through 'FirstRand' we managed to improve their flock genetics by buying 5x Rams from one of the industry's top producer Mr Ben Van Der Westhuyzen who further donated 15xRams to 'Siyavuya Community Development Projects'. As of this current winter shearing season of 2024, the farm is running just over a 1000 Angora Goats and this number will continue to climb as the goats have just

began kidding this week. The 'Mohair Empowerment Trust' aims at taking an emerging farmer to commercial level through increasing goat numbers but there are other areas on the farm which need tending to which the Trust unfortunately can't assist with, leading to our young but already proving fruitful relationship with the 'Eastern Cape Development Corporation'.

Working together to Empower and bring change into people's lives, and lives were changed at 'Lifford Farm'.

Imagine working a +-1500ha farm with no source of mobility but just your will and passion, having electricity challenges and using a wheel barrow and 20l drums to kart water from the river to the dipping tank (+-200m apart) with a capacity of 150l-400l is what these farmers have endured for a number of years until this month whereby through the 'Mohair Empowerment Trust' and 'Eastern Cape Development Corporation' we managed to secure an incentive to install; a solar powered water pump, solar system for the houses and got a bakkie for the farmers.

# Why supporting women farmers is good for society



Women make up 43% of the global agricultural labour force, but they face discrimination when it comes to land ownership, access to finance and credit, and participation in decision-making activities, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN). Supporting women farmers goes a long way towards alleviating food insecurity and providing employment – but what can companies do to empower them?

In June 2024, Trialogue and Standard Bank South Africa presented a webinar exploring some of the challenges smallholder women farmers face in South Africa and beyond, along with possible solutions. Panellists included **Niki Neumann-Forder**, Head of Agribusiness Platforms and Innovation at Standard Bank, **Grant Jacobs**, Co-founder and CEO of HelloChoice, **Leigh Hildyard**, Programme Policy Officer: Food systems and smallholder market access of the UN World Food Programme (WFP), and **Leeko Makoene**, Founder and CEO of Made with Rural.

The webinar was prefaced by an introduction by **Dr Kirston Greenop**, Head of Corporate Citizenship at Standard Bank. She said the bank's holistic approach focuses on bringing about systemic change, disrupting the status quo and partnering with various stakeholders to increase impact.

## Addressing systemic challenges

Companies are uniquely placed to address some of the systemic challenges in the agricultural value chain. This includes driving access to financial and information services, and investing in digital technologies and innovation to improve farmers' efficiency. Access to information and a successful growing cycle ensure a farmer's sustainability, while digital or mobile apps can provide them with access to finance, market pricing, weather information and the skills they need to manage their small businesses.

A prime example of this is Standard Bank's partnership with HelloChoice, an online agricultural marketplace. Standard Bank powers OneFarm Share, a platform that accelerates smallholder farmer development and helps to reduce food waste by connecting NPOs to

available fresh produce from local farmers and markets. The platform focuses on multiple solutions in the sector, including alleviating hunger, reducing food waste, promoting market access for small farmers and helping them to commercialise their businesses. The platform procures food from emerging farmers and directs it to 2 700 charities through food distribution partnerships with FoodForward SA, Gift of the Givers and SA Harvest. "Over the past four years we have distributed 24 000 tons of food and created 90 million meals for about 1.2 million people," Jacobs said.

As a 'friendly offtaker' the platform helps small farmers commercialise their operations, making it possible for them to improve quality so their businesses can become more sustainable. Perhaps more importantly, the platform has injected R23 million into women-owned farming businesses nationally. In South Africa, women own only 13% of farm and agricultural land, which limits their vast potential – but the picture is slowly changing.

The WFP is helping to remove some barriers to success by addressing capacity constraints preventing women farmers from entering the agricultural value chain and accessing markets. "If you grow a great crop but can't sell at the right price at the right time, you can't move from being a subsistence farmer to an entrepreneur," Jacobs pointed out.

Another necessary solution for women farmers is access to funding – crucial since many women cannot open bank accounts without their husband's approval, said Hildyard. The WFP has partnered with UN Women to address, among other things, the lack of digital and financial literacy in South Africa and elsewhere.

## Solving problems for women farmers

Growing up with subsistence farmers made Makoene aware of the challenge of market access, which led to her founding Made with Rural, an aggregator platform that links smallholder farmers in rural and township areas to different stakeholders in the agricultural sector. "I came up with a demand-driven model that means farmers don't have to plant seeds, water and harvest them, and then cross their fingers in the hope that someone will buy their produce," she said. "Now, we go into the market and see what offtake agreements we can get, which will inform how the farmers' planting journeys will unfold."

She said solving the challenge of market access eases many of the other challenges farmers face. Although government or private sector programmes do not often fund aggregators and prefer to fund farmers directly, supporting an aggregator or hub in a particular village is vital as it allows farmers to access technology and resources they would not otherwise have.

Neumann-Forder made the important point that, to bring about systemic change, we need to take a longer-term view and shift from a development or donor mindset to a commercialised mindset. "Large corporates must view the disbursement of CSI funds as an investment," she concluded. "Funds may be development-focused, but they must have financial and commercial upsides for their beneficiaries."





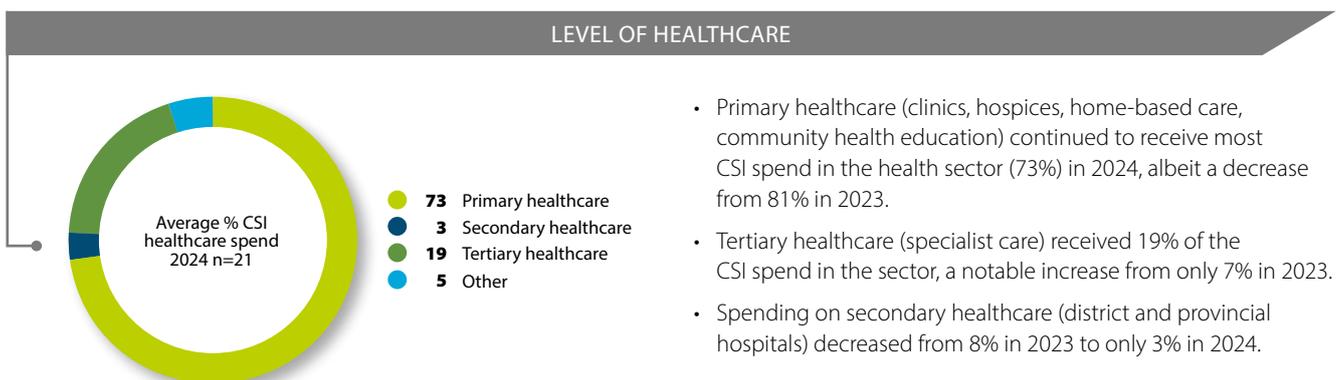
## HEALTH

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

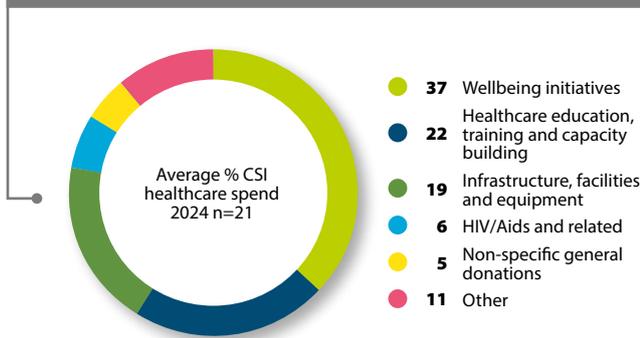
- The national health budget increased from R259 billion for 2023/24 to R271.9 billion for 2024/25, constituting 11.5% of consolidated government expenditure of R2.37 trillion for the financial year.
- According to Stats SA's mid-year population estimates for 2024, the life expectancy at birth in South Africa is 66.5 years, a significant increase from 53.6 years in 2005. The rise in life expectancy can be attributed to three key trends: the antiretroviral treatment programme leading to a reduction in Aids-related deaths from 284 249 in 2005 (42% of all deaths) to 68 406 in 2024 (12% of all deaths); uptake of vaccinations and treatments for Covid-19 infections; and the decrease in the infant mortality rate from an estimated 57 infant deaths per 1 000 live births in 2002 to 22 per 1 000 live births in 2024.
- According to Stats SA, the total number of people living with HIV is approximately 8 million in 2024. For adults aged 15–49 years, an estimated 16.7% of the population is HIV positive.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 55 000 individuals in South Africa died from tuberculosis (TB) in 2023, while around 280 000 were infected with the disease.
- The *Mental State of the World in 2023 Report* ranked South Africa as the country with the highest percentage (35.8%) of its population being distressed and struggling with mental health.
- On 15 May 2024, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the National Health Insurance Bill (NHI) into law in an effort towards achieving universal health coverage in South Africa. Over 60 million people, and over 3 000 clinics and 34 hospitals are registered on the NHI database.
- According to Statista, in 2023, South Africa had the highest healthcare index score in Africa, taking into account factors such as the overall quality of the healthcare system, healthcare professionals, equipment, staff, doctors and cost.
- From 1 January to 3 September 2024, a total of 24 940 suspected cases, 5 432 confirmed cases and 639 deaths of Mpox were reported from 14 African countries, with the Democratic Republic of Congo worst affected. The total number of cases in South Africa was 25. WHO declared a public health emergency of international concern and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention declared a public health emergency of continental security for the first time.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

Health was supported by 36% of companies and received 9% of average CSI expenditure.



## TYPE OF INTERVENTION



- Over a third of average healthcare CSI expenditure (37%) in 2024 went to supporting wellbeing initiatives, a substantial increase from 18% in 2023.
- Healthcare education, training and capacity building received 22% of average healthcare spend, up from 13% in 2023.
- Infrastructure, facilities and equipment received 19% of average healthcare spend, up from 10% in 2023.
- The increase in support for these three types of intervention came at the expense of non-specific general donations which fell from 37% in 2023 to just 5% in 2024, when only one company allocated spend to it.

## KEEPING SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS HEALTHY HIGHER HEALTH

CASE STUDY

Higher Health plays a crucial role in supporting the health and wellbeing of students across South Africa. Formerly known as the Higher Education and Training HIV/AIDS Programme, it has evolved into an impactful agency that implements a wide range of health services at over 420 campus sites nationwide.

### A network of partnerships

Founded in 2000, Higher Health operates from a national office in Gauteng, supported by 70 district-based offices and three regional hubs in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. The organisation's strength lies in its partnerships with government agencies, the private sector, United Nations bodies and civil society, all of whom are fundamental to its operations and outreach.

Collaboration is at the heart of Higher Health's initiatives and its success. It works closely with the DHET and numerous allied partners, including the Global Fund, European Union (EU) and Universities South Africa. These partnerships are not just beneficial; they are essential for mobilising resources, sharing expertise and fostering innovation.

Funding, human resources and essential services come from this extensive network of collaborators who share a commitment to the wellbeing of South Africa's youth. By establishing strong ties with all 26 public universities and 50 TVET colleges, Higher Health successfully implements health campaigns and clinical services tailored to the needs of students.

One of the standout achievements of Higher Health is the establishment of primary healthcare clinics at TVET campuses, significantly improving access to health services. The collaboration with the national Department of Health and provincial health departments has been instrumental in providing critical healthcare resources, ensuring that students receive comprehensive support.

The EU's contributions have also been pivotal, funding the development of vital policies and tools, such as the Covid-19 screening digital tool that supported over 1 million students and staff during the pandemic. This kind of partnership exemplifies how shared resources and knowledge can lead to innovative solutions in times of crisis.

Moreover, collaborations with organisations such as the South African Depression and Anxiety Group enhance mental health support, while ongoing guidance from gender-based violence task teams strengthens interventions in this critical area.

As Higher Health continues to expand its services, the emphasis on collaboration remains paramount. Through strategic partnerships, the organisation not only enhances the health and wellbeing of students but also builds a more resilient and healthier future for all South Africans.

# DKMS Africa

## Changing the landscape for South African blood cancer patients



The DKMS Group is one of the most significant non-profit organisations in the world dedicated to fighting blood cancer and blood disorders. With twelve entities, a global presence in seven countries on five continents and a strong commitment to saving lives, the team works tirelessly to connect patients with matching blood stem cell donors.

The DKMS Africa mission is to increase the number of potential donors worldwide, enhance the ethnic diversity of the donor registry, provide life-saving transplants to patients in need, and improve patient outcome. Since its formation in South Africa 3 years ago, we have recruited over 100 000 potential life savers, among whom include under-represented groups in the global donor registry.

Patients from the Black, Coloured, Indian and Asian populations have a disproportionate chance of finding a matching stem cell donor.

Every 72 minutes, someone in South Africa is diagnosed with blood cancer or a blood disorder. Stem cell transplants are a potentially life-saving treatment for more than 70 different diseases like leukaemia, aplastic anaemia, thalassaemia and sickle cell disease. For many patients, a blood stem cell transplant is their only hope of a second chance at life, however, only 0.36% of the South African population are registered donors. With this in mind, DKMS Africa recruits diverse stem cell donors in order to give all patients in South Africa a fighting chance against blood cancer and blood disorders.

### Leaving no one behind in the fight against blood cancer and blood disorders

The work of DKMS Africa extends to creating strategic and mass based tactical education and awareness campaigns. Through this, we have partnered with a number of organisations and social partners including universities and colleges across the country, collaborating with corporate partners, organising donor recruitment drives across various communities with patients and their families. All of this is to help ensure the following:



Raising awareness and educating communities on the effects of blood cancer and blood disorders



Donor recruitment drives across various communities to help increase the number of diverse donors on the registry



Assisting with transplantation costs for patients who can't afford the costs associated with transplants

DKMS Africa prides itself on growing a community of people committed to one cause: fighting blood cancer and blood disorders in South Africa, across the continent and in the world. The needs and well-being of the patients which DKMS Africa serves are at the core the work done and this is why DKMS Africa believes in telling patient stories as reminder that there is hope.



One such patient is **5-year-old Preshthi** from KwaZulu Natal is fighting a battle that no child should face. *Diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia*, her only chance at survival is a stem cell transplant. Yet, as of now, there is no match for her on the stem cell registry. The signs first started in 2021, when *Preshthi*, then only two (2) and a half years old, began experiencing persistent soreness in her legs. Following a doctor's visit and subsequent blood work, the devastating diagnosis was confirmed. Described by her mother, Arthie, as a vibrant and loving soul with a passion for music and TikTok challenges, *Preshthi* is dearly missed in her household as she is undergoing inpatient treatment. *Preshthi* sadly experienced a relapse in January 2024 and doctors indicated that a stem cell transplant is her best chance to live a full life again.



Then there is **26-year-old Londeka Mdletshe** who was diagnosed with *Acute Myeloid Leukaemia*. Her future hangs in the balance as there is currently no match for her on the global stem cell registry. *Londeka's* journey began with unexplained stomach aches and ulcers in December 2022. Recurrent headaches and shortness of breath followed. This led to countless doctors' visits which left her feeling hopeless until May 2023, when she received her diagnosis. Since her diagnosis, she has endured a grueling cycle of hospital admissions and discharges, often spending months confined to a hospital bed. With a 5-year-old daughter, *Londeka* had plans to further her studies and pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree at UNISA, so as to be able to give her and her daughter a beautiful life. However, due to her declining health, she was unable to actualize her plan.

## The barriers preventing access to healthcare need everyone playing their part and getting involved in whichever way they can

As a significant player within the stem cell transplantation sector and hematology sectors, DKMS Africa's mission is to give each patient a fighting chance against blood cancer and blood disorders. Working together with different stakeholders, including corporate partners, community organizations and leaders, the media and public and private institutions, an enormous impact can be made within the South African healthcare sector, which will ensure that blood cancer patients and those with blood disorders are provided with the resources and healthcare needed for them to get through to transplant and live dignified lives.

24% of potential blood stem cell donors registered

with DKMS are female and 76% are male. 47% of potential blood stem cell donors registered with DKMS are younger people (aged 18 -30) which shows that young South Africans want to get involved and help in the fight against blood cancer and blood disorders.

In order to keep making an impact in the lives of blood cancer patients and patients suffering from blood disorders, everyone needs to get involved so that patients can have a second chance at life!

To find out more about how you can get involved and help us in our fight against blood cancer and blood disorders, visit [dkms-africa.org](https://dkms-africa.org) or email [fundraising@dkms-africa.org](mailto:fundraising@dkms-africa.org).



## The medical humanities



The medical humanities is a multidisciplinary field that includes the arts and social sciences in medical training. More broadly, this holistic approach to healing goes beyond the merely physical, helping people discover innate resources to 'self-recover' from trauma. **Dawn Garisch**, Founder of the Life Righting Collective, explores the role writing plays in healing.

**What are the medical humanities and why is it important to integrate other disciplines with medical training?**

The social sciences and the arts have much to contribute to the health sciences around wellbeing. Story is often understood to be our 'operating system'. However, when the stories we tell are harmful, we need ways to change. Altering the narrative can allow us to make better decisions around care of self, others and the planet. As the writer CS Lewis has said: "You can't go back to the beginning and change what happened, but you can start from where you are and change the ending."

**Why does South Africa, a country that has experienced historical and ongoing traumas, need interventions drawn from the medical humanities?**

Regular creative practice can be healing and transformative, and creativity is a low-cost, in-built resource. Learning to write about one's life in a facilitated group setting is a powerful tool for discovery and recovery. The need for interventions that address mental health problems is huge and requires group processes rather than one-on-one sessions with a mental health professional.

**What is 'life writing' and why is it a useful, non-medical way to improve resilience to trauma? Please share your findings and explain how such interventions can be replicated.**

Our courses are designed to activate the writer's creativity so they can go beyond the anecdote or a self-defeating narrative. When we write out sensory experience and associations, we enlist the unconscious mind and new information can arise. This can counter assumptions about the self and others, and expand understanding and possibility.

Reading one's work in a safely held group allows the writer to be seen and heard, which builds their confidence. Training facilitators in this method could expand outreach.

**How does the Life Righting Collective use writing to foster 'self-recovery'?**

Picking up a pen, writing about a traumatic event and giving it shape outside the distressed body are acts of agency in situations where the writer has felt powerless. The rational mind shuts down the story with interpretation, whereas writing creatively can release the story into new insight.

Retelling a story on paper can help the writer to change their relationship to what happened and come to terms with their lives. In addition, bearing witness to the zeitgeist and personal circumstance can help the writer to advocate for change in the community or in policy. We can get to know one another through sharing memoirs; dispensing with our assumptions about race, religion, nationality, gender, class, ability and age; and develop empathy towards ourselves, others and the natural world. Recognising our tendency to assume is a very powerful corrective in improving relationships.

**What makes writing a particularly good therapeutic tool, especially as South Africa has low levels of literacy?**

Literacy is a limitation. However, finding creative ways to express oneself does not need high levels of literacy. Helping people with inadequate access to education to write about what they know is a huge boost to confidence. Language is another potential barrier to courses and the Life Righting Collective is seeking funding to train facilitators in all South African languages.

**How can corporate investments in literacy and the arts advance development in South Africa?**

Art is not a luxury or a pastime. We are all born creative as a core evolutionary advantage. Jaak Panksepp, the neuroscientist who won the Nobel Prize for his study of mammals, found that we need to play to learn. Regular creative practice keeps us curious, engaged and inspired, and helps us to try out our options in a safe imaginative space. The lack of non-didactic arts education in our schools and the paucity of funding for the arts seriously hamper our emotional literacy. In turn, this deficit undermines our capacity for relationship, community, employment and effective governance and advocacy.

**Please provide an example of successful collaboration in this discipline, together with the outcomes thereof.**

The Life Righting Collective ran a team-building writing course for staff at the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) (<https://cdkn.org/>). From this initiative, CDKN has employed our methodology in rural communities in Africa and India to support those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change to write down their experience. These testimonies will be presented in international spaces to influence policy.

**DAWN GARISCH**

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# Transforming healthcare through social investments

In a country where access to quality healthcare remains a pressing issue, AfroCentric, a leading black-owned investment holding company, has taken bold strides towards universal health coverage through its corporate social investment (CSI) initiatives. AfroCentric's strategic approach to CSI has not only addressed historical inequalities but also catalysed sustainable change in communities across South Africa.

## Empowering the Next Generation of Healthcare Leaders: AfroCentric Bursary Programme

One of the company's flagship initiatives, the AfroCentric Bursary Programme, is a testament to its dedication to addressing the country's skills shortage and nurturing young black professionals. By specifically targeting previously disadvantaged black female students, it breaks down barriers to education and ensures broader representation and cultural competency within the healthcare sector. Its holistic approach includes mentorship and wellness support.

### CEO Engagement: AfroCentric Bursary Students

In July 2024 the Group CEO and AfroCentric executives visited the AfroCentric bursary recipients at North-West University (Potchefstroom campus). This engagement aimed to extend and strengthen the company's relationship with the bursary students.

We seek to build meaningful relationships with the students, fostering ongoing engagement throughout their academic journeys. The bursary programme has evolved from hosting an annual bursary luncheon with the Chairman of the Group to now engaging with the Group Executive Committee.

The AfroCentric leadership spent a day with their bright young minds, inspiring and empowering them through insightful discussions about their academic journeys and challenges, and providing them with insights into industry practices, the healthcare sector and career opportunities. The company's 'Purposely Ignited' initiative facilitates a supportive environment, helping students to address both academic and personal challenges and set goals for overall wellbeing and growth.

## Driving Positive Change through Strategic Partnerships: SANAC

AfroCentric recognises that lasting change requires private and public partnerships through targeted collaboration and collective action. Its impactful partnerships with organisations such as the South African National Aids Council (SANAC) Private Sector Forum and the South African Business Coalition on Health and Aids (SABCOHA) have set out to eradicate HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis (TB) and chronic communicable and non-communicable diseases. The company's health screening programmes, implemented in 2019, help to drive sustainable health outcomes for communities nationwide. A recent initiative extended wellness screenings to 25 000 community members in Musina, Limpopo and included HIV counselling and testing, screenings for TB and sexually transmitted infections, blood pressure and glucose checks, body mass index assessments and vision screening. AfroCentric allocated additional funding to the BizAIDS Programme for small business owners to assess their businesses' health and legal risks, and learn how to take action to reduce those risks.

## Transforming Healthcare and Vision: AfroCentric's Collaboration with Vision 4 Change

Since 2017, AfroCentric Group has proudly partnered with Vision 4 Change. Vision is Vital, an intervention project spearheaded by Vision 4 Change, aims to change the lives of underprivileged children by providing them with free eye screenings to determine the overall health of learners' eyes. All learners who have been identified as having challenges with their sight are fitted with free prescribed spectacles specifically tailored to each child's needs, thereby giving them access to essential vision care. To date the Group has enabled thousands of children across the country to benefit from this initiative.

## Eluthandweni Maternity Clinics

AfroCentric Group teamed up with Eluthandweni Maternity Clinic recently to launch a satellite branch in Alberton Mall. This year's theme, 'Our Nurses. Our Future. The Economic Power of Care', epitomises Eluthandweni Maternity Health Services' commitment to the Vosloorus and Alberton communities. Sister Nonina's leadership exemplifies the dedication and integrity of the nursing profession and she deserves accolades for her tireless efforts. Initially a birthing clinic, the main facility in Vosloorus, Eluthandweni, has evolved into a comprehensive healthcare amenity offering round-the-clock services, including screening for chronic conditions and testing for non-communicable diseases. It also serves as a pick-up point for chronic medications, including the Central Chronic Medicines Dispensing and Distribution (CCMDD) programme, easing accessibility and adherence for patients.

## The Backbone of Healthcare

The first mother-and-child clinic, initiated by Sister Diphoko's mother Sister Dolly Dube, in the early 90s in Vosloorus, was borne from a vision to enhance maternal and child wellbeing during the birthing process. Despite the high global mortality rates, Eluthandweni has maintained a remarkable 0% mortality rate and 100% natural birth rate. The AfroCentric Group has been instrumental in the construction of the clinic in 2015 and purchased vehicles for the establishment, two of which have been converted into ambulances. The Clinic is open 24 hours, seven days a week and has no holidays, which enables patients to consult and collect their medication at their convenience so that they do not lose time from work.

## Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Hospital School

AfroCentric Group's association with the hospital school began in 2012. The hospital school provides an opportunity for children with life-threatening illnesses to continue with their schooling while in hospital. The hospital school caters for 60 pupils from grade R to grade 12. This allows learners to receive medical treatment without interrupting their education. The company's contributions – i.e. the construction of the school; providing furniture, a library, a computer lab, laptops for teachers, a printer for the school as well as a school bus – have always focused on ensuring that the school's facilities can match the level of the care provided by the committed doctors and teachers at the hospital.

## Alma Clinics

Through its Enterprise Development Programme, the AfroCentric Group funded the opening of the Soshanguve Alma Clinic, a digital native primary healthcare provider, in 2023. Leveraging the latest technology innovations, powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning capabilities, Alma Clinics offer comprehensive care at their physical clinics, and homecare and telehealth services. Truly 'A Commitment to Healthcare Excellence'.

## Bringing Vision Care to Communities in Need

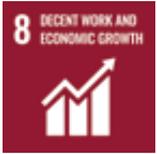
The most recent outreach was in November 2023 when Vision 4 Change deployed a dedicated team of optometrists to screen and test learners from two underprivileged schools – Thandokuhle Primary and Khethamahle Primary in KwaMashu, Durban. In both schools 547 children were screened and tested, with free prescription spectacles provided to learners with visual impairments. The project's success rendered invaluable support to the schools, recognising the crucial role visual perception plays in effective learning, academic achievement and sporting prowess.

For information on how to collaborate with AfroCentric, please contact:  
**Palesa Modisane**  
Email: PalesaM@afrocentrichealth.com



**AfroCentric**  
GROUP

Healthier Together



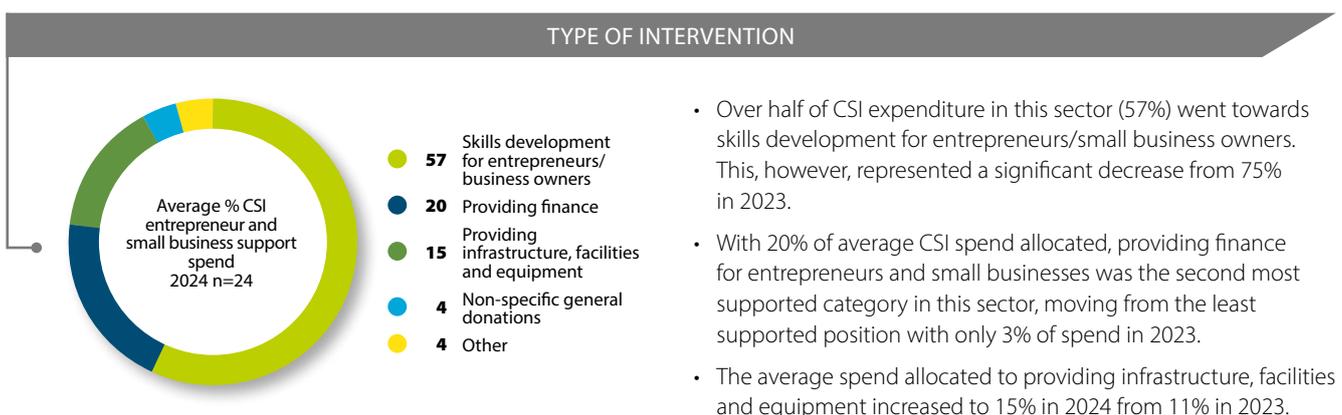
# ENTREPRENEUR AND SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) was allocated R2.4 billion for 2024/25, constituting 0.1% of consolidated government expenditure of R2.37 trillion for the financial year. Transfers to entities to support small enterprises account for over 80% of this, with most going to the Small Enterprise Development Agency and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency.
- As at April 2023, South Africa's small, medium and microenterprises (SMMEs) contributed 40% towards the gross domestic product (GDP), as reported by the DSBD. However, only 37% of SMMEs are formally registered.
- *The FinScope MSME Survey South Africa 2024* found that there are approximately 3 million micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in South Africa, employing around 13.4 million people. More than 2.5 million microenterprises make up the sector, with 72% operating informally. About one in four small (23%) business owners are foreign national citizens. Only 30% of MSME owners are 35 years old or younger, even though 50% of the adult population are youth and constitute 60% of the unemployed population.
- The DSBD has committed to support 50 000 MSMEs and cooperatives, 30 000 township and rural enterprises and 10 000 youth-owned enterprises in 2024/25.
- In July 2024, the National Small Enterprise Amendment Bill was signed into law. It proposes the establishment of the Small Enterprise Development Finance Agency and the Office of the Small Enterprise Ombud Service to ensure an equitable trading environment for small businesses.
- In 2023, South Africa ranked 47th out of 49 economies on the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's National Entrepreneurship Context Index, which indicates the average state and quality of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country.

## OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Entrepreneur and small business support** was provided by 43% of companies and received 5% of average CSI expenditure.



## DRIVING TRANSFORMATION IN FINANCIAL SERVICES ASISA ESD INITIATIVE

CASE  
STUDY

Collaboration is key to transformation in South Africa's financial services sector. The Association for Savings and Investment South Africa (ASISA) leads this charge, representing major asset managers, collective investment scheme management companies and life insurance firms. A central focus of ASISA is uplifting black-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through its Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) initiative.

Launched in 2013, the ASISA ESD initiative fosters sustainable development and economic empowerment. It is more than just funding; it is a comprehensive ecosystem that supports SMEs often excluded from traditional financing avenues.

Funds are managed by Edge Growth and provide not only financial resources but also vital business support and market access for SMEs selected from ASISA member supply chains.

### A framework for collaboration

The success of the ASISA ESD initiative relies on its collaborative framework. Funders can contribute through investments, loans or grants, creating a sustainable structure that continually supports emerging businesses. This pooled investment model enhances purchasing power, reducing costs while maximising impact on SMEs.

The initiative aligns with the Financial Sector Code and engages diverse stakeholders – fund managers, independent trustees and corporate sponsors – to drive meaningful transformation.

### Empowering SMEs through tailored support

Beyond financial aid, the ASISA ESD initiative offers tailored support programmes that equip SMEs with

skills and knowledge. This includes technical assistance and governance training, empowering entrepreneurs to adopt environmentally friendly practices and create sustainable jobs.

Success stories highlight the initiative's impact: Benguela Global Fund Managers is emerging as a black-owned player in ethical investing, while I-G3N addresses clean energy challenges amid load-shedding.

### A sustainable future through shared commitment

With approximately R700 million in assets and about 70 funders, the ASISA ESD initiative is among the largest in the country. Corporate sponsors include companies such as Sanlam and Momentum Metropolitan.

Lee Coller, a representative of ASISA, emphasises the efficiency gained through resource pooling: "Publicly owned companies could all do their own thing, but it would probably be at a higher cost for themselves. By pooling resources, they can achieve more, reduce costs and reach a wider network." Amanda Urban, Head of Operations at Edge Growth, echoes this sentiment: "Through collaboration, we can have a greater impact on the SMEs we work with. Without this support, our efforts would be limited."

### Joining the ASISA ESD initiative

Interested companies can visit the ASISA website for details. SMEs seeking funding can apply directly.

For more insights and case studies, the full *ASISA ESD 2024 Annual Overview* is available, showcasing the transformative impacts of this collaborative effort across South Africa.

*"Through collaboration, we can have a greater impact on the SMEs we work with. Without this support, our efforts would be limited."*

# Growing Africa's future through entrepreneurial action

At Absa, we believe that there is an opportunity in every story, which is why we don't just invest in initiatives—we invest in people. As a force for good across Africa, we are dedicated to turning aspirations and dreams into realities. We empower youth, women, and informal businesses to dream bigger, reach higher, and create lasting change by providing education, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

[absa.africa/a-force-for-good](https://absa.africa/a-force-for-good)

Your story matters



## A Pan-African vision for financial inclusion through entrepreneurship

Our Corporate Social Investment (CSI) journey has evolved to create sustainable impact and shared value. Building on our successful youth empowerment efforts, we are pivoting towards Financial Inclusion through Entrepreneurship (FITE), targeting youth and women.

Recognising entrepreneurship's vital role in our continent's development, this shift fosters an entrepreneurial mindset that empowers the next generation to seize opportunities through entrepreneurship. Through the FITE strategy, we pathway youth into entrepreneurial action, starting from creating an entrepreneurial mindset and progressing to intent and then action.

We focus on youth in school, youth in higher education and training, youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) and youth and women entrepreneurs running informal enterprises to assist them to formalising their enterprises.

By supporting youth, women and informal enterprises, we are not just imagining a brighter future for Africa—we are helping to build it. A future where innovation enables financial inclusion, contributes towards economic growth, and empowers individuals to realise their full potential.



## Making a difference across the continent in the last 5 years



**R1,5bn** invested in the past 5 years. More than 1.27 million lives impacted.



Over **130,000** youth prepared for the world of work.



Over **R160m** donated through staff volunteering efforts; benefiting 660,000 lives.



Over **39,000** students supported through post-school education, with 20,400 transitioned into income-generating opportunities unlocking over R290 million in income.



**420,000** individuals provided with financial literacy education.



These are not just numbers—they represent dreams realised, futures secured, and lives transformed.

# Empowering young entrepreneurs, one story at a time

At Absa, our ambition is to **empower Africa's development and growth**, enabling **intergenerational inclusion through entrepreneurship** to tackle **socioeconomic ills**.

Through initiatives like the Young African Entrepreneurs Institute (YAEI), we empower young individuals by providing practical skills, knowledge, and essential support to help them thrive.

Your story matters



## YAEI and Absa: Building the future of entrepreneurship

Founded in 2017, YAEI is a youth-led non-profit organisation dedicated to equipping youth with the tools to transform ideas into impactful startups. In 2023, Absa partnered with YAEI for the Youth Entrepreneurship Week, drawing over 1,000 participants and supporting 40 businesses.

Our 2024 partnership focuses on the Youth Entrepreneurship Tour (YET), the Youth Entrepreneurship Skills Programme, and the Youth Entrepreneurship Week (YEW). These interventions support entrepreneurship development, helping youth start and grow businesses while also highlighting potential market opportunities for aspiring young entrepreneurs.

Youth Entrepreneurship Week will celebrate and announce the Emerging30 innovators—recognising standout young entrepreneurs. By supporting programmes like YAEI, we ensure that stories like Mabaso's inspire the next generation of young entrepreneurs to thrive.

## Bonginkosi Mabaso: A story of success

Bonginkosi Mabaso, founder and CEO of Ann-Connect, is among the 1.27 million people positively impacted by Absa's R1.5 billion investment over the past 5 years.

A proud second-time startup founder, Mabaso has demonstrated a strong commitment to innovation. His first venture, aDrive, an e-hailing company, led to the creation of Ann-Connect, a platform designed to provide offline access to education and solve critical challenges in student connectivity.

In September 2024, Mabaso further expanded his innovative efforts by launching ProctorPal, an invigilation app that ensures online exams are monitored even if students lose connectivity. This groundbreaking solution addresses a vital need in the education sector, ensuring uninterrupted assessments.

Mabaso's innovation earned him the prestigious YAEI cash prize in 2024. He acknowledges the crucial support from YAEI and Absa, saying, "YAEI and Absa provided legal experts and facilitated financial investments from local and international stakeholders."

His journey, along with many others, highlights the transformative power of initiatives like YAEI in shaping Africa's entrepreneurial landscape.





# Enabling intergenerational inclusion in entrepreneurship



Triologue and Absa partnered to present the themed segment 'Enabling intergenerational inclusion through entrepreneurship' on the first day of the Triologue Business in Society Conference 2024. The theme examined how to enable inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurship.

Absa's sense of responsibility for driving financial inclusion is at the heart of the company's support for entrepreneurship. "To take society and our economy forward we simply cannot raise young people who are purely job seekers. We need to raise young people who are job creators," said Absa's Corporate Citizenship Managing Executive, **Dr Steven Zwane**, in his executive overview.

## Exploring a data-driven approach to enabling entrepreneurship

There is a need for robust data to diagnose and overcome barriers to entrepreneurship in Africa, according to **Dr Phumlani Nkontwana**, founding Academic Director of the Allan Gray Centre for Africa Entrepreneurship. In his keynote address, he highlighted the importance of understanding macroeconomic contexts and ecosystem conditions to support entrepreneurial ventures effectively: "You are only as strong as the strength of your ecosystem. If your ecosystem is struggling, no matter how many support organisations you put together, they're just not going to work. That's the story of Africa."

## Strategies for inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurship

In the panel discussion Zwane, Gordon Institute of Business Science Associate Professor **Anastacia Mamabolo**, UVU Africa Group CEO **Ian Merrington** and entrepreneur **Mankoana Pheona Phalane** unpacked strategies aimed at fostering cultures that embrace entrepreneurship and support intergenerational enterprise development.

Absa invests in entrepreneurship education at high-school level as a catalyst to addressing youth unemployment, Zwane told conference delegates. This not only creates employment but also encourages a problem-solving mentality that

enables young people to create new opportunities. He acknowledged the challenges brought on by the shortage of qualified teachers, infrastructure and resources, but urged the government to support entrepreneurship education that enables and draws entrepreneurship into the broader ecosystem.

Mamabolo noted that greater acceptance of entrepreneurship in society is necessary, even from the business community itself. Businesses need to create a conducive environment for entrepreneurship to thrive, rewarding calculated risks that deliver innovation, she noted. Speaking to the rise of the 'side hustle', she said: "One of the important things is allowing side hustles within organisations. We are pleading with (Human Resources) Managers to develop policies that are supportive of side hustles within businesses because we've learnt that employees with side hustles are more creative and productive."

## Driving inclusivity in entrepreneurship

Mamabolo said effort is needed to support the intergenerational opportunity that exists in many entrepreneurial endeavours to transform them from jobs for life to legacy businesses that can support multiple generations. "We are behind in this and many businesses are struggling because there isn't proper succession planning," she explained.

While she spoke to the need for social diversity and inclusion in building local entrepreneurship and intergenerational opportunities, she cautioned against taking a blanket approach to growing entrepreneurial enterprises. "There are individuals whose motive is to just run that business, not to grow that business. Others want to grow and it is to these that we need to apply diagnostic tools."

Mamabolo stressed the importance of intermediaries to help entrepreneurs navigate the growth process: "The important thing is for us to go to the entrepreneurs in the townships because they will not come to the big cities. Township businesses are embedded within the community, so the community is the livelihood of the business. If we don't go to them there will never be a point where they are part and parcel of the ecosystem and not destroy the connections and interlinkages they have formulated to deal with the institutional voids we have in entrepreneurship."

## Qualities that drive successful entrepreneurship

While noting the qualities that guarantee entrepreneurial success can be hard to define, Merrington cited several characteristics that improve the likelihood of succeeding. Besides being resilient, he listed curiosity and flexibility as the necessary qualities of an entrepreneur. A willingness to listen to advice and act on it is also required, as is the ability to embrace technology and change.

"We're at an inflexion point in a wave of technology as big as the desktop computer and moving from analogue to digital. Generative AI (artificial intelligence) is going to have the same effect on us and the ability to embrace technology no matter what area of entrepreneurship you're operating in is critical. Those who can embrace change, technology and innovation in their business model are going to give themselves an advantage."



what

# Afrika Tikkun

means to me



**I'm ready for  
big school now**

Kgomotso, 5  
Preschool Learner

**A safe space  
to grow since  
grade 1**

Samuel, 17  
After-school Participant



**Finding my  
place in the  
world after  
matric**

Ruth, 20  
Gap-Year Participant

**I'm employed  
with the right  
skills**

Simphiwe, 26  
Career Development Programme  
Participant



**You've been in  
my life since  
I was 5 years o**

Abraham, 32  
Alumni Member

**Help me elevate  
my career**

Mukundi, 20  
Alumni Entrepreneur



## 30-years of commitment to nurturing young lives from cradle to career

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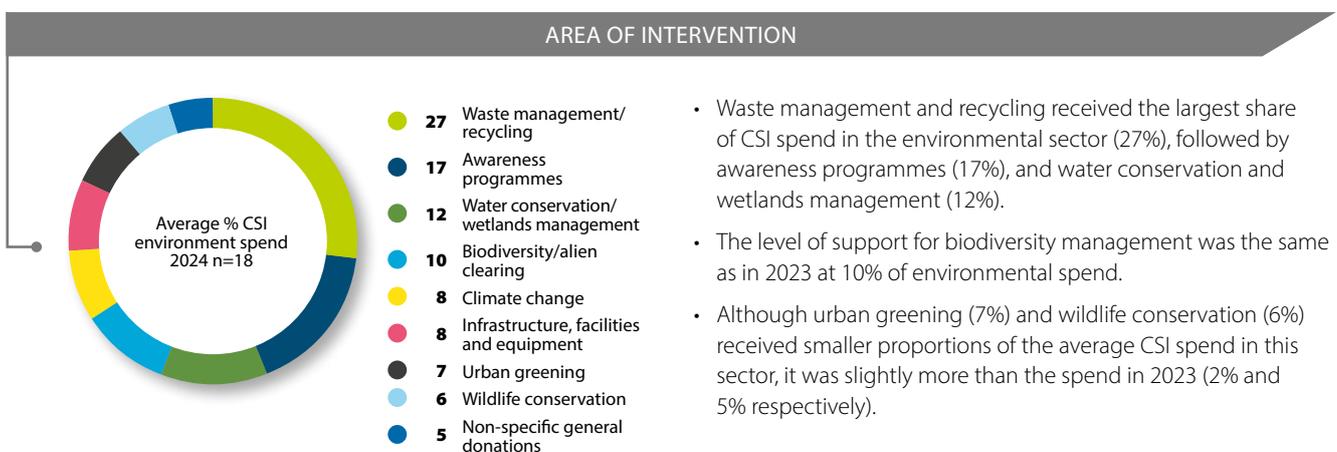
## ENVIRONMENT

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) was allocated R8.7 billion in 2024/25, constituting 0.4% of the consolidated government expenditure bill of R2.37 trillion, a decrease from R9.9 billion in 2023/24. As per the DFFE's annual performance plan, the largest allocations are R2.7 billion to environmental programmes and R1.3 billion to biodiversity and conservation.
- The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) took place in December 2023 in Dubai, during which for the first time nearly 200 countries agreed on the need to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems. The Loss and Damage Fund was established with initial commitments of US\$770 million to help vulnerable countries cope with climate disasters.
- According to the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies, the majority of South Africa's electrical energy in 2023/24 was generated from coal (78% of total system demand), with renewable energy supplying 9% of the demand. The South African system was unable to provide 4% of the electricity demand. Last year was the worst for load-shedding on record, with the country experiencing outages on 335 of 365 days. However, by 20 September 2024, there had been 177 consecutive days of uninterrupted power supply.
- The Just Transition survey, administered as part of the 2023 HSRC *South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS)*, found that very few South Africans (9%) have heard the term 'Just Transition' and know what it means. A majority of South Africans (62%) approve of the transition away from coal, but there are concerns about potential impacts, with one-third of respondents concerned about high electricity prices and 32% worried about job losses.
- The WWF's 2024 *Living Planet Report* found that the average population sizes of more than 5 000 species declined by 73% in the 50 years from 1970 to 2020.
- The UN Biodiversity Conference (COP16) took place in October 2024 in Colombia. It focused on taking stock of national biodiversity strategies and action plans for meeting the Global Biodiversity Framework, increasing the finance available for nature protection and restoration, and a global agreement to combat biopiracy by requiring users to pay for genetic information from nature.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Environment** was supported by 44% of companies and received 5% of average CSI expenditure.



## COLLABORATING TO ADVANCE BIODIVERSITY NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY AND BUSINESS NETWORK

CASE  
STUDY

In today's business landscape, the natural environment is more than just a backdrop; it is an essential component of the value chain. In South Africa, the National Biodiversity and Business Network (NBBN) plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration between various stakeholders to promote biodiversity conservation.

Founded in 2013 by the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), the NBBN is a unique consortium that brings together businesses, government entities, NPOs and academic institutions. This multifaceted network recognises the critical importance of biodiversity to business sustainability. As such, it works to empower organisations to become proactive agents of conservation.

With partnerships that initially included major players such as De Beers, Nedbank and Pick n Pay, the network has expanded its reach to include companies such as Eskom, Glencore, Shoprite, Mondi and Anglo-American.

One of the NBBN's primary goals is to equip businesses with the tools and knowledge necessary to manage their ecological footprint. Through training sessions and e-learning courses led by national and international experts, companies gain insights into biodiversity assessments, risk management and how to develop targets and action plans.

### Promoting sustainable business practices

The NBBN facilitates initiatives aimed at helping businesses incorporate biodiversity thinking and practices into their

operations. By conducting biodiversity assessments and offering sector-specific workshops, the network helps businesses tailor their strategies to align with environmental sustainability. It publishes annual ratings reports on the biodiversity performance of South African corporates.

Collaboration is at the heart of the NBBN's activities, evident in its ongoing projects with both the private and public sectors. The NBBN represents South Africa on the UN's Global Partnerships for Business and Biodiversity, and shares insights globally aimed at helping businesses minimise their ecological impact effectively.

The Business Action and Advocacy for the Planet project is supported by the Global Environment Facility and implemented in conjunction with Conservation International. It aims to foster dialogue between businesses and the South African government, driving policy ambitions to achieve a sustainable economy by 2030.

### Join the movement

The NBBN welcomes companies and nonprofits to join its ranks and become part of a vibrant community dedicated to biodiversity conservation. From joining free dialogues and events to participating in business advisory groups, organisations can choose the level of engagement, encouraging a diverse range of stakeholders to participate in this essential CSI work.

*"Through training sessions and e-learning courses led by national and international experts, companies gain insights into biodiversity assessments, risk management and how to develop targets and action plans."*

## VIEWPOINT



# Water security – a worsening crisis?



South Africa's water challenges have not received the same degree of public attention as the energy crisis, despite the 2023 cholera outbreak and other factors jeopardising the provision of clean, drinkable water. **Caroline Gelderblom**, Policy, Integration and Risk Manager of WWF South Africa explains how companies can help as we reach the midpoint on the path to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6: ensuring access to clean water and sanitation for all.

What are some of South Africa's most pressing water challenges and what are some contributing factors?

South Africa's available water (mean annual runoff) is one-seventh of the global average, according to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research's Green Book and we are already using over 98% of the available water. The National Water Resource Strategy 3 (NWRS-3) predicts an 18% deficit in water supply as early as 2030 and in many areas the availability of water is already a significant limitation for economic growth. In addition, the distribution of our rainfall is not near the demand centres, which means a very complex system is needed to transport water to where it is needed. In many places this is exacerbated by infrastructure challenges within municipalities, which result in inadequate basic services. As a result, three million South Africans do not have access to a basic water supply and over 14 million do not have safe sanitation.

Has underinvestment contributed to the current water crisis and, if so, what type of investments are needed most?

The Department of Water and Sanitation has acknowledged a R33 billion annual funding gap between what is needed for the maintenance of infrastructure and the current budget. This has contributed to the loss of 35% of water to leaks and, shockingly, that 56% of wastewater treatment works and 44% of water treatment works function poorly. A further 11% of water treatment works are regarded as being dysfunctional. The delivery of a regular supply of clean water ultimately depends on healthy catchments and this is where a further hidden crisis lies. The ecological infrastructure of our catchments has

also not been well maintained and maintenance is not adequately included in the department's budget projections. For example, many catchments have become infested with invasive alien plants, which use up to 60% of streamflow in droughts and dry seasons. Eroded catchments can result in very rapid siltation of dams, which severely decreases the quality of the water they can deliver.

Some of the water 'solutions' we have produced in the country are not necessarily ideal. Which sustainable solutions do we need to work towards and how can we achieve these goals?

The most cost-effective way to produce additional water, apart from fixing leaks and reducing demand, is to restore catchments by removing invasive alien plants. This nature-based solution is much more effective than any other option. In the case of Cape Town, in 2020 it was calculated that it would cost R2 to R3 per cubic metre for alien clearing vs R5 for groundwater use or R10 for desalination.

How do you think companies can help to mitigate the crisis and ensure the sustainable provision of good quality water?

Companies are exposed to two forms of water risk. The first is operational water risks, which are the outcomes of companies' internal actions and those of their suppliers that must be addressed by improved internal water stewardship and procurement policies. The second is basin risk, which can only be reduced through collective action that improves the condition of the broader catchment. The WWF Water Risk Filter is a free global tool that allows companies to assess and respond to both forms of risk.

Can you highlight collaborative efforts on the part of the different stakeholders – the government, companies or NPOs – to overcome the challenges we face and what has made these efforts successful?

Our strategic water source areas cover only 10% of South Africa, Lesotho and Eswatini, but they produce over 50% of our water and support 64% of our economy and over 90% of the people living in large metros. The national importance of these strategic water source areas has been recognised in several key pieces of national legislation. In response, water source partnerships have been established in several water source areas for the public and private sectors to take proactive collective action to restore catchments and reduce exposure to water risk. These partnerships involve all spheres of government – national, provincial and local – and companies active in the water, environmental, development planning and agricultural sectors to work together on collaborative planning and implementation. The Development Bank of Southern Africa has recently established a new Water Partnership Office, which will blend finance to support the adaptation of working with municipalities and the private sector to improve built water infrastructure. It is hoped this will be enhanced by the allocation of finance to the restoration of supportive ecological infrastructure.

### CAROLINE GELDERBLOM

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# Practical solutions at the heart of the Shoprite Group's sustainability agenda

How environmental stewardship and sustainability are embedded in the retailer's business strategy

**Sanjeev Raghur, Chief Sustainability Officer, explains how Africa's largest retailer embedded sustainability throughout the business and continues to collaborate for impact.**



Our purpose of uplifting lives every day is central to our long-term value creation, which sets the tone and foundation of our sustainability efforts, guiding us towards a future where our business prospers in harmony with the environment and society.

The Group prioritises sustainable practices, reducing our environmental impact through responsible consumption and production. Our commitment extends to minimising climate change by focusing our attention on renewable energy, water conservation, waste management, sustainable packaging, responsible sourcing and biodiversity preservation.

## What are some of the practical things the Shoprite Group is doing around energy efficiency?

Our energy resilience plan focuses on reducing grid dependency by increasing energy efficiency and expanding renewable energy use. This year we sourced 6.5% (exceeding our target of 5.5%) of our electricity from renewable sources, thanks primarily to 82 solar photovoltaic (PV) systems across 77 sites. We're also exploring wheeling, which involves purchasing renewable electricity from independent producers and have been trialling this in the Eastern and Western Cape.

Currently, 10.5% of the electricity used in our distribution centres comes from renewable energy. We plan to add more solar panels to suitable rooftops and carports. Our installed capacity of over 36 000 kilowatt peak (kWp) generates enough clean energy to power nearly 10 200 households annually, significantly reducing our carbon footprint.

In our fleet we've improved energy efficiency by optimising routes, upgrading our fleet with fuel-efficient trucks and installing solar PV panels on 1 488 trailers, which save 3.2 litres of diesel per trailer each day and has resulted in a reduction of approximately 6 010 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e).



## How does such a large supermarket retailer manage waste?

We are committed to reducing and managing waste to minimise effects on human health and the environment, while promoting the concept of the circular economy to eliminate or repurpose 'waste' into new resources.

In the last financial year we diverted 80 709 tonnes of waste from landfills, up from 72 000 tonnes in the previous year, with a focus on reducing both edible food waste and non-edible organic waste sent to landfills, improving packaging sustainability, and increasing plastic and cardboard recycling rates.

Our food donation programme ensures surplus food is redirected to those in need, rather than going to waste. We donated R233.9 million worth of food and goods to over 500 organisations in the past year.

## What steps is the Group taking to promote sustainable packaging and reduce its environmental impact?

Packaging plays a crucial role in protecting products and reducing food waste, but it can also contribute to environmental problems, especially plastic waste. We are committed to working with suppliers to minimise waste and promote sustainable packaging solutions.

Currently, 98.7% of our in-store packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable, with an average recycled content of 83.4%. All paper packaging in our delis, bakeries and fresh fish departments is responsibly sourced and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council or Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

Our goal is for 100% of our private label packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025, with 30% average recycled content.

## MAKING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS

Usave, part of the Shoprite Group, was announced the Overall Winner at the 2024 South African Plastic Recycling Organisation (SAPRO) Awards and won Gold in the Rigid Plastic category for its Ubrand Safety-First Thin Bleach bottle. Made from 100% post-consumer recycled plastic and post-production waste, our Usave Thin Bleach contains zero virgin plastic. The bleach bottle is fully recyclable with a child-safe lid and has braille for blind and visually impaired customers.

Visit [shopriteholdings.co.za/sustainability](https://shopriteholdings.co.za/sustainability) for more information



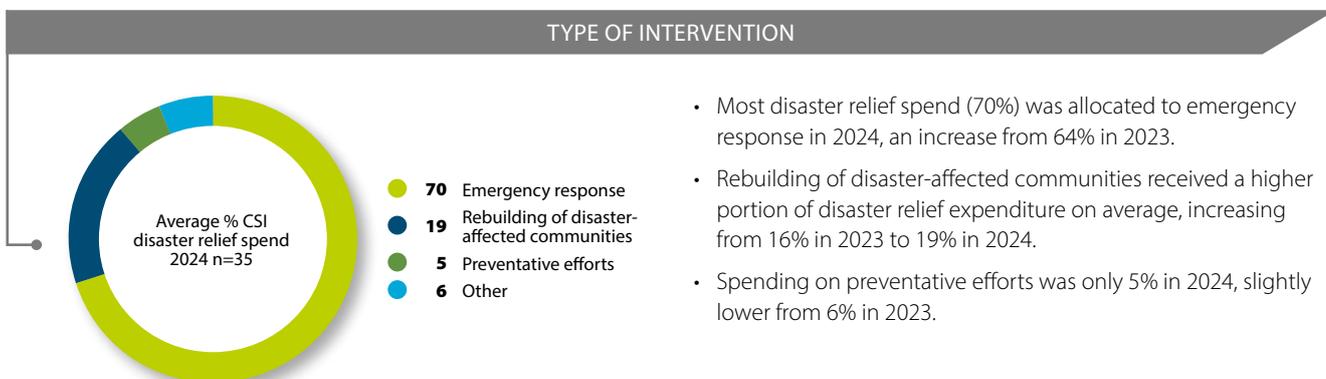
## DISASTER RELIEF

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The National Disaster Management Centre within the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs was allocated R1.4 billion for emergency disaster relief in 2024/25, an increase of around 50% from R932 million in 2023/24.
- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reports that the increasing frequency and severity of weather and climate extremes disproportionately affect African economies and societies. Climate-related hazards including droughts, floods, cyclones and heatwaves exacerbate food insecurity, water scarcity and displacement, and cause African countries to lose, on average, 2% to 5% of their GDP annually, with many countries diverting up to 9% of their budgets into unplanned expenditures to respond to extreme weather events.
- In 2024, South Africa experienced severe flooding, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. By April 2024, National Treasury had released R372 million from the Municipal Disaster Recovery Grant for almost 200 projects in municipalities across seven provinces affected by floods in recent times.
- The Early Warnings for All initiative (EW4All), launched at COP27 in 2022 and led by the WMO and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, aims to ensure that everyone on earth is protected by early warning systems by the end of 2027. Engagement at COP28 promoted the scale-up of end-to-end early warning systems, showcasing significant progress in countries including South Sudan, Mauritius and Tonga. South Africa has started to develop an EW4All National Roadmap.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

Disaster relief was supported by 57% of companies and received 4% of average CSI expenditure.



## COORDINATING DISASTER RELIEF IN PARTS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

CASE  
STUDY

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is a global humanitarian organisation supporting vulnerable communities before, during and after crises, uniting 191 National Societies and reaching 160 million people yearly. It promotes global humanitarian standards and supports vulnerable populations through a strong volunteer network, community expertise and a commitment to independence as it serves all people needing humanitarian support. Guided by Strategy 2030, the IFRC promotes safe, resilient communities worldwide.

In southern Africa, the Pretoria Cluster Delegation supports five National Societies in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Eswatini.

The IFRC integrates disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation throughout its work, leveraging technology to predict and respond proactively to crises. By using tools for risk anticipation and predictive financing, the IFRC helps to minimise the impact of disasters, enabling faster and more efficient resource allocation to support vulnerable communities before disasters strike. It also focuses on building the capabilities of volunteers so that they can respond to complex humanitarian situations.

According to Kopano Masilo, the IFRC Head of Pretoria Cluster Delegation, the organisation emphasises enhancing the operational capacities of National Societies through training programmes, shared resource mobilisation and strategic partnerships. Through its commitment to localisation the IFRC recognises the importance of programmes tailored to local needs and cultural contexts.

National Societies often collaborate with their respective governments and are auxiliary partners in humanitarian services. This partnership is based on mutual agreements that define roles and responsibilities, ensuring that humanitarian needs are met effectively within legal frameworks.

During the severe flooding in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in 2022, the IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal (EA) for 8 million Swiss francs (CHF) to support relief efforts targeting 30 000 individuals affected by the floods.

This included providing food, clean water and psychosocial support while also addressing longer-term recovery plans. This was in support of the South African Red Cross Society alongside government agencies, local businesses and other humanitarian organisations to ensure a coordinated and effective response, emphasising community involvement to enhance resilience against future disasters.

The IFRC is currently responding to the severe drought across southern Africa, caused by the 2023/24 El Niño weather pattern. This crisis has resulted in acute food insecurity, malnutrition and water shortages for millions of people, further aggravated by declining humanitarian funding. In response, the Lesotho Red Cross Society launched an Emergency Appeal on 6 September 2024,

seeking CHF5 million to assist approximately 87 381 individuals facing food insecurity, with 700 000 people at risk of hunger due to crop failures. Similarly, the Namibia Red Cross Society also initiated an Emergency Appeal on the same date, requesting CHF5 million to support 140 000 individuals out of 1.4 million affected by drought, with urgent needs for food and clean water. These appeals are part of a broader initiative by the IFRC to address the worsening humanitarian conditions caused by the drought, contributing to the Pan-African Zero Hunger Initiative aimed at eradicating hunger across the continent through sustainable solutions.

The IFRC supports National Societies to foster resilient communities through a holistic approach that includes disaster risk reduction, preparedness training and efficient response mechanisms, helping communities tackle both present and future challenges of disasters and climate change. Prioritising community involvement ensures that these strategies are both contextually relevant and sustainable in the long run. "The IFRC also aids National Societies in implementing Disaster Risk Reduction through various innovative and strategic initiatives, such as the Pan-Africa Tree Planting and Care Initiative, which strengthens environmental resilience by reducing soil erosion and enhancing water retention," says Masilo.

*"The IFRC integrates disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation throughout its work, leveraging technology to predict and respond proactively to crises."*



# From crisis to change: Impactful disaster relief investing



Disasters are common in South Africa and beyond, but they are becoming more frequent and intense. In 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*, identified the SADC region as a climate change hotspot. In addition, global warming can be said to increase the risk of epidemic infectious diseases like Covid-19.

In July 2024, Trialogue and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) presented a webinar exploring how companies can invest more strategically in disaster risk reduction. The panellists were **Tebogo Molefe**, CSI Head at the IDC, **Dr Moses Khangale**, Manager: Stakeholder Programmes at Santam, and **Kopano Masilo**, Head of the Pretoria Cluster Delegation at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

## Agile, adaptive relief initiatives

The IDC's social responsibility programmes focus on education and skills development, developing entrepreneurs and consumer education. In addition, the development finance institution has a strategic portfolio for initiatives that fall outside of these focus areas.

In 2022, it set up a R500 million Flood Relief Fund in KwaZulu-Natal. "[Of this], R400 million supported affected businesses and about 60% of the R40 million allocated to our CSI initiatives went towards immediate relief for communities, while 40% went towards rebuilding infrastructure," said Molefe. "This included affected early childhood development (ECD) centres – one of our focus areas."

Dr Khangale told webinar attendees that disaster relief is central to Santam's core business and falls within the ambit of the company's Partnership for Risk and Resilience Programme. This focuses on strengthening risk management with selected municipalities, prioritising disaster relief relating to fire, floods and drought. Social impact initiatives are managed by a separate CSI department.

The IFRC is the largest humanitarian network in the world, with a mandate to prevent and alleviate human suffering among those facing disaster, conflict, and health and social challenges.

Masilo said IFRC members are trained as first responders but the organisation also "invests in resilience building and anticipatory actions – for example, we look at how to improve early warning systems, which helps to reduce the cost of relief".

## Thinking strategically about disaster response

For companies that want to invest in disaster response, several strategies could make such investments more impactful. The first is collaboration. "Without strategic partnerships, you are doomed to failure," Molefe noted.

Dr Khangale urged companies to partner with the government before disasters occur, particularly as the bulk of the work is often done pre-disaster and relief is "down the value chain". He said it is vital to become an active member of a provincial or district forum, which helps when disaster hits and you want to ascertain the needs on the ground as well as avoid duplicating effort.

"Everyone wants to distribute food parcels, but there are other critical needs not being addressed, such as plastic sheeting for temporary roofing," he pointed out.

Masilo said companies should consider getting involved in some of the capacity-building activities the IFRC carries out. "Even when there is no disaster, we are always at work, building systems and training volunteers," he said. The IFRC has a youth programme and recruits and trains volunteers, aiming to create employment opportunities. For example, young people who pass the First Aid course can offer training to corporates. The IFRC partnered with FoodForward SA's youth skills programme to tackle youth unemployment.

Another strategy is for companies to use their convening power to mobilise other businesses to respond to disasters.

Dr Khangale added that companies should avoid working with organisations that are not mandated to work within certain communities. "You want to be sure an organisation remains within the community and your interventions are institutionalised," he said. "Ideally, they should remain in place beyond your presence or be integrated into municipal development plans."

Companies with a presence in these communities, such as wholesalers or hardware stores, could consider putting together "starter packs" as part of their CSI initiatives "to assist communities to rebuild after a disaster", said Dr Khangale.

## Recommendations for companies and NPOs

Each delegate shared their 'top tips' on how corporates and NPOs can improve their disaster relief efforts:

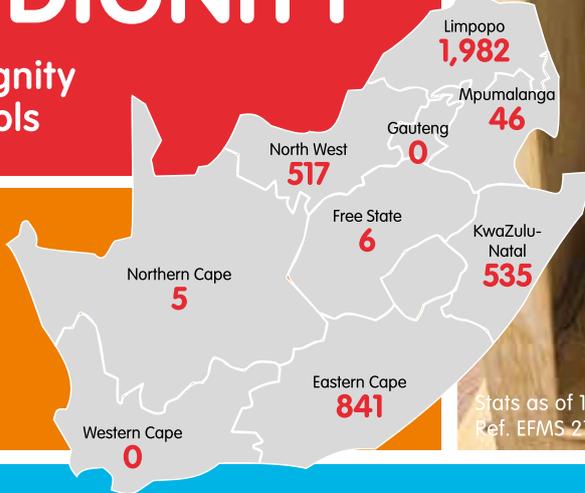
- Molefe said companies need to be more flexible in their requirements, while NPOs need to help provide training and capacity in communities to help them become more resilient.
- Dr Khangale recommended that companies get involved in community-based disaster reduction initiatives to help reduce risk while urging NPOs to engage local authorities to streamline their contributions.
- Masilo asked companies to look at the humanitarian industry as an investment while urging NPOs to establish branches of their organisations in communities and use technology to mitigate risk.



# HELP US FIGHT FOR CHILDREN'S DIGNITY

End the shame and restore dignity by replacing pit toilets in schools

**MORE THAN 1 MILLION CHILDREN AFFECTED**  
**3,932 SCHOOLS STILL USE PIT TOILETS IN SOUTH AFRICA**



Stats as of 1 September 2024  
 Ref. EFMS 21 August 2023



## ERADICATING SCHOOL PIT TOILETS SINCE 2023



**2064**  
Facilities



over 30 years

**845**  
ECD and school toilets



**25**  
Schools in 1 year



**399**  
Unsafe pits sealed



**607**  
Eco-friendly low-flush toilets and waterless urinals



**12,317**  
Learners and staff benefited

## WHAT MAKES BREADLINE AFRICA DIFFERENT?



High-quality, durable, RSA-made components (Agrément, NHBC approved)

Up to 80% local labour

Offer **multiple solutions** at sites



**Adhere** to government norms & standards



**Close & seal pits**

Complete in **less than a month**



Complete turnkey solution **R35K - R40K per seat**



**Engage** with traditional leaders & local education departments



In-depth **monitoring & impact reporting**

**5-year maintenance contract** (inspections & desludging as required)



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Guided by the Nurturing Care Framework, we work with partners to ensure children's essential needs are met for a brighter future.





# Partnership for Risk and Resilience (P4RR)

Partnership for Risk and Resilience (P4RR) is Santam's flagship programme aimed at building societal resilience through collaboration and partnerships with all spheres of government, state owned entities, research and academic institutions, community-based organisations, private sector agencies to co-create initiatives to enhance institutional capacity of mandated organisations to manage disaster risks focusing on three primary hazards i.e., drought, fires and floods Santam initiated the P4RR programme in 2012 in response to the South African government's call for the corporate community to support critical skills development

and capacity building within municipalities within the framework of the Business Adopt a Municipality (BAAM).

Partnerships between government, communities, private sector – including insurance companies, civil society formations is in line with the “all of society approach” advocated in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. A programme such as Santam's Partnership for Risk and Resilience is a model that could be replicated by other companies and across national jurisdictions.

## Key P4RR Highlights



**14 MUNICIPALITIES**  
participated in the CSIR's **GreenBook rollout**.



**23.3 MILLION PEOPLE**  
benefitted from P4RR initiatives.



**95 MUNICIPALITIES**  
supported since inception.

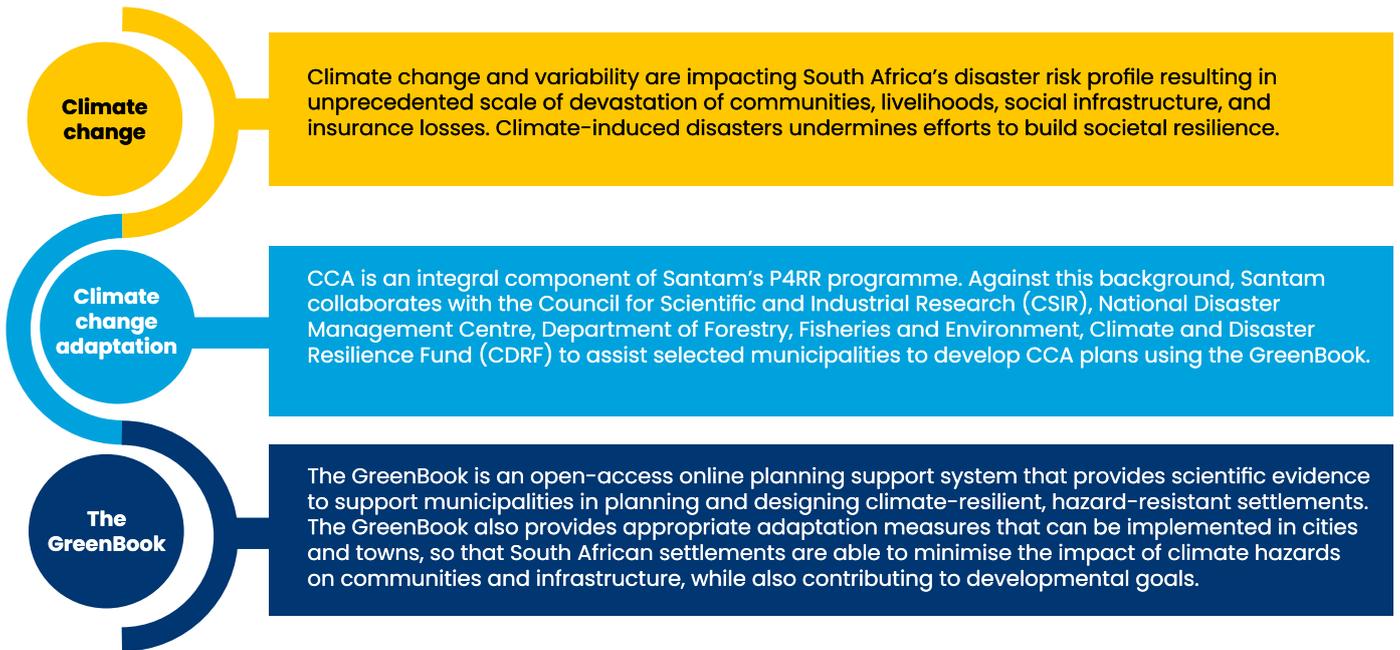


**OVER 66 000 PEOPLE**  
reached with targeted **disaster risk education**.



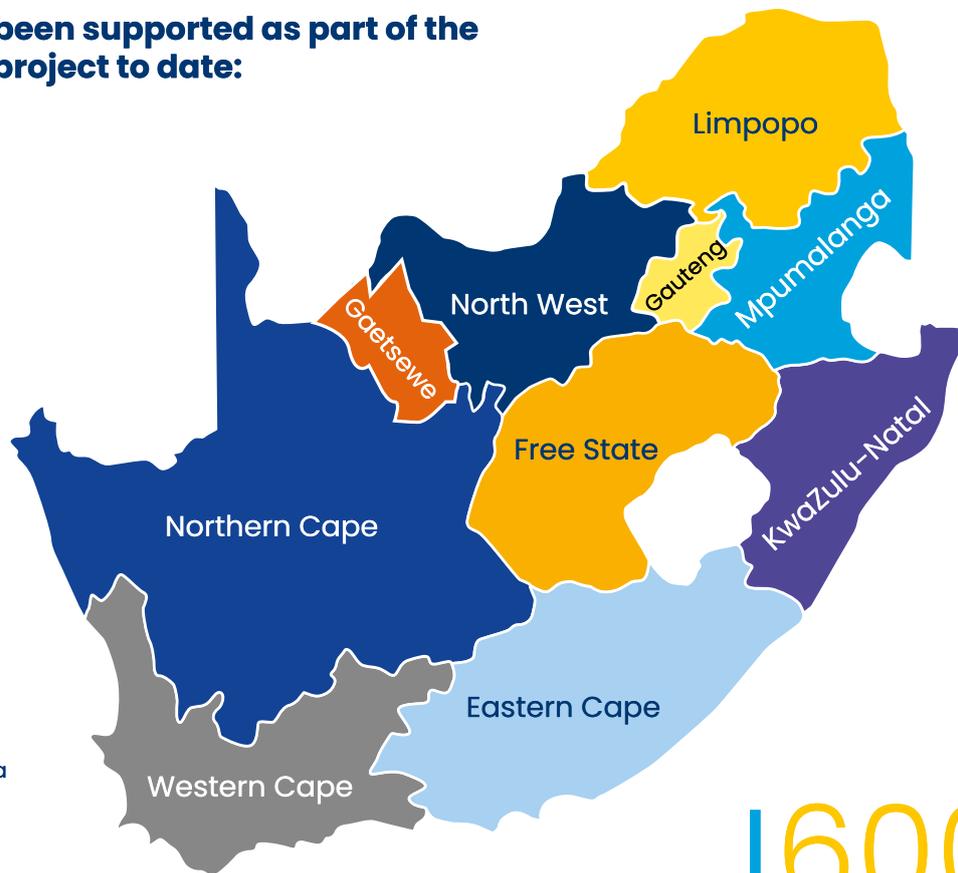
**OVER 700 PEOPLE**  
trained in firefighting, safety, disaster management and related courses.

# Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) support to municipalities



## Districts that have been supported as part of the GreenBook rollout project to date:

1. Vhembe
2. Mopani
3. Capricorn
4. Waterberg
5. Sekhukhune
6. Bojanala
7. Nkangala
8. Ehlanzeni
9. Namakwa
10. Alfred Nzo
11. Buffalo City
12. Sarah Baartman
13. Joe Gqabi
14. Garden Route
15. Overberg
16. Cape Winelands
17. Sedibeng
18. West Rand
19. Lejweleputswa
20. Thabo Mofutsanyana
21. uMgungundlovu
22. Ugu
23. John Taolo



**600:**

As part of supporting climate change adaptation efforts, Santam will continue to plant indigenous trees in three different Districts participating in the GreenBook. These districts include West Rand, Ugu and Alfred Nzo. The indigenous trees will be planted in selected schools, fire stations and community facilities.

**200:**

Santam donated and planted 200 indigenous trees on 3 October 2023 in Capricorn District as part of supporting CCA efforts. Vegetation indigenous to South Africa generally requires far less irrigation and forms an important part of the defence of cities against climate change. The 200 trees were planted in selected special needs schools, fire stations and traditional council facilities.



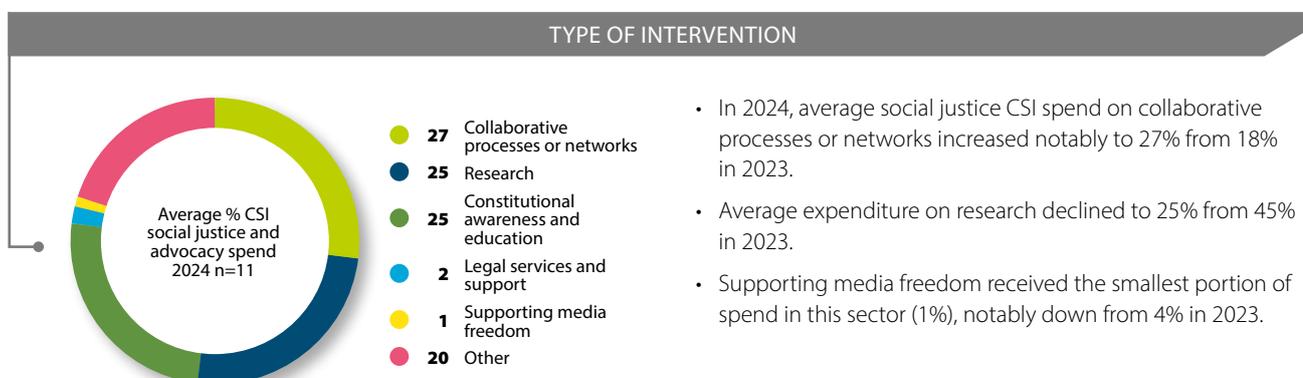
## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

- According to the World Bank, South Africa has the highest income inequality in the world of countries with data, with a Gini coefficient of 0.67. The richest 20% of South Africa's population hold nearly 70% of the income, while the poorest 40% of South Africans hold 7% of the national income.
- South Africa also has the highest unemployment rate in the world at 33.5% (8.4 million unemployed people), with an expanded unemployment rate – which includes those who are not looking for work – of 42.6% (Stats SA data for the second quarter of 2024).
- According to Municipal IQ, South Africa experienced 198 service delivery protests in 2023, mainly driven by issues such as electricity blackouts, water shortages and other municipal service failures. In 2024, there were 122 major protests recorded in the first six months alone, with a spike in May 2024 around the time of the elections. Protests are expected to decline with the reduction in load-shedding.
- On 10 July 2024, judgment was handed down in the inquest into the deaths of 141 mental health patients who died in 2016 and 2017 when they were moved from Life Esidimeni facilities. It was found that the former Gauteng Health Member of the Executive Council (MEC) and former head of mental health could be held responsible for the deaths of at least nine patients. The National Prosecuting Authority will review the judgment to decide if there will be criminal prosecutions.
- August 2024 marked the 12th anniversary of the Marikana massacre. Despite efforts to secure justice and accountability for the families of the deceased miners, the state has yet to prosecute anyone for the events of August 2012. In September 2024, the Mahikeng High Court acquitted six police officers who were standing trial for their involvement in the events.
- 31 August 2024 marked a year since the Usindiso building fire in Marshalltown that claimed the lives of 77 people including 12 children, and left many more injured and destitute. There has been no justice for the families of those that died and the survivors have not yet been provided with alternative housing or compensation for their loss.
- The 6th Annual Social Justice Summit, held in October 2024, was themed 'Social Justice and the Sustainable Development Goal on Zero Hunger (SDG 2)', highlighting that there cannot be sustainable democracy or social justice if people are hungry.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Social justice and advocacy** were supported by 20% of companies and received 2% of average CSI expenditure.



## FUNDING SYSTEMIC CHANGE SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

CASE  
STUDY

The Social Justice Initiative (SJI) is an NPO founded in 2013. It focuses on maximising the impact of available resources to create a more equitable society and to mobilise resources for critical aspects of social justice work in South Africa. It works with civil society initiatives under three broad themes: access to justice, governance and accountability; transparency including independent media; and state capacitation. The SJI adopts a social change funds model for resource mobilisation, where the organisation fundraises for, manages, monitors and reports on the impact of these funds from a social and systems change perspective.

In 2016, the SJI and a group of businesswomen raised more than R300 000 for work related to gender-based violence (GBV). Four centres providing care for Johannesburg-based GBV survivors were supported. In 2020, it partnered with the South African National Editors' Forum during the Covid-19 pandemic to roll out emergency funding for journalists who had lost their livelihood and had not received retrenchment packages as well as freelancers who were retrenched or had their contracts cancelled from the date of implementation of the national lockdown on 26 March 2020. More than 430 journalists benefited from the fund, with corporate donors including FirstRand, MTN, Nedbank, Allan Gray, Old Mutual, Standard Bank, philanthropic foundation Open Society Foundation for South Africa and Yellowwoods Social Investments.

Currently, the organisation is more focused on systemic change. In 2023, it launched the New Futures Fund (NFF), which promotes and supports interventions that centre the role of citizens as key actors in deepening and sustaining

South Africa's democracy in the long term. The fund aims to bring about systems change by supporting work that increases citizen participation in formal democratic processes and advocating for increased state capacitation to address key service delivery challenges communities face. The goals of the fund include improving citizen engagement and public participation, supporting electoral reform initiatives, and advocating for capacitating the state by ensuring legislative oversight, greater executive accountability and service delivery as well as administrators and public officials being capable and responsive to their

constituents. Implementing partners include the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, My Vote Counts, the Democracy Development Program, PlanAct, the Public Affairs Research Institute, Pathways Institute, South African Institute of International Affairs in partnership with the Rivonia Circle, and Media Monitoring Africa.

The SJI also hosts an annual learning session that fosters collaboration and peer learning among implementing partners. "Our partners gather to share aspects of their work, along with successes and challenges," says Portfolio Manager Noxolo Ntaka. "It is here where partners have begun to find synergies in the work with the intent to collaborate outside of formal SJI engagements as well."

In raising funds for a common goal and collaborating with partners to achieve its objectives, the SJI hopes to unlock new funding sources for important social justice work across the country. The SJI aims to create a platform that unearths less visible interventions and showcases social justice organisations, contributing positively towards a thriving and sustainable social justice sector.

*"The fund aims to bring about systems change by supporting work that increases citizen participation in formal democratic processes and advocating for increased state capacitation to address key service delivery challenges communities face."*



## Why corporates should engage with social justice advocacy



Corporate engagement with social justice advocacy is an important and overlooked area of responsible business. Such advocacy can enhance a company's societal responsiveness and legitimacy, but the private sector typically shies away from engaging with it. Development practitioner **Louise Jones** shares her research insights.

### What is social justice advocacy?

The social justice definition I like most is simply "Everyday justice in the lives of ordinary people", as the Edmund Rice Centre puts it. Expanded further, it is about fairness and equity within economic, social, political and ecological systems. Add advocacy into the mix and social justice advocacy becomes *action(s)* taken to address *structural unfairness and inequity*. These actions can range from research, community mobilisation, information-sharing, capacity building, policy advocacy and litigation (at its most extreme).

Examples of social justice issues include zero-rating public benefit organisations' websites to enable free information and services for marginalised communities (the DG Murray Trust), school sanitation and the eradication of pit latrines (Section27) and tackling unscrupulous debt collection practices which disadvantage vulnerable debtors (Stellenbosch University Law Clinic).

You conducted research into why South Africa's private sector is reluctant to get involved in social justice advocacy. How was this research carried out and what are the key findings?

While corporate social investment (CSI) efforts can contribute somewhat to socioeconomic development, advocacy work deepens social impact and extends corporate responsibility to the public sphere. To better understand why more corporates do not support social justice advocacy, I opted for a qualitative approach to my research and gathered data through 11 semi-structured interviews across three target groups: corporates not funding social justice advocacy; corporates funding social justice advocacy; and social justice organisations.

Six inhibiting factors were identified: ignorance of social justice concepts;

a fear of reputational risk; a short-term profit orientation; a compliance mindset; disconnectedness from their operating environment; and recognition that a business' view of its purpose will determine its level of societal engagement. The fundamental premise is that having evidence-based insights into corporate rationale on this topic will enable more constructive engagements going forward.

### What are some of the conclusions drawn from your research?

The metafindings show that corporate engagement with social justice advocacy *is always going to hold ideological tension*, which sits at the nexus of how a business views its role in society, how it manages its accountability and accessibility, and how it uses its power in the public sphere. Where a business conducts itself ethically, transparently and inclusively across these three areas, there will be less ideological tension with social justice advocacy. The reverse holds true as well. Corporates should integrate social justice advocacy into their sustainability strategies as part of regular business practice, but it is *how* they go about engaging in this space that is most important.

### Are there examples of business engagement with social justice advocacy?

There are approximately 275 companies listed on the JSE and yet it is still difficult to find businesses who engage with social justice advocacy. Based on their annual reports, some corporates have taken steps towards advocacy work and these examples can help to stimulate new ways of thinking about corporate responsibility in the public sphere:

- Futuregrowth Asset Management and Old Mutual Investment Group, working with shareholder advocacy organisation Just Share, funded independent research into whistle-blower protection in South Africa.

- Massmart funds Section27, a nonprofit legal advocacy organisation and, more recently, research into drivers of gender-based violence and alcohol abuse in South Africa, through the Wits University Female Academic Leadership Fellowship.
- Standard Bank has an Expanded Democracy Support Programme to strengthen systems of democracy and its stakeholder engagement strategy includes special interest and advocacy groups, analysts, researchers and think tanks. This formalises access for more diverse stakeholders, including potentially critical voices.

### What are your recommendations to companies that want to get involved?

Businesses can get involved *responsibly* with social justice advocacy by formally integrating social justice advocacy into their corporate sustainability strategy to strengthen the public sphere. This speaks to the 'S' in environmental, social and governance principles and should (ideally) be board-approved and CEO-led. Companies should also develop a stakeholder engagement policy that includes social justice partners and specialists to inform their social justice policy. This formalises access and opens valuable channels for dialogue.

Further recommendations include funding social justice organisations that will capacitate civil society and advance advocacy work, having leaders speak out on the social issues companies are driving and avoiding an ad hoc approach with a 'business-as-usual' mindset. Corporates should be value-invested in the long-term social change they are working towards.

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## VIEWPOINT



# Are migrant and refugee rights under threat?



The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) has gazetted the *White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection: Towards a complete overhaul of the Migration System in South Africa* (White Paper).

**Nabeelah Mia**, Head: Penal Reform Programme at Lawyers for Human Rights, explains what impact this may have.

### What are the aims of the White Paper?

The White Paper seeks to amend the immigration and citizenship framework, specifically the Citizenship Act 88 of 1995, Immigration Act 13 of 2002 and Refugees Act 130 of 1998 on the alleged basis that the reason for the dysfunctionality of the DHA is partly attributed to the fact that these pieces of legislation are not in harmony with one another.

### What changes do the White Paper introduce that differ from the current framework?

With respect to refugee protection measures, the White Paper proposes South Africa's review and/or withdrawal from the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention) and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (1967 Protocol) with the intention to re-accede with reservations and exceptions that seek to restrict the rights to work, healthcare and education for refugees and asylum seekers.

In respect of citizenship rights, the White Paper proposes repealing the Citizenship Act and reviewing the pathways to citizenship by naturalisation, specifically section 4(3) of the Act, which enables children born in South Africa to refugee, migrant or stateless parents to access South African citizenship. Moreover, it proposes the repeal of the Birth and Deaths Registration Act 51 of 1992.

With respect to the immigration framework, the White Paper proposes a review of the Border Management Authority Act 2 of 2020 to align it with the new immigration and citizenship policy framework. The new policy framework should include the establishment of a cross-governmental Department Advisory Board that includes representatives of the departments of Trade, Industry and Competition; Labour and Employment; Tourism; Education; International Relations and Cooperation; Defence; and Military Veterans; the Director-General of the DHA; South African Police Service; South African Revenue Service; and representatives of organised labour.

Furthermore, it envisions the adoption of legislation giving effect to strengthened

powers of immigration officers and inspectorate, the implementation of quotas for the employment of migrants and the establishment of immigration courts as contemplated by the first iteration of the Immigration Act.

It has been argued that some of the provisions in the White Paper may undermine human rights. Please describe which provisions these are and what can be done about it?

The provisions in question are those that:

- Seek to restrict pathways to citizenship through the proposed amendments to the citizenship legal framework. These post crucial legal safeguards against statelessness for children born in South Africa to refugee, migrant or stateless parents. Imposing stricter criteria for citizenship will increase the risk of statelessness, particularly among vulnerable groups like unaccompanied/separated/orphaned/abandoned children.
- Propose that South Africa withdraw from the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, which would no longer bind South Africa to the international legal obligations outlined in these documents. Although the White Paper suggests that South Africa will re-sign these treaties with certain reservations and exceptions, this would have severe implications for the current rights afforded to refugees and asylum seekers, especially those rights covered by the provisions to which South Africa would seek to make reservations.

### Does the White Paper address the issue of skilled immigration?

It is important to consider the White Paper's perspective on what is termed 'economic migrants' holistically. The following key points must be noted:

- The DHA welcomes the opportunity to enter into public-private partnerships with organisations such as AgriCulture South Africa and agrees to quotas as proposed in the Labour Migration Policy submitted by the Department of Labour and DHA to the National Economic Development and Labour Council.
- An audit of all spaza shops will be conducted by municipalities to ensure

spaza shops are registered and to establish the immigration status of owners. Municipalities will introduce by-laws around the location, and health and safety requirements for these businesses.

- The Critical Skills List will be reviewed and certain professions/qualifications will be removed from the list.
- There will be a review of the current visas provided under the Immigration Act and certain visa regimes such as the relatives, corporate and intra-company visas will be abolished. The following visas will be introduced: limited-duration permanent resident (linked to minimum investment), e-visas for tourists and remote working visas.

### What was the reaction of civil society to the White Paper?

As Lawyers for Human Rights, while we welcome the review and harmonisation of the legal framework governing the citizenship, immigration and refugee framework, we call for the DHA to withdraw this draft and allow for more time for public consultations and a redraft of the paper with the assistance and leadership of the South African Law Reform Commission. We note that the new Minister of Home Affairs has requested a legal opinion on the constitutionality of the proposals set out in the White Paper and welcome this.

### Is there a role for CSI in citizenship, immigration and refugee issues and, if so, what do you recommend companies support?

Yes. We recommend that business uses its positioning and relationships with the government regarding the proposed amendments that will negatively affect it and are contrary to human rights. We further recommend that business engages with the government to promote pathways to the regularisation of migrants in South Africa that benefit the country economically and socially, and continues to uphold South Africa's stature as a beacon of human rights on the continent.

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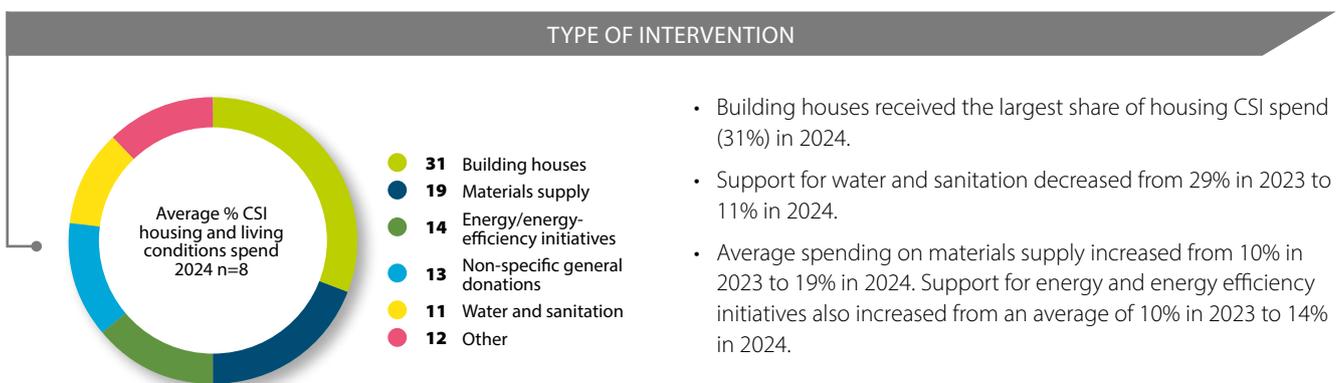
## HOUSING AND LIVING CONDITIONS

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The national budget allocated to human settlement, and water and electrification programmes decreased from R61.7 billion in 2023/24 to R59.2 billion in 2024/25, constituting 2.5% of consolidated government expenditure of R2.37 trillion.
- According to Stats SA's 2023 *General Household Survey*, the percentage of households that live in formal dwellings increased from 73% in 2002 to 83% in 2023. The percentage of South African households that were connected to the main electricity supply increased from 76% in 2002 to 89% in 2023. The percentage of households with upgraded sanitation facilities, including flush toilets and pit toilets with ventilation pipes, rose from 61% to 83% in 2023. However, only 45% of households had access to piped water in their dwellings in 2023 (up from 43% in 2002), while 29% accessed water on-site, 11% relied on communal or neighbours' taps, and 3% of households still had to fetch water from rivers and other sources.
- The Department of Human Settlements (DHS) has delivered 4.9 million housing opportunities since 1994 and has issued a total of 1 450 862 title deeds, according to the DHS annual performance plan for 2022/23. According to the National Housing Finance Corporation, South Africa has a housing backlog of over 2.3 million units, with an estimated 13.6 million people living in inadequate housing.
- The Global Action Plan Framework on Informal Settlements and Slums was launched in October 2022 and aims to accelerate the transformation of informal settlements and slums by 2030. Spearheaded by the South African government and the UN Human Settlements Programme, the framework focuses on ensuring access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for all. According to the DHS, there were 4 297 informal settlements, home to more than 2 million households, across South Africa in 2023, most of which are concentrated in the major metropolitan areas of Johannesburg, Cape Town and eThekweni. South Africa has committed to upgrading 1 500 informal settlements by 2026 through the Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme (ISUP).

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Housing and living conditions** were supported by 16% of companies and received 1% of average CSI expenditure.



## NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP STRIVES TO QUENCH SOUTH AFRICA'S THIRST STRATEGIC WATER PARTNERS NETWORK

CASE  
STUDY

South Africa's water woes have been the subject of concern for several decades. Despite multiple water emergencies and ample warning of an impending national water crisis, little headway has been made in improving the situation.

The majority of the country's dams are overexploited, with two-thirds of our rivers in poor condition. According to the 2023 *Blue Drop Water Report*, as much as 15% of South Africa's water supply systems are in poor or critical condition. For a country ranked as one of the top 30 driest countries in the world, good water management is essential to general wellbeing and water security.

In response to looming water scarcity challenges, the Strategic Water Partners Network (SWPN) emerged to bridge South Africa's projected water supply-demand gap. This partnership, co-chaired by the Department of Water and Sanitation and South African Breweries, brings together government agencies, private enterprises and civil society organisations to collectively tackle water security challenges.

SWPN Executive Secretary Peter Varndell notes that partnerships are central to the organisation's work. He adds that the collaborative's successful initiatives over the years in the agricultural, municipal and mine water sectors earned SWPN the international State-of-the-Art Partnership of the Year Award in the clean water category in 2018.

The collaboration brings together diverse stakeholders to assess problems and opportunities and take a practical approach to problem-solving, serving as an incubator for water management solutions. Joint discussions then evolve into concrete projects, which are carefully tested, refined and ultimately scaled up.

The network operates through specialised working groups, each targeting critical areas of water management: agricultural supply chains; wastewater and sanitation; water use efficiency; and water stewardship. Core teams work with municipalities to reduce water demand and address non-revenue water loss (e.g. water leaks). To this end, the organisation has delivered various projects targeting water demand reduction in Polokwane, Nelson Mandela Bay and Johannesburg. The network participates in Gauteng's water security initiative, which addresses the province's pressing supply-demand water gap.

Since its launch in 2011, SWPN has grown from five founding partners to an extensive network comprising dozens of international organisations, public sector bodies, financial institutions and civil society groups. This growth reflects both the urgency of South Africa's water challenges and the effectiveness of SWPN's collaborative model.

SWPN places particular emphasis on scalability and sustainability. Projects are selected based on their potential to help close the projected 17% water supply-demand gap by 2030, but equally important is their ability to be replicated or to catalyse broader change in water management practices. The network prioritises initiatives that can become self-sustaining beyond initial support, ensuring a long-term impact.

### SWPN in action – The Alex Project

Building on the demonstrated success of previous programmes, the Alex Project aims to create a fund to seed investments to reduce water leaks while ringfencing savings to pay for scaling out the projects.

SWPN has concluded a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Johannesburg Water permitting the collaboration to repair leaks. It has identified the retrofitting and repair of faulty or leaking household plumbing fittings in Alexandra as a viable project. Customers will be educated on the benefits of responsible water use and effective metering will be implemented to enable equitable revenue collection of consumed water. The project is anticipated to deliver a financial saving of R56 million a year.

### The role of business in water security efforts

Rather than playing a strong role in lobbying or advocacy, Varndell notes that SWPN is more focused on finding areas of commonality and supporting the implementation of those activities that deliver results.

He notes that opportunities exist for companies and nonprofits to support municipalities and that it is possible to cross-subsidise operational budget-type projects with corporate CSI opportunities. Companies can support projects through their CSI strategies, leveraging their social investments to support job creation, health and other interventions that involve water security.



## How corporates can assist people without homes

Many interventions to assist people who find themselves on the streets fall short of restoring their dignity and independence. **Carlos Mesquita**, Founder of The Rehoming Collective, Housing Action Committee (HAC) and Outsider and who has lived experience of homelessness, explains what can be done to solve this societal challenge.

### What is the extent of homelessness in South Africa currently?

This is extremely difficult to ascertain as there is no credible data on homelessness. This means millions are being spent on interventions based on assumptions and misconceptions. Outsider started an assessment of people living on the streets of Cape Town called Everybody Counts. This count was led by individuals with a lived experience of being homeless, which is imperative as these are the only individuals who know where to find people living on the streets and are trusted enough to carry out assessments. During this poll, 24 808 people were physically counted and 14 002 filled in questionnaires. This makes Everybody Counts the largest and most comprehensive database of people living on the streets in South Africa.

### What is the government's approach to homelessness and are its interventions helping or harming people without homes?

Understanding homelessness is easier when we learn that the strongest, most enduring predictor of homelessness is not substance use or mental illness – it is poverty. The common denominator is usually rejection, which makes homelessness a societal rather than individual problem. Many have families who are unwilling or unable to accommodate them if they have lost a job, experienced the death of a partner, are elderly, disabled or suffer from addictions and have mental health issues. Unfortunately, despite the preamble to our Constitution, which itself speaks directly to the state's responsibility towards our most vulnerable citizens, our government has never developed a policy on homelessness or even determined under which department it should fall. NPOs are usually tasked with addressing homelessness using funds allocated by national government to provincial governments.

### The Government of National Unity (GNU) has been tasked with drafting a homeless policy discussion paper. What would you like to see coming out of the process?

The GNU has inherited the work started by the previous administration towards developing a policy on homelessness. Unfortunately, this process has thus far been flawed. My expectation is that the GNU will take the criticism levelled at the process by myself and other roleplayers seriously and ensure a credible count is undertaken. Due to years of inactivity, and ineffective municipal and nonprofit interventions, we are faced with unserved, unmanaged, unhygienic, unsightly and unsafe homeless encampments throughout our cities.

### You have made recommendations to the government about funding more community-based interventions that recognise the symbiotic relationship between housed and unhoused people. What are some of these interventions?

The Encampment Management Programme (EMP) could counter an unprecedented rise in homelessness. The EMP is intended to provide a short-term emergency response as housing services and initiatives come online, creating new pathways to permanent supportive housing for unhoused people. We should empower ward councillors with funding to help form community bodies to address homelessness. These should involve, among other roleplayers, businesses, faith-based organisations, ratepayers, safety and security agencies as well as unhoused people themselves.

Other possibilities include converting government buildings that are currently empty and working with low-cost accommodation venues to provide discounts for people living in crisis on the streets – for example, we have located 11 landlords across Cape Town who

are prepared to make rooms available for R1 500 a month per single room and R2 000 per double room. We source funds from donors to pay for the first month's accommodation, groceries and toiletries. We ensure the tenants have identity documents and can register for grants, since most are able to start paying their landlords by the second month. We also provide access to a harm reduction therapist, occupational therapist, social worker and doctor. Since the beginning of 2024, we have managed to accommodate 228 individuals, 191 of whom are now self-sustainable and 23 of whom have now moved into their own accommodation. Private, lockable rooms and independence bring dignity to people who find themselves on the streets and give them agency regarding what their future might look like.

### Corporates can play a meaningful role to address homelessness – what would you recommend they do to assist people without homes become more secure and reintegrate with their communities?

Corporates tend to be guided by what is promoted as successful, but I look forward to the day when they start working with organisations or projects that are seeking alternatives to what is essentially a failed system. The largest groups of individuals living on the streets, namely pensioners, the disabled, abused mothers with children and families who have lost their homes due to job losses, should be able to live independently and privately with the support services that they require. Corporates should prioritise these financially constrained groups to find accommodation for them.

The projects most likely to succeed are those run or managed by people who have a lived experience of homelessness. I would also recommend that companies hire at least one person with such lived experience.

#### CARLOS MESQUITA

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# Strengthening water security in South Africa



South Africa, one of the driest countries in the world, faces significant water challenges. Factors like prolonged droughts, ageing infrastructure and unsustainable usage exacerbate the situation. In light of this, Triologue partnered with the Rand Water Foundation (RWF) in September to host a webinar on improving water security.

The discussion highlighted the critical role of corporate social investment (CSI) and partnerships in addressing the country's water scarcity. Panellists included **Mashudu Funzani**, Programme Manager: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) at the RWF, **Peter Vardell**, CEO of the NEPAD Business Foundation that hosts the Strategic Water Partners Network (SWPN), and **Justin Smith**, Head of Business Development at WWF South Africa.

Many companies in South Africa focus on water issues through their core operations rather than CSI initiatives. Triologue research indicates that water and sanitation receive 29% of funding in the housing and living conditions sectors, while water conservation sees 19% investment in the environmental sector. Yet, these initiatives comprise only a small portion of total CSI spending. As South Africa grapples with increasing water stress, businesses have opportunities to enhance their contributions to water security.

## RWF initiatives

The RWF targets rural and semi-rural communities, providing access to clean water through boreholes, storage tanks and purification systems. They have also been instrumental in fixing domestic leaks, training SMMEs and educating communities on sustainable water use. In response to the ongoing water crisis in Gauteng, the Foundation collaborates with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) on the multistakeholder Platform for a Water Secure Gauteng. This initiative includes the Dashboard for a Water Secure Gauteng, which tracks water management progress and supports reliable supply.

The Foundation's retrofit programmes have been effective in saving water, leading to a significant reduction in water loss. Additionally, the RWF partners with youth-led nonprofits for water and sanitation improvements in schools and wetland rehabilitation efforts.

## SWPN interventions

The NEPAD Foundation manages the SWPN, South Africa's only multistakeholder water partnership led by both the government and private sector. This network works alongside the DWS to bridge the gap between water supply and demand through collaborative efforts. It focuses on reducing non-revenue water – water that is produced but not billed – by working with municipalities to improve efficiency.

The DWS's *No Drop Watch Report 2023* revealed that 47.5% of South Africa's national water balance was classified as non-revenue, with 40% of this attributed to water losses. NEPAD's initiatives, for example the non-revenue water strategy in Polokwane, have delivered tangible results by improving infrastructure and reducing water wastage. Vardell emphasised the potential for businesses to engage in these projects, noting that even small contributions can yield significant water savings and sustainability.

## WWF contributions

WWF South Africa focuses on strategic water source areas that supply the majority of the country's surface water and drive economic activity. The organisation partners with local communities, businesses and governments to enhance water resilience, with a particular focus on removing invasive plant species from critical catchments. This effort not only improves water availability but also creates employment in rural areas.

WWF South Africa supports companies in assessing water-related risks within their operations and supply chains. They work with around 25 companies to meet water replenishment targets, which often include projects aimed at improving ecological infrastructure.

## Recommendations for companies and NPOs

- **Focus on infrastructure development:** Companies can make a significant impact by funding projects that develop

and maintain water infrastructure in under-resourced areas. This includes supporting boreholes, water storage systems and retrofitting initiatives to reduce water losses.

- **Collaborate on non-revenue water projects:** Businesses should consider supporting non-revenue water initiatives, which have a strong business case due to their potential to reduce operational risks and improve water reliability. These projects can often pay for themselves through water savings.
- **Engage in partnerships:** Building partnerships with government bodies, NPOs and other businesses is crucial for achieving broader water security goals. Collaborative efforts enable the pooling of resources and expertise, making a greater collective impact.
- **Integrate water management into core business:** Companies should align their water conservation efforts with their core operations and supply chain priorities. This can involve replenishment targets and contributions to ecological restoration, improving resilience against water scarcity.
- **Leverage CSI for broader social benefits:** Beyond addressing water challenges, businesses can use their CSI to support job creation and community health through water management projects. This approach not only addresses water issues but also meets broader environmental, social and governance goals.





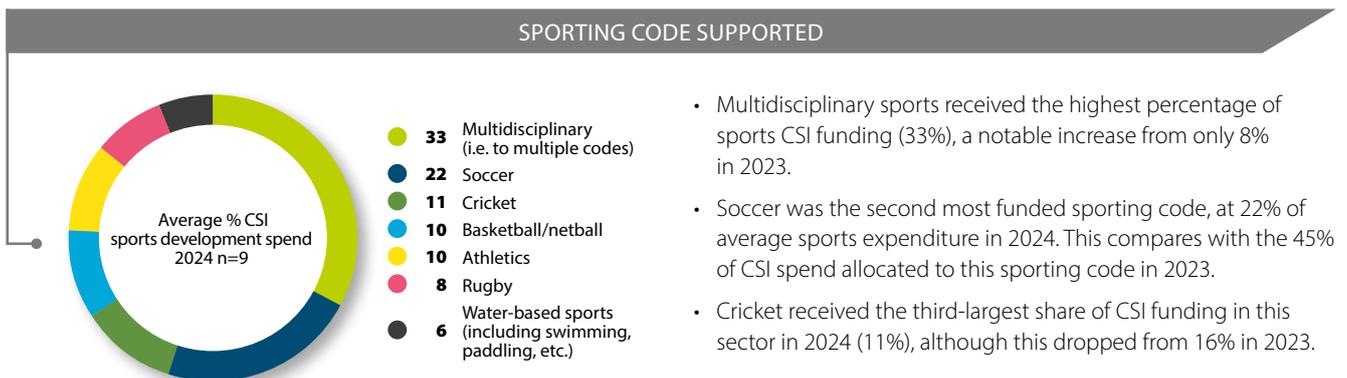
# SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The national budget for arts, culture, sport and recreation is R6.1 billion in 2024/25, constituting 0.3% of the consolidated government expenditure of R2.37 trillion for the year. The budget allocation for the Recreation Development and Sport Promotion Programme under the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) is R143 million, including R40 million for supporting 90 community-based sport and recreation activities, and R78 million for sports equipment and attire to schools, hubs and clubs.
- In September 2024, the DBE and DSAC signed an MoU to establish a collaborative framework between the departments to implement extracurricular programmes, including school sports programmes, throughout the country.
- In April 2023, DSAC published a draft Women in Sport Policy Framework, aiming to address gender disparities in participation, leadership, governance and visibility.
- According to the Brookings Institute, the sports economy worldwide is estimated at 5% of GDP, but only 0.5% in Africa, indicating a significant opportunity for growth. It has been estimated that the sports industry contributes more than R50 billion to the South African economy annually, creating employment, bringing new investments and boosting sports tourism. According to Future Market Insights, the demand for sports tourism in South Africa is forecast to increase at a robust 9% growth rate through to 2032.
- At the 2024 Paris Olympics, South Africa was represented by 138 athletes. The team managed to secure a total of six medals: one gold, three silver and two bronze.

## OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Sports development** was supported by 23% of companies and received 1% of average CSI expenditure.



## PROMOTING PAN-AFRICAN SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH SPORT SPORT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE NETWORK AFRICA

CASE  
STUDY

The Sport for Social Change Network Africa (SSCN) is a collaborative platform that brings together organisations, governments, NPOs, companies and individuals committed to using sport as a tool for development on the continent.

The organisation was originally set up by Nike in 2007, along with networks in Brazil, Kenya and the United Kingdom to create opportunities for sport to be an agent of change through public-private sector collaborations. SSCN has a secretariat that acts as a conduit between funders and members, with projects typically initiated by specific partners with specific objectives. The network works closely with strategic partners that include the DSAC, Alliance of Social Workers in Sports, The Jobs Fund, National Youth Development Agency, German Development Agency GIZ South Africa and Global, the Dutch Embassy, and Nike Africa and Global to promote pan-African social change through sport.

SSCN drives social change through sport via three pillars: member accreditation, knowledge-sharing and resource mobilisation. Members include NPOs, social enterprises and other entities that use sport to bring countries closer to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) most relevant to them – for example, Altus Sport uses sport as a tool for community, youth and gender empowerment, with the support of public and corporate partners. In 2023, Altus Sport partnered with Standard Chartered Bank (Futuremakers), Women Win and SSCN to distribute sanitary products to beneficiaries in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Almost 5 000 sanitary products were handed out to 28 primary schools.

In 2023, SSCN demonstrated its convening capacity in various ways – it collaborated with the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation and UNICEF to host a seven-day

workshop on capacitating sport and development organisations to respond to environmental and climate change issues. It also hosted a transformation and development through sport conference themed ‘The Africa We Want’, which brought together more than 200 stakeholders from various sectors. The conference aimed to share knowledge and inspire innovative solutions to address pressing challenges in Africa using sporting initiatives.

SSCN Project Manager Zaine da Silva says the organisation shares knowledge and resources to help capacitate its members. He points to Cape Town-based NPO Waves for Change, which runs a mental health programme. The organisation shared its programme free of charge with other network members. There are currently over 130 member organisations in South Africa and other parts of the continent benefiting from this collaborative initiative.

*“The organisation shared its programme free of charge with other network members. There are currently over 130 member organisations in South Africa and other parts of the continent benefiting from this collaborative initiative.”*

“Collaboration is vital in our sector as it helps ensure we achieve a larger impact with the very little resources to address complex challenges effectively,” says Da Silva. “Collaboration is important to solve complex challenges and achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063. To achieve

this, we foster member-to-member linkages and provide inclusive forums and symposiums.”

Investing in sport will be essential to achieving Agenda 2063, a blueprint for growth and development on the continent, according to the African Union. Sport creates jobs, while sports tourism may help to boost local economies. One strategy CSI departments can consider, says Da Silva, is investing in networks with significant reach, which may deliver a more comprehensive impact.



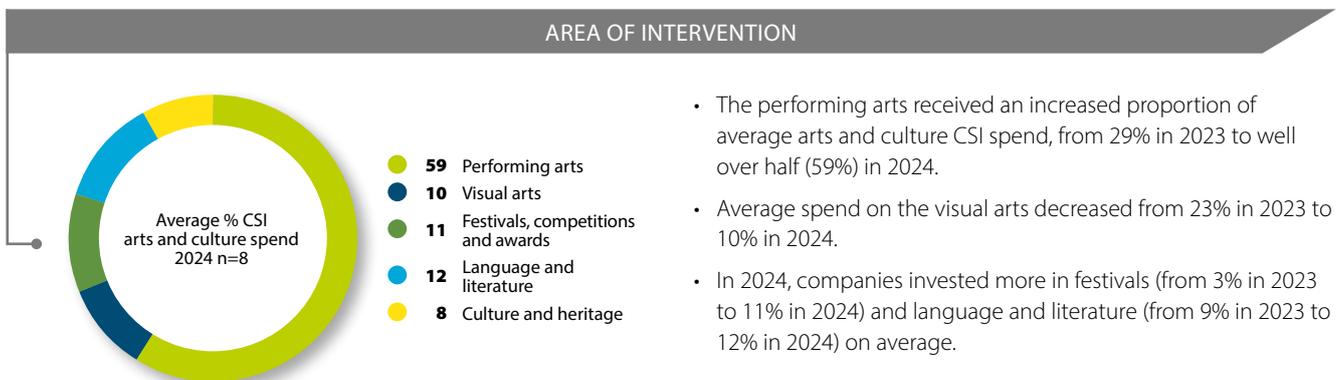
## ARTS AND CULTURE

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The national budget for arts, culture, sport and recreation is R6.1 billion in 2024/25, constituting 0.3% of the consolidated government expenditure of R2.37 trillion for the year, a decrease from R6.3 billion in 2023/24. Over the medium term (2024/25 to 2026/27), 43% of the department's budget is allocated to the Heritage Promotion and Preservation programme, of which most is earmarked for community library services, followed by transfers to museums for their operations.
- Over the medium term, R1.2 billion is being allocated to the Mzansi Golden Economy programme to create more than 60 000 job opportunities in the cultural and creative sector. A portion of this is earmarked for placing more than 1 000 artists in schools over the next three years, with the aim of developing and improving art teaching and skills.
- The Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme, launched in October 2020 and geared towards employment creation and retention initiatives for artists, creatives, heritage sector workers and cultural workers, was allocated R351 million in 2024/25 with the aim of creating 30 000 jobs in the cultural and creative industry.
- In July 2024, UNESCO expanded its World Heritage List to include three new South African sites, bringing the country's total to 12.
- In September 2024, the DSAC facilitated the repatriation of the human remains of over 40 liberation struggle stalwarts from Zambia and Zimbabwe. This initiative is part of a broader mission to honour those who lost their lives during the liberation struggle.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

Arts and culture were supported by 20% of companies and received 1% of average CSI expenditure.



## COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO EMPOWER THE 'ORANGE ECONOMY' YOURSA

CASE  
STUDY

A new arts body is hoping to forge collaborations to boost the economic potential of the creative industries in South Africa. YouRSA – a commercial venture spearheaded by a subsidiary of VMCo Advisory Group – is working to bring about systemic change in the arts while showcasing South African talent both at home and abroad, specifically in the United States.

Collen Dlamini, former Group Executive of Corporate Affairs at the MultiChoice Group, and a board member of the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has set up YouRSA primarily to provide young people with a unique platform on which to express themselves through storytelling, engage in meaningful dialogues and amplify the growing interest in Africa's dynamic culture. Beyond this, however, Dlamini would like to spark greater business interest in the creative economy. His organisation partnered with the *Sunday Times*, the Cultural and Creative Industries Federation of South Africa and the Copyright Coalition of South Africa (CCSA) – representing 22 trade associations and industry bodies from various art disciplines – in May 2024 to host a high-level dialogue with seven political parties. The aim was to discuss strategies to realise the creative industry's economic potential.

"Our value proposition is our ability to build bridges between policymakers and business," Dlamini explains. "Through proactive stakeholder engagement and collaboration, we strive to strengthen bonds, promote mutual understanding and facilitate sustainable development with our partners."

A recent collaboration saw YouRSA, Brand South Africa, the South African Consulate General in New York, Jaguar SA

and the Duma Collective exploring cross-cultural synergies in art, fashion and music. The #GiveHerACrown initiative, driven by Jaguar SA and co-curated by the African Fashion Council, showcased the talents of five South African female fashion designers at the New York Fashion Week in August 2024.

Dlamini's organisation also plays a major role in policy advocacy, having run a successful campaign around protecting the intellectual property of rightsholders on behalf of the CCSA. "President Cyril Ramaphosa has since referred the Copyright Amendment Bill and the Performers' Protection Amendment Bill to the Constitutional Court, which we're happy about as they pose a risk to the economic growth of the sector in their current form," says Dlamini. "Policies are a key lever to enabling the country to leverage its economic potential and address impediments to the growth of the country's 'orange' economy."

Dlamini aims to assist young people to find work in the creative sector, which is largely under-funded and under-appreciated, despite its transformative potential.

In March 2025, YouRSA will host an investment symposium for the creative and cultural industries in Johannesburg, partnering with both government agencies and the private sector. The symposium will feature international investors, industry experts, policymakers, thought leaders and academia to boost high-level collaboration. YouRSA will also host another South African arts and culture event in New York in July 2025 to commemorate 30 years of freedom during Mandela Month. The events will comprise high-level dialogues, a South African music showcase, film and an art exhibition in Manhattan.

*"A recent collaboration saw YouRSA, Brand South Africa, the South African Consulate General in New York, Jaguar SA and the Duma Collective exploring cross-cultural synergies in art, fashion and music."*



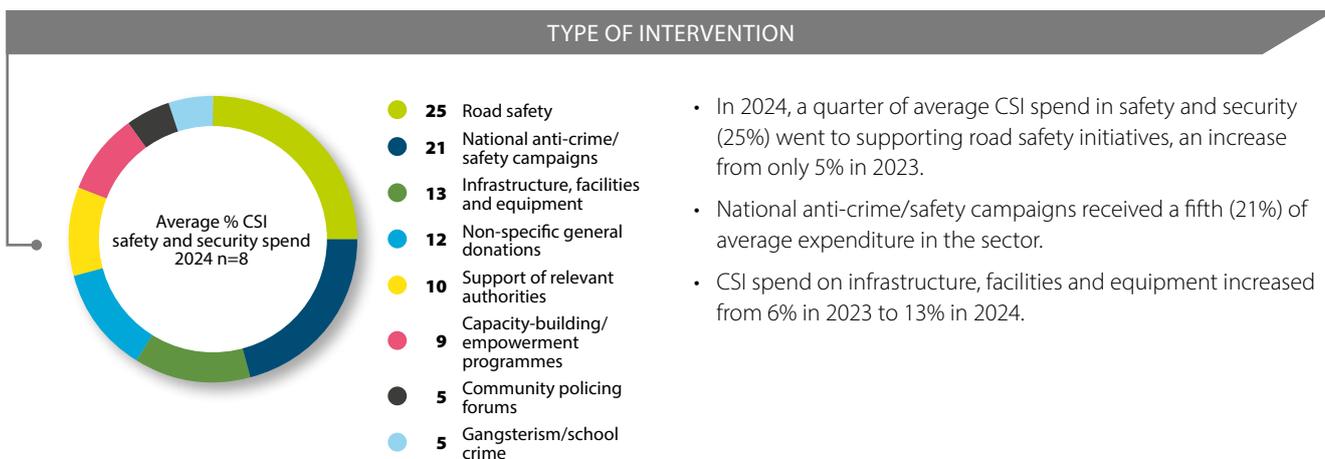
## SAFETY AND SECURITY

### NATIONAL CONTEXT

- The peace and security budget increased from R227.3 billion in 2023/24 to R244 billion in 2024/25, constituting 10.3% of consolidated government expenditure of R2.37 trillion for the year. Of this, police services received R125 billion, law courts and prisons R54.4 billion, defence and state security R53.5 billion, and home affairs R11.1 billion.
- The South African Police Services' crime statistics for the 2023/24 financial year showed a 4% increase in contact crimes from the previous year to 678 701 incidents, including 27 621 murders and 53 285 sexual offences.
- The National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) Bill was signed into law on 24 May 2024, establishing the National Council to coordinate and provide strategic leadership in the fight against GBVF (see viewpoint on page 190).
- In October 2024, the Department of Employment and Labour launched the Occupational Health and Safety Prevention Accord, focusing on enhancing collaboration, preventing workplace injuries and promoting a culture of safety across various sectors.
- The Institute for Economics and Peace's *Global Peace Index 2024* report found that the average level of country peacefulness deteriorated in 2024. This is the fifth consecutive year that global peacefulness has deteriorated. South Africa improved slightly to 127 out of 163 countries, from 130 in 2023.
- The global Financial Action Task Force greylisted South Africa in February 2023, subjecting it to additional oversight because of eight areas of deficiencies in tackling money laundering and illicit financial flows. As at June 2024, the country has addressed eight of the 22 action items and needs to address the remaining 14 by February 2025 for it to be removed from the greylist by June 2025.

### OVERVIEW OF CSI SPEND

**Safety and security** interventions were supported by 15% of companies and received 1% of average CSI expenditure.



## FIGHTING CRIME AND CORRUPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA JOINT INITIATIVE TO FIGHT CRIME AND CORRUPTION

CASE  
STUDY

The Joint Initiative to Fight Crime and Corruption (JICC) represents a transformative approach to addressing some of South Africa's most pressing challenges. Through collaboration, the JICC harnesses the strengths of both the government and the private sector, creating a powerful alliance in the fight against crime and corruption.

Launched in 2023, this partnership between the government and organised business aims to coordinate and monitor initiatives that combat the twin evils of crime and corruption. Led by President Cyril Ramaphosa, the JICC brought together 115 chief executive officers (CEOs) from South Africa's leading companies, including Standard Bank, FNB, Anglo American and Vodacom, who pledged their skills and resources to support government efforts.

### Pooling resources for efficient implementation

One of the most significant advantages of collaboration within the JICC is the pooling of resources and expertise. The participation of top CEOs means that the initiative can tap into a wealth of knowledge, experience and financial resources that government entities alone may not possess. This collaboration fosters a more comprehensive approach to addressing the multifaceted issues of crime and corruption, leading to innovative solutions that benefit the entire country.

Public trust in governmental institutions has been undermined by scandals and inefficiencies. The partnership with respected business leaders enhances the credibility of government initiatives, showing citizens that serious efforts are being made to address these issues. When prominent figures from the business community advocate for change, it signals to the public that the fight against crime and corruption is a collective priority.

Collaborative efforts streamline the implementation of initiatives. With business leaders involved, there is a clear

understanding of operational efficiency, making it easier to roll out projects, like modernising the 10111 helpline and establishing a forensics analysis centre. The private sector's expertise in logistics, project management and technology can significantly improve the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Collaboration also encourages innovative thinking. The diverse perspectives brought together in the JICC can lead to creative solutions to complex problems. For instance, by leveraging technology and business acumen, the JICC can develop new strategies to combat infrastructure crime and enhance law enforcement capabilities.

### How collaboration is fostered in the JICC

The JICC operates under the auspices of the National Priority Crime Operational Committee, providing a structured framework for collaboration. This formal setup ensures that all stakeholders have clear roles and responsibilities, fostering accountability and enabling focused efforts towards shared objectives.

Regular meetings and updates between government officials and business leaders are crucial for maintaining momentum and alignment. By facilitating open dialogue, the JICC can adapt its strategies based on feedback and evolving challenges. This engagement is essential for building trust and ensuring that all parties remain committed to the initiative's goals.

Highlighting and celebrating achievements, such as significant arrests and leadership changes within critical state institutions, reinforces the value of collaboration. By showcasing progress, the JICC not only motivates participants but also garners public support for continued efforts.

*“Collaboration also encourages innovative thinking. The diverse perspectives brought together in the JICC can lead to creative solutions to complex problems.”*



## New gender-based violence legislation



The National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Bill was signed into law on 24 May 2024. However, the legislation falls short of commitments agreed to in the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. **Kayan Leung**, Head: Strategic Litigation and Gender Equality Programmes at Lawyers for Human Rights, outlines what companies need to know about the new legislation.

How does the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NCGBVF) Act differ from the 2020 National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSPGBVF)?

Briefly, the institutional framework (as set out in the NSPGBVF) was carefully crafted to hold all roleplayers and stakeholders accountable, demand accountability across government departments, not be tied to the mandate of any one department, and encourage and facilitate collaboration and coordination within respective sectors and communities. The Act deviates substantially from the model developed and agreed on regarding clarity on a funding framework for gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) or accountability mechanisms that ensure government departments provide indicators on how to contribute to the fight against GBVF.

The NCGBVF Bill establishes the Council, its powers and its scope, with the board monitoring the implementation of the Council's action plan. The current NCGBVF Act 9 of 2024 has reversed the composition of representation in favour of government. Both civil society and private sector members for the board are appointed by the President and from a list of persons recommended by the National Assembly by way of resolution with a supporting vote of a majority of the members of the Assembly.

The Council must report to the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. The Minister will prescribe norms and standards for coordinating and accountability of the provincial and local GBVF structures.

As a call to action, we strongly believe that transparent and fair appointment processes must be in place and draw a distinction between people who come from civil society and people who represent civil society. This is to safeguard against political deployment and interference within important spaces, which can ultimately hamper the implementation of the NSPGBVF.

The Act also states that the minister has a prerogative to make regulations, meaning there is no duty to do so and certainly not within clear time frames. Depending on the political will of the department, this can hamper the effective implementation of the NSPGBVF.

No mention is made in the Act of a GBVF fund, save for funding for the administration of the Council. Placing the onus to establish a national GBVF fund through the Council who would manage it was deliberated extensively through both Presidential summits on GBVF. This fund should pool all resources instead of the current GBVF response fund which consists only of funds from the private sector and development partners.

The Act proposes the creation of an NCGBVF. How would the Council be constituted and funded?

The Council will be funded through:

- i. Monies appropriated by Parliament for this purpose
- ii. Donations or contributions received from any source
- iii. Trust funds vested in the Council; interest derived from investments
- iv. Money received from any other source.

What would need to be done to ensure the Council is capacitated to bring about meaningful change?

The NCGBVF Act does not adequately reflect the 2018 commitment to combat GBVF. The Act must be urgently reviewed and its shortcomings must be addressed through a participatory process that involves all key stakeholders. While the recent enactment of the Act was intended to mark a significant step towards better leadership, coordination and accountability in the fight against GBVF, it has unfortunately fallen short of its purpose. To add insult, the DWYPD intends to unilaterally appoint the EndGBVF Collective as the Council secretariat, disregarding the clear process set out in section 17 of the Act

Do you foresee a legal challenge to the Act and, if so, what outcomes would you like to see?

We are pursuing all avenues to engage with the government to correct the Council's fundamental defects. If this fails, we will explore legal action. We want to see the Council constituted as envisaged by all stakeholders in the NSPGBVF.

What impact does the Act have on companies and how would this affect their GBVF work?

Funds from companies that have invested and committed to GBVF may not be fully optimised for its purpose in the NSP. Companies would struggle to hold government and implementers of the NSP accountable, leaving meaningful impact lacking. Our country faces so many issues of corruption and mismanagement, we do not wish to see this repeat in this space.

What recommendations do you have for companies and NPOs that want to improve the outcomes for GBVF survivors and prevent GBVF in the first place?

Support the call to fix the NCGBVF Act that will include:

- A funding framework for the NSPGBVF
- Fair representation for civil society and the private sector on the Council
- Strong accountability mechanisms that ensure commitments are integrated into government performance indicators
- Political leadership at the highest level, including the Presidency
- Inclusion of provincial and local structures in the fight against GBVF.

Finally, demand that we stop the DWYPD from appointing the End GBVF Collective as the Council's secretariat, which contravenes the Act.

### KAYAN LEUNG

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# LIGHT, PEACE AND SAFETY IN JOHANNESBURG CITY CENTRE, RESTORING THE CITY TO ITS PREVIOUS SPLENDOUR

## MAHARISHI SECURITY MASTERY ACADEMY: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN JOHANNESBURG

In the heart of the inner city, thanks to networks of NGO's, the private sector and passionate individuals, are pockets of vibrant, flourishing blocks of redevelopment that compare well with those of any first-class overseas city.

### The future of the Johannesburg Central Business District has never looked this bright.

At the Maharishi Invincibility Institute, our commitment to innovation aims to create a positive impact that extends beyond the classroom, benefiting millions. We are excited to announce the launch of the Security Mastery Academy, a beacon of hope for safety and security in Jozi, dedicated to achieving mastery in both the security industry and personal development.

The Academy aims to produce the future leaders of South Africa's security sector. Over a rigorous three-year program, graduates will become consummate professionals, with guaranteed employment through our partnership with CAP, a leading security firm, ensuring a 100% employment rate. Students will earn qualifications in End-User Computing, PSIRA (Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority) certificates, and engage in practical training as security officers, supervisors, and commanders. They will gain invaluable real-world experience while actively contributing to the safety of Johannesburg.

Our state-of-the-art facilities will provide a dynamic learning environment, equipped with advanced technology, a world-class gym, sports facilities, and martial arts training. In line with 'The Way of the Peaceful Warrior,' the Academy

emphasizes personal development through a holistic, consciousness-based educational approach. Essential traits such as integrity, empathy, and critical thinking will be cultivated, allowing students to unlock their full potential through specialized training, including Transcendental Meditation and scientific stress management techniques. Graduates will be empowered to become leaders in the industry and make meaningful contributions to society, building a safer, stronger city filled with opportunities for all.

The Maharishi Security Master Academy's three-year program will play a crucial role in Johannesburg's educational landscape, aligning with the plans for Education Town in the CBD. Our collaboration with CAP will enhance Johannesburg's status as an educational hub in Africa, addressing the growing need for skilled security professionals. This initiative not only enriches knowledge but also improves the overall quality of life for individuals and the community, attracting international support and restoring pride in the city's magnificence.

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Photo credit: **Chiefs Herd**, Ngwenya Glass, Eswatini.

A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.

## Capitec Foundation

# Empowering future maths teachers

The Capitec Foundation is dedicated to transforming mathematics (maths) education in South Africa through its comprehensive Whole School Approach. This multifaceted strategy addresses the interconnected challenges within the maths education ecosystem. A key component of this approach is the Future Teacher programme, which equips aspiring educators with the skills and confidence necessary to improve maths outcomes for learners.

### ADDRESSING TEACHER READINESS FOR THE EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM

The Future Teacher programme directly tackles the pressing issue of teacher readiness in South Africa's education system. Many Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) graduates enter the classroom lacking the essential content knowledge, pedagogical skills and confidence needed to thrive.

Initially, the programme was implemented as a pre-service teacher development initiative focused on improving the maths outcomes of learners within the Foundation's Saturday tutorial classes. However, over time, the Foundation realised there was an opportunity for broader impact by developing competent maths teachers for the education ecosystem rather than just competent maths tutors for the Saturday tutorial classes.

### HOLISTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCE

This shift in approach focuses on a progressive development plan that spans three years, targeting the critical years of a teacher's preparation. The first two years concentrate on third- and fourth-year B.Ed students, equipping them with essential maths content knowledge and innovative pedagogical skills to effectively address the learning gaps.

The final year involves selected graduates being employed by the Foundation as Hub Teachers within the Foundation's partner



school-based Technology Hubs, where they can implement their skills in a practical setting. "This change is crucial for our future educators," noted one of the programme coordinators. "By embedding them in schools, they can directly influence student learning while also growing into their roles as educators."

Recognising the importance of holistic development, the programme also focuses on nurturing 'soft skills' such as self-esteem, motivation, emotional resilience and classroom management. This comprehensive model enables aspiring educators to facilitate effective teaching and learning, even amid the socioeconomic challenges often present in their classroom environments. As one participant shared: "The Future Teacher programme has changed my life. Before joining, I felt overwhelmed and unprepared to teach. Now, I have the skills and confidence to make a real difference in my students' lives."

Participants benefit from scaffolded practical teaching experiences in controlled settings, guided by experienced mentors who provide valuable feedback and support.

### POSITIVE IMPACT ON LEARNERS AND TEACHERS

Since the Future Teacher programme's inception, over 300 pre-service teachers have completed their training, positively impacting approximately 120 000 learners across more than 300 schools nationwide.

The Future Teacher programme has had a profoundly positive impact on pre-service teachers, **inspiring many to remain committed to the teaching profession at a time when they may have considered leaving**. Participants consistently report that **the programme equipped them with the necessary skills and confidence to excel as educators**. "I became one of the most outstanding maths educators and managed to produce 100% matric results in 2021 and 2022. Because of that outstanding performance, I eventually earned myself a promotion in just three years of teaching experience," said one participant.

The opportunity to work with small groups of learners, supported by experienced mentors, is a recurring theme among participants. **Many emphasise how this experience validated their teaching purpose, helping them navigate the often challenging**



**environment of the education system.** One teacher noted how the programme helped to “validate” their professional purpose. “The reason why I did my PGCE [Postgraduate Certificate in Education] was because I got to work with a small group of learners and had a chance to get to know them and what their challenges are. I came to understand so much about teaching and the struggles our children face,” the young graduate shared.

The **mentoring component is cited as invaluable by participants, providing pre-service teachers with focused guidance often missing in traditional university programmes due to large student numbers.** Many participants highlighted the mentorship aspect as the most beneficial part of the programme, with one saying: “My mentors have been incredible. They guided me through lesson planning and classroom management in ways that my university courses never did. I feel much more prepared to face a classroom full of students now.”

The programme has not only boosted the participants’ confidence but also enhanced their practical teaching skills. **Participants have reported improvements in their maths content knowledge, classroom management and interpersonal skills.** They said they appreciated that the development and support they received from the Foundation differed significantly from their university education, which often lacked a practical focus. One teacher explained: “The programme boosted my confidence in teaching maths, such that when an opportunity for taking a role of teaching grade 12 maths for the first time came, I took it with both hands.”

The Future Teacher programme has also **shifted participants’ perspectives on teaching, encouraging a learner-centred approach that fosters stronger relationships with learners.** Participants have noted the importance of connecting with learners and motivating them to engage actively in their education. One participant stated that the programme motivated them to keep teaching because they could see the “real effect” they could have in children’s lives.

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## BUILDING PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

The Future Teacher programme also fosters professional networking among participants, creating communities of practice where they can share resources, experiences and best practices. This sense of camaraderie is vital for those facing challenging teaching environments, ultimately reinvigorating their passion for the teaching profession and enhancing their resilience.

Another participant spoke of the friendships they built during the programme. “I’ve built friendships and connections that will last a lifetime. Knowing I have people to turn to when I face challenges in the classroom is invaluable.”

## FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND A CALL TO ACTION

The Capitec Foundation’s Future Teacher programme is a vital component of its holistic Whole School Approach to improving maths education. By investing in future teachers the Foundation not only elevates the standard of education but also cultivates a new generation of educators who are confident, capable and deeply connected to their learners.

Moving forward, the Capitec Foundation aims to scale its Future Teacher programme, reaching more aspiring educators across South Africa. By sharing insights and establishing partnerships with educational institutions, the Foundation seeks to enhance the quality of maths instruction nationwide, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed.



# How companies can lead the fight against GBV 2024



The persistent issue of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa takes on renewed urgency during Women’s Month, as stakeholders from government, business and civil society examine the challenges women continue to face. With the country’s femicide rate significantly higher than the global average and many women experiencing intimate partner violence, the need for corporate involvement in addressing GBV has never been more crucial.

In August 2024, Trialogue and the Vodacom Foundation hosted a webinar which explored how companies can leverage their corporate social investment (CSI) initiatives to address GBV and support survivors. The panellists were **Angela Abrahams**, Executive Head of CSI at the Vodacom Foundation, **Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze**, Head of Economic Inclusion and Acting Head of Social Transformation at the National Business Initiative, and **Dr Zubeda Dangor**, Head of Executive at the National Shelter Movement of South Africa. The focus was on how businesses can integrate GBV prevention and response into their CSI strategies, extending support beyond their immediate workforce to the wider community.

### CSI support for safety and security

Research from Trialogue shows that 13% of South African companies support safety and security initiatives, but only 1% of their average CSI spending in 2023 was dedicated to these projects. GBV and related social challenges have widespread economic implications, making it vital for companies to adopt a broader perspective that addresses these societal issues.

McLaren-Ushewokunze highlighted the role of businesses in creating safe spaces and fostering collaborations that support government initiatives. She stressed the importance of addressing both the immediate needs of GBV survivors and the root causes of violence, advocating for workplaces that are inclusive and proactively address issues like pay parity.

Abrahams discussed the Vodacom Foundation’s holistic approach to gender empowerment, emphasising alignment with the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSPGBVF). The Foundation’s efforts include technological solutions such as the Bright Sky mobile app and GBV Command Centre which offer free resources and emergency support for victims. The Command Centre’s data collection capabilities can further inform proactive measures against GBV.

The Foundation’s initiatives extend into education through the deployment of psychosocial support workers in schools, addressing broader social issues including GBV. Since 2021, the programme has expanded to reach over 35 000 learners across 42 schools. Furthermore, the Vodacom Foundation has supported the establishment of Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs), providing safe spaces for victims to report violence and access medical care without facing secondary trauma.

Dr Dangor emphasised the importance of collaboration between the private sector and on-the-ground initiatives. She noted that effective partnerships are crucial for addressing GBV realities and that businesses should invest in monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure the impact of their contributions.

### Recommendations for companies and nonprofit organisations (NPOs)

The delegates shared several tips on how corporates and NPOs can improve their strategies to combat GBV:

- **Adopt a holistic approach:** Companies should integrate GBV prevention into their existing CSI efforts, supporting survivors while also addressing systemic causes of violence. This includes fostering inclusive work environments and implementing policies such as pay parity to create safer workplaces.
- **Align with national priorities:** Working within frameworks like the NSPGBVF can help companies ensure their efforts are aligned with the broader goals and amplify their impact. This alignment enables collaboration with the government and civil society for more comprehensive solutions.
- **Invest in long-term impact:** Companies should focus on long-term investments in GBV prevention, understanding that change takes time. By developing strategic, interconnected CSI initiatives, businesses can address the complexity of social issues such as GBV more effectively.
- **Support NPOs and community initiatives:** Continued financial and strategic support for NPOs working on GBV is essential. Companies can play a pivotal role in empowering these organisations through sustained funding and capacity-building, contributing to stronger community responses to GBV.



# FEM Education Foundation

## Collaborating for excellence in Limpopo



A teacher intern demonstrating a Shared Reading lesson using Funda Wandé's *Big Book*. Shared Reading is another important activity used to teach reading in the Foundation Phase.

An education collaboration in underserved rural areas in Limpopo brings hope to learners by producing more effective teachers.

South Africa faces significant challenges in education, particularly in foundational literacy and numeracy. This problem is especially acute in rural areas and schools serving lower-income communities. Research has found that the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree pursued by teacher interns does not equip them with the numeracy, literacy and subject content knowledge they need to teach effectively. In Limpopo the situation is compounded by the fact that schools do not have adequate resources and infrastructure to support the desired outcomes.

### EQUIPPING TEACHERS TO SOLVE LEARNING CHALLENGES

The lack of skills among newly qualified teachers is a concern exacerbated by the fact that teachers already in the education system are also not adequately equipped for their roles. The Thandulwazi Maths and Science Academy was looking for a solution to help improve the instructional and pedagogical competency of their teacher interns when they identified Funda Wandé's world-class programme to improve foundational literacy and numeracy.

Funda Wandé's ambitious mission has been to ensure that by 2023 all children in South Africa could read for meaning and calculate with confidence by the age of 10. The proposed partnership appeared to solve both organisations' problems while contributing to initial teacher education (ITE). With the support from the FEM Education Foundation (FEMEF), Thandulwazi and Funda Wandé negotiated a memorandum of understanding which formalised the collaborative partnership and provided Funda Wandé with a mandate to conduct additional training in numeracy and literacy to foundation phase teacher interns in Limpopo.

**Funda Wandé's role:** To support Thandulwazi in recruiting and placing teacher interns; training teacher interns and mentors through the Reading and Numeracy Academy; and provide in-classroom support to teacher interns in the Capricorn and Waterberg districts.

**Thandulwazi's role:** To recruit and select teacher interns; work with schools to appoint mentors; provide study resources as well as psychosocial and financial support for teacher interns; and continuous professional development activities for teacher interns and mentors alike.

### Challenges and benefits of the partnership

Both organisations have their own cultures and carefully developed programmes. The partnership meant 'letting go' and being able to trust that the joint effort would yield better results than working in isolation. It proved challenging to agree on costings and operations,

but both organisations worked together to budget and plan for the programme. It was anticipated that the programme would deliver positive financial impact and teach vital lessons about how to collaborate for social impact. "We also anticipate that the impact of this partnership in the personal and professional development of the teacher interns will be significant," says Zolani Metu, Head of Programmes at Funda Wandé.

### OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The three-year intervention (2024–2026) has clear goals: to produce B.Ed graduates with strong instructional and pedagogical capabilities; improve foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes in schools participating in the programme; and create a sustainable model for initial teacher education, combining theoretical knowledge with practical skills and evidence-based teaching methods.

An independent evaluator will measure the ultimate impact of the programme in 2026. The parties will then reconvene to discuss a possible post-2026 strategy, says Metu.

### IMPACT

The collaboration is benefiting a total of 84 teacher interns and 84 mentors (experienced teachers) in the Waterberg and Capricorn districts of Limpopo Province.

### KEY BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

The partnership demonstrates several key benefits of collaboration in education:

- Drawing on complementary expertise:** Combining Thandulwazi's initial teacher training experience with Funda Wandé's literacy and numeracy programmes creates a more comprehensive approach
- Making the most of resources:** Sharing resources and responsibilities allows for a broader reach and more efficient use of funds
- Innovating:** The collaboration has led to new approaches in ITE, potentially creating a model for future programmes
- Improving reach and scaling initiatives:** Working together helps the programme to reach underserved rural areas in Limpopo.

The collaboration between Funda Wandé and Thandulwazi, supported by FEMEF and the Limpopo Department of Basic Education, shows how partnerships can address complex educational challenges. By combining their strengths, these organisations are working towards producing well-prepared teachers and improving educational outcomes for learners in rural Limpopo, potentially creating a model for broader educational reform in South Africa.



<https://www.fem.co.za/fem-education-foundation/>

Investec

# University academic support programmes give students a chance at success

South African learners' matric results represent a critical fork in the road, dictating a young person's access to tertiary education and shaping their future prospects. Yet, these scores often fail to reflect true potential, as they are influenced by a deeply challenged social and education system. Investec corporate social investment (CSI) recognises this disconnect and is assisting university support programmes to give learners a second chance to redefine their academic journey and, ultimately, their lives.

Our education system faces profound challenges which impact learners' likelihood of succeeding in secondary-level education. Investec CSI Head Setlogane Manchidi articulated how grade 12 results often fail to accurately reflect students' true potential in an article he wrote for the *Mail & Guardian* in early-2024. His concern was how the discrepancy between performance and capability has far-reaching implications for young people's future and the country's broader socioeconomic landscape.

## MAKE-OR-BREAK MATRIC RESULTS

The 2023 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results provide a stark illustration of this issue. While the overall pass rate of 82.9% was celebrated as an achievement, a closer examination reveals concerning trends. Of the 691 690 candidates who wrote matric in 2023, only 262 016 wrote pure maths and only 206 399 learners sat for the physical science (physics) exam.

These statistics become even more troubling when considering higher performance thresholds. Only 15.8% of students achieved 60% or higher in maths, while 17.2% reached this level in physics. The number of students achieving distinctions (80% or above) was a mere 3.4% in maths and 3.2% in physics nationally. Perhaps most critically, only 40.9% of the total number of candidates who wrote the 2023 NSC examinations received bachelor passes, allowing them to pursue university studies.

"These figures point to deeper systemic issues within South Africa's basic education system. The fact that scores between 30% and 40% in some subjects still constitute a pass is a cause for concern. Moreover, the poor uptake and performance in gateway subjects such as maths and science limit learners' future academic and career options," Manchidi explains.

The challenges faced by South Africa's education system are multifaceted. Poverty and inequality continue to play a significant role, with 469 115 of the 691 690 candidates in 2023 coming from no-fee paying schools. This socioeconomic reality creates additional hurdles for students attempting to access and succeed in higher education.

The cumulative effect of poor performance in lower grades also contributes to the overall quality of passes and performance in matric. The lack of standardised national examinations for lower grades makes it difficult to identify and address underperformance earlier in learners' educational journeys. Discipline issues, learning deficits exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and a shortage of adequately qualified teachers in key subjects like maths and science further compound these challenges.

The implications of these educational shortcomings extend beyond individual students. As Manchidi notes, an education system that perpetuates poverty and inequality rather than addressing it is fundamentally at odds with the country's developmental goals. The high number of dropouts and low-quality passes likely contribute to the growing number of youth not engaged in education, employment or training, with long-term psychological and economic consequences for South African society.

## INVESTEC'S SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY BRIDGING PROGRAMMES

Recognising the make-or-break nature of matric results and how the odds are stacked against learners in a society still deeply challenged by inequality and poverty, Investec has made tertiary education support a key focus of its CSI.

Investec has partnered with various university initiatives at institutions such as the University of the Free State (UFS), University of Cape Town and Rhodes University to support bridging programmes. These facilitate students' access to higher education and support their performance at tertiary level.

"The initiatives seek to enable the social, academic and psychological integration of students from diverse backgrounds into university life. Providing additional support through mentoring, tutoring, academic advising, supplemental instruction and career guidance, these initiatives aim to level the playing field for students who have experienced educational and life disparities," says Manchidi.

## BRIDGING THE GAP

The Investec-supported UFS University Access Programme (UAP) gives students whose matric results fall short of mainstream university admission requirements a second chance to access tertiary education.

The one-year Higher Certificate (EMS) access programme addresses the educational gaps often resulting from inadequate schooling. The UAP offers a comprehensive curriculum designed to prepare students for the rigours of university study. Participants enrol in

three credit-bearing first-year university courses: a compulsory course in skills and competencies for lifelong learning, a mandatory academic literacy course and a maths literacy module. Students can choose between two broad disciplines: Economic and Management Sciences or Human and Social Sciences.

The demand for such bridging opportunities is evident from the staggering number of applications the programme attracts. In 2022, the UAP received 27 000 applications for fewer than 1 200 places.

To ensure quality education and support, the UAP employs 12 full-time lecturing staff. These module coordinators are responsible for coursework curriculum and assessment, supported by 200 part-time contracted facilitators. The programme extends beyond the UFS Bloemfontein campus, with contact sessions in Bethlehem, Welkom, Sasolburg, Phuthaditjhaba and Motheo. Additionally, the UAP has representatives at affiliated technical vocational education and training institutions, ensuring comprehensive coverage and support for students across various locations.

Investec provides financial assistance to participating students. Between 2017 and 2022, Investec invested more than R2.5 million in the programme. This investment encompassed a range of support mechanisms, including limited bursaries, boot camps, tutorials, psychosocial mentoring and recognition for top achievers.

### GAUGING PROGRAMME IMPACT

A recent impact analysis conducted by UFS provides compelling evidence of the programme's success, particularly at the undergraduate level.

- More than 1 000 students enrolled in the programme between 2017 and 2022.
- Sixty-seven percent of enrolled students successfully completed the programme and obtained the Higher Certificate, with the vast majority doing so within two years of enrolment.
- Seventy-eight percent of graduates went on to enrol in undergraduate degree programmes within a year of completing the Higher Certificate. Of the 701 programme graduates who proceeded to undergraduate studies, 378 entered extended programmes, while 323 entered mainstream programmes.
- Of the initial 2017 intake, 70% of the programme's successful participants who then enrolled in undergraduate degrees have completed their degrees. The 2018 cohort shows similar promise, with 59% already having graduated with an undergraduate degree, a percentage expected to increase in the coming years.
- While the primary impact of the programme is seen at the undergraduate level, some UAP graduates have continued to postgraduate studies. The assessment found that 35 students had enrolled in Honours degrees, with 34% successfully graduating and most completing their degree in one year.

Bolstered by Investec's investment, the programme has proven to be a powerful tool in addressing educational inequalities and opening doors to higher education for students who might otherwise have been left behind.

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### FROM BRIDGING STUDENT TO PhD

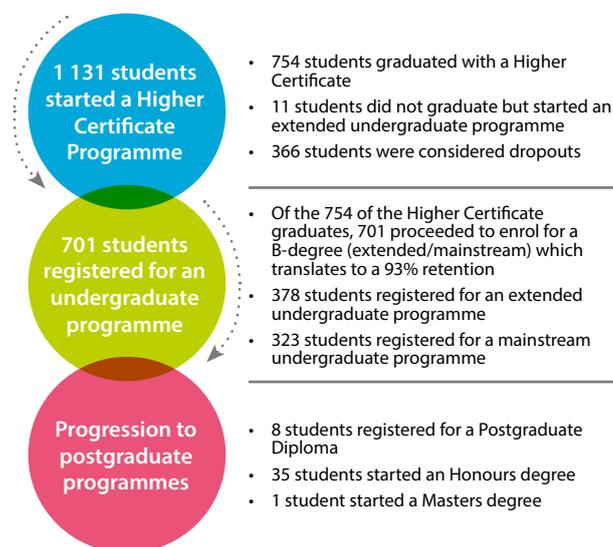
Dr Lerato Sekonyela's academic journey is a testament to her perseverance and the power of second chances. After losing her mother at a young age and struggling academically, Sekonyela's matric results fell short of university requirements. Faced with disappointment, she found hope in UFS's Career Preparation Programme (now UAP).

Despite being discouraged by stigma and teasing, Sekonyela's self-reflection on the sacrifices her father made and the opportunity she had been offered made her commit to proving herself.

Her determination paid off. In 2005, she earned her first qualification and became a tutor. She went on to complete two Honours degrees and was appointed as a facilitator in the very programme that launched her academic career. Her Masters and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) research focused on improving access and support for students in higher education, particularly in university access programmes.

Today, Dr Sekonyela coordinates the UAP at UFS, helping students who face similar challenges to those she once encountered. Her story is a powerful reminder of the impact that university bridging programmes can have in unlocking potential and changing lives.

### PATHWAY PROGRESS OF EMS STUDENTS OVER SIX YEARS



The programme's success not only transforms individual lives but is contributing to the broader goal of creating a more equitable and prosperous society.



## Momentum

# Momentum explores elevating CSI through collaboration

In a move towards greater impact from CSI, the Momentum Group Foundation has embarked on a strategic approach challenging the CSI status quo. Recognising that traditional approaches to youth unemployment were not yielding the desired outcomes, the company's self-reflection and exploration of collaboration to deliver change mark essential first steps towards more integrated CSI.

Companies are far more likely to talk up their social impact efforts in the name of marketing and brand development than they are to acknowledge the potential limited return on CSI. That is why it is refreshing – and valuable – when companies are willing to undertake critical examinations of their initiatives and share their frustrations about the limited reach these programmes may have. This is the case for the Momentum Group Foundation, which found that its youth unemployment CSI efforts are unlikely to realise the real impact that South Africa so sorely needs. At least not alone.

Momentum Group CSI Manager Tshego Bokaba says: "We can see that real, lasting change requires more than individual corporate efforts. If we want to move the needle on youth unemployment we are going to have to take a collective approach, one where multiple stakeholders pool their resources, expertise and insights to tackle the problem."

And the problem is a significant one. South Africa has the unenviable status of the second-highest youth unemployment rate in the world. Over 60% of young people aged 15 to 24 are unemployed. The economic and social implications of this crisis are far-reaching, affecting not just individuals but the fabric of South African society. The need for effective interventions cannot be overstated.

### MOMENTUM'S EVOLVING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT INTERVENTIONS

The Momentum Group has framed its CSI initiatives around the vision of a thriving economy that benefits, and is fuelled by, the country's youth. Its initial research identified unemployment as one of the critical barriers to achieving equality. In 2017, the Momentum Group Foundation reviewed its strategic focus on youth empowerment through job creation, skills development and fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship in young people.

The Foundation partnered with organisations experienced in working with youth, targeting sectors with higher employment probabilities, to train and place young people in employment. At the outset, skills development was the top priority, with the strategy focused on three principal areas: personal skills, technical skills and employability skills.

Early lessons revealed that programme success required more job readiness, practical experience and careful recruitment. It became apparent that industry-specific skills and the relevance of those skills to market demands were crucial. Participants were also found

to need financial support to ensure they were able to complete the programme.

The Foundation's strategy has evolved in recent years, shifting the focus from skills development and job readiness to job placement.

Recognising that employment needs to be generated on a far larger scale than any single sector can provide, the Foundation increased its emphasis on entrepreneurship, acknowledging that young people would have to become job creators themselves to survive the job losses of a shrinking economy. Including people with disabilities and focusing on gender equality – ensuring greater participation of women and students from rural communities – became key programme priorities.

Since the adoption of the youth employment strategy in 2019, the Foundation has reached over 50 637 youth, trained more than 2 200 individuals, placed 1 456 in jobs and supported 84 entrepreneurs. Behind these numbers are real stories of young people who have gained new skills, found employment and started their businesses through the Foundation's Consumer Financial Education (CFE) programmes and socioeconomic development focus on youth employment. "While we are proud of these achievements, we are aware of the pressing need to expand our efforts," says Bokaba.

### ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT INTERVENTIONS

Throughout its journey the Momentum Group Foundation has remained committed to rigorous evaluation and learning, commissioning independent assessments to refine its strategy.

Its 2023 impact assessment provided valuable insight into the broader systemic challenges affecting youth unemployment programmes. These include:

- **Training young people for jobs** that the market cannot offer – market demand is needed alongside skills training
- **Addressing South Africa's stagnant job market** – job placements from these programmes may disadvantage other job seekers or make sustainable employment unrealistic
- Focusing on the need for **long-term livelihood sustainability and job quality** – the shortage of high-quality, sustainable jobs fuels short-term employment and under-employment cycles



- **Being cognisant of multidimensional poverty** – food insecurity, income poverty and care responsibilities, among other realities of poverty, can impact young people’s ability to find and retain employment.

The assessment found that abundant training and skills development initiatives are insufficient to address the problem. What is needed is demand-led training and workplace experience that aligns realistically with market needs, so that young people are work-ready in terms of both skills and broader competencies.

“Addressing these complexities requires more than just job placement,” asserts Bokaba. “It demands comprehensive support addressing various barriers and promoting sustainable livelihoods for young people. We need better research coordination to establish a clear, sustainable and impactful pathway to employment.”

The findings stressed the value of collective impact and collaborative funding in creating systemic change.

### **COLLABORATION: SEEKING SYNERGIES FOR GREATER IMPACT**

Armed with these insights and the understanding of the limited influence of individual youth unemployment programmes in such a challenging context, the Momentum Group Foundation is approaching its CSI with new vigour. The Foundation hosted a collaboration event in September 2024 to explore how a collective approach might deliver better social impact.

The event brought together the government, other corporates, nonprofit organisations, entrepreneurs and youth employment experts to share learnings and explore ideas for a more collaborative approach. Key takeaways included the following:

A central theme emerging from the event was the recognition that youth are not a homogeneous group and that addressing their challenges requires more than just skills development.

Empowering young people requires the adoption of a pragmatic approach and collaborative effort.

There is a need to create employment hubs in rural areas and townships rather than focusing on urban areas like Sandton. Bringing opportunities to our youth will empower them to be mobile, access credit and see their dreams realised.

There is a need to focus on the informal sector and small businesses, noting that empowering young entrepreneurs in these sectors would have a ripple effect on the broader economy. If the informal sector grows, the economy will grow in parallel.

The Masibambisane – Thriving Together event marked a landmark moment in the collective efforts to tackle youth unemployment, setting the stage for future partnerships and initiatives across all sectors that will put South Africa’s youth into employment and drive economic growth.

### **MOMENTUM PLANS A COLLABORATIVE CSI FUTURE**

The Momentum Group Foundation is reshaping its approach to youth unemployment interventions. It hopes to contribute its insights and resources to build on the efforts of existing collaborative approaches to deliver real impact to South Africa’s youth unemployment crisis, envisioning a contribution to:

- Enhanced skills training in alignment with market demands, including the formal and informal economies
- Partner alliances that create a more comprehensive support ecosystem for young job seekers
- Robust mentorship programmes that provide long-term support and guidance
- Tailored interventions that address the challenges and opportunities specific to different geographic areas
- Support for entrepreneurship in the form of resources, mentorship and potential seed funding
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation that tracks the effectiveness of interventions for improvement and adaptability
- The means to address systemic issues towards creating a more enabling ecosystem for youth unemployment.

Bokaba concludes: “This journey of self-reflection and collaboration has been challenging but incredibly valuable. We are excited about the potential of our new approach to create meaningful, lasting change in the lives of South African youth. By working together and constantly learning, we believe we can make a real dent in the youth unemployment crisis.”

As the Momentum Group Foundation embarks on a new CSI chapter, it is setting an example for corporate South Africa. The Foundation calls on all interested stakeholders – whether programme operators or designers, policymakers or fellow funders – to reach out and connect, and together build a sustainable future for South Africa’s youth.

**Tshego Bokaba** | Momentum Group CSI Manager  
<https://www.momentum.co.za/momentum/about-us/csi>



Oceana

## Grassroots CSI supports fishing industry transformation

Corporate social responsibility has the potential to do much more than mitigate the trade-offs between companies and citizens. Done right, CSI has the potential to meaningfully transform the industry in which it is implemented.

Oceana Group Limited's Small-Scale Fishers (SSF) training programme is an example of how well-considered strategic CSI with long-term vision can change the face of the fishing industry for the better, building communities while supporting the long-term sustainability of the industry.

"Fisheries are an underrated sector in South Africa. Globally, fishing provides thousands of jobs and contributes substantially to the economy," says Zodwa Velleman, Group Executive of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs at Oceana. "Upskilling SSFs plays a valuable role in how we regulate the sector and how we ensure the long-term sustainability of the resource. The better regulated the industry, the better it is for all industry stakeholders."

### CSI ANCHORED IN FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

Oceana's CSI reflects the transformation ambitions that have evolved South Africa's fishing industry since the birth of democracy.

The industry's legislation has come a long way from the Marine Living Resources Act 18 of 1998, which factored only private businesses and individuals as the rights holders eligible to apply for limited fishing quotas. The introduction of broad-based black economic empowerment and the community rights holding model made some progress towards recognising the rights of fishing communities dependent on subsistence fishing. However, the lack of formal structures to comply with the legislation meant that traditional leaders or groups with the loudest voice often secured the available quotas, leaving much to be desired in the push for equity.

Subsistence fishing communities have since found benefit in the government's adoption of cooperative fishing models, from across Japan, Mexico and Chile, which allocates quotas to community cooperatives. Cooperatives, governed by the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission legislation and democratic, mandated structures, manage the fishing rights on behalf of their communities.

While this approach gives fishing communities an important stake in the industrial fishing sector, it can overlook some of the realities subsistence fishing communities face. These cooperatives may have the quotas for high-value catches such as mussels, squid, lobster, oysters or traditional line fish like snoek and hake, but they may not necessarily have the human, vessel or cold storage resources to fulfil their quota allocations.

Seeing this gap in the industry, the private sector has stepped in to support SSFs and reinforce the industry as a whole. Oceana's CSI initiatives are designed to grow fishing cooperatives, assist them in making the most of their quotas and support them in becoming more profitable.

Oceana, in offering the training programmes, decided not to enter commercial contracts with fisher people as the focus was on empowerment as opposed to business transactions. Velleman says the initiatives have a big philanthropic payoff for Oceana. "Through the process of running training and impact assessments, we've witnessed the importance of cooperatives as tools to build communities. Cooperatives are about more than just economic interests. Many of the individuals who participate in cooperatives, particularly rural cooperatives, are motivated by the desire to strengthen and uplift their communities," comments Velleman.

### TRAINING UPLIFTS FISHING COMMUNITIES

Oceana's CSI education initiatives serve fishing communities around the country. The commitment was to train all cooperatives established by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) across four provinces, namely the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

"The better we equip people in the industry using the resources we have as Oceana – one of Africa's largest fishing companies – the better it is for the entire industry. It's not a matter of competition. It's about partnerships for good."

Oceana offers a three-pronged learning journey with its dedicated training facility, the Oceana Maritime Academy. External partners supporting the SSF training programme include the DFFE, National Sea Rescue Institute, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South African International Maritime Institute (SAIMI) and service provider DYNA Training.

The Co-operative Sense programme is a three-day course that has been on offer since July 2021, teaching communities the basics of how to run a cooperative and understand the constitution that governs it. It covers the essentials, including cooperative set-up, financial management, brand development and marketing. The course is the culmination of a two-year consultation with the DFFE and small-scale fishing cooperatives. The company also provides internationally recognised ocean safety training, educating cooperatives and interested parties on sea safety and emergency response protocols at sea.

Following the impact assessment of the programme by Mthente Research and Consulting Services Proprietary Limited, one of the gaps identified was a need for mentorship. Oceana's one-year generic management course, made possible by the generous funding of FoodBev Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority, was an identified next step. The follow-up course offers National Qualifications Framework Level 4 training to cooperative leadership or mentors.

Accessing the communities and individuals to engage in training takes place with the support of community liaison officers in the DFFE's small-scale fisheries management branch. The 80% female attendance rate of the generic management classes speaks to government's prioritisation of women and youth empowerment as well as to the community nature of cooperatives. "Women are the pillars of many of our fishing communities, so naturally the co-ops start to take that shape and form," notes Velleman.

### RELATIONSHIPS BUILT ON TRUST

Oceana's hands-on approach to CSI allows it to take ownership of the SSF programme better, by listening to the needs of communities and adjusting to better serve these needs.

Velleman says that this approach has enabled the formation of strong trust-based relationships with SSF communities and other industry stakeholders that have partnered with Oceana for the benefit of the SSFs.

When the world's largest maritime insurer funded a global study of the socioeconomic impact of drownings within small-scale fishing communities, Oceana's relationships with these communities enabled South African representation. Researchers were unable to gain the trust of local fisher communities to access the necessary information until Oceana's CSI team stepped in to facilitate the process.

"Even if this is not a direct benefit for Oceana, it is a benefit for the global fishing community to understand the quantifiable impact of drownings in small-scale fishing communities globally. That research would not have been possible in South Africa without an entity intimately involved in cooperatives that had taken the time to build their respect and trust."

These relationships have established a bridge between South African fishing communities and other entities, such as SAIMI, that would like to lend additional support to communities.

### THE FUTURE IS SMALL

Velleman envisions a future where SSFs are successfully supported and integrated into a sustainable fishing industry.

Oceana is currently exploring innovative options for future CSI. It will continue to offer its bespoke training for another year, after which its CSI will evolve into other forms of strategic support.

"You can't continue to train just for training's sake," explains Velleman. "The industry will most likely need to make real, material resource investments to support SSFs. This remains the focus of our discussions with our partners on what the next two to three years will look like for SSFs post Co-operative Sense and mentorship training."

For now, Oceana continues to upskill fishing cooperatives while paving the way for a more sustainable and integrated fishing industry.



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## RURAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CSI CHALLENGES

CSI in urban areas, marked by easier access and better infrastructure, can be an easy win for companies, but companies aiming to make an impact in vulnerable, far-flung rural communities face unique challenges.

### GEOGRAPHICAL

Velleman explains how accessing fisher people involves overcoming substantial geographical difficulties. Taking quality training programmes to areas that are seldom accessed by vehicles and which lack electricity or flushing toilets creates logistical hurdles for companies responsible for these initiatives. Providing catering that meets the required standard, transporting portable toilets to distant locales and supporting training service providers to travel to and stay in areas with minimal facilities all present challenges to the initiative.

### FINANCIAL

Physical challenges have knock-on financial implications. Longer distances and rougher roads demand more time and money being spent on hiring suitable vehicles, longer travel and on-site time for service providers as well as higher incident risk and mitigation.

These financial implications were amplified in the wake of the initial Covid-19 outbreak, requiring larger venues, more vehicles and more stringent measures to comply with health regulations. The deaths of key community members influenced community attendance and engagement.

### CORPORATE MISTRUST

An unanticipated difficulty Oceana has had to navigate has been the deep, inherent mistrust that rural communities have when it comes to corporate engagement. Velleman notes that many of these communities, particularly mineral and resource-rich rural communities, have experienced negative, even violent and traumatic historical interactions with corporate entities.

These can have implications for community attendance in unrelated CSI initiatives. Oceana's initial training programme attendance rates of 50–60% increased to nearly 90% once the company understood the problem and established measures to build community trust, adding in additional time before training to sensitise communities to its presence, explain its intentions and demonstrate the company's philanthropic motivations.

### LANGUAGE

South Africa's particular language challenges add further complications for rural CSI initiatives. Not only do languages vary widely across the country, but they can vary in the same training group, something that can be hard to anticipate. Oceana's Co-operative Sense course has been written in four languages – English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa and isiZulu – and course facilitators are equipped to deliver the course in all these interchangeably as the class requires.

Sasol

## Sasol's National Skills Competition: Empowering South Africa's future through technical skills development

Sasol, an integrated energy and chemical company founded in South Africa in 1950, has a long history of innovation and commitment to sustainability. Initially focused on producing synthetic fuel from coal, the company has expanded into a global player with operations across gas, chemicals and renewable energy. Sasol's focus on enhancing energy security reflects its commitment to creating shared socioeconomic value. Central to this is Sasol's promise to act as a catalyst for positive social change.

The company fulfils this promise by empowering individuals to thrive. Through education and training programmes Sasol invests in upskilling the youth, improving their employability and contributing to economic growth. This places young people at the heart of its approach, ensuring that Sasol's efforts lead to meaningful and lasting outcomes.

### SASOL'S CSI IN RESPONSE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

In South Africa a notable gap exists in practical skills training within technical schools. Learners require not only theoretical knowledge but also hands-on experience with the equipment they study. This aligns with Sasol's broader commitment to addressing skills shortages in engineering and technical fields. To this end, Sasol has established the Technical Schools of Excellence Network (TechSENet) through which it aims to produce a pipeline of world-class artisans, technicians and technologists. TechSENet enables broader access to quality education and training for learners interested in vocational trades. Additionally, the initiative works to contribute to human capital development of the country and increase the pool of vocationally skilled people in the science, technology, engineering and maths disciplines.



### THE SASOL AND KAGISO TRUST NATIONAL TEACHER AND LEARNER SKILLS COMPETITION

A cornerstone of Sasol's skills development strategy is the Sasol and Kagiso Trust National Teacher and Learner Skills Competition (National Skills Competition), implemented in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Targeting learners in grades 10, 11 and 12, the competition provides hands-on training in various technical fields such as welding, plumbing, engineering, and graphics and design. The initiative aims to raise the visibility and recognition of technical vocational education and training, directly challenging societal perceptions that traditional academic paths hold more value than careers in trades such as plumbing and welding. This initiative supports the National Development Plan's goal of producing 30 000 artisans annually in South Africa.

The competition operates at four progressive levels: school, district, provincial and national. Learners are selected at the school level based on practical tasks they complete, with those excelling moving on to district and provincial competitions. The top learners from each province then compete in a national showdown, evaluated by industry professionals.

Practical skills development is integrated with theoretical studies, ensuring that students effectively use the state-of-the-art equipment that Sasol donated to schools. This approach prevents the under-utilisation of resources and encourages healthy competition among students, enhancing their employability.

### TRACING THE ROOTS OF SASOL'S SKILLS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

The success of Sasol's skills development efforts can be traced back to the initiation in 2011 of the transformation of the John Orr Engineering School of Specialisation (previously John Orr Technical High School) in Johannesburg. This project aimed to restore the school's standing as a premier institution for technical



education. After seeing positive results, Sasol expanded this initiative, eventually developing the TechSENet, which now spans five provinces.

The idea for the National Skills Competition emerged from this foundation and Sasol's experience with equipment donations. While advanced tools and machines were provided, they were often under-used and primarily reserved for end-of-year assessments. To promote continuous engagement, Sasol introduced the competition, allowing learners to develop proficiency in operating these tools effectively on an ongoing basis.

### IMPACT AND SUCCESS STORIES

The programme has successfully transformed schools into fully equipped technical training centres, delivering high-quality education in vocational trades. Workshops now feature Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)-accredited machinery and teachers have undergone additional training, empowering learners with essential skills in maths, science and trade theory. As a result, hundreds of students have qualified as artisans, directly contributing to South Africa's objective of increasing the number of skilled technicians and artisans. Additionally, the competition raises the profile of vocational training, providing much-needed recognition for learners in a landscape where academic pathways have long overshadowed vocational options.

Another notable advantage of the competition is the exposure it offers. Learners engage with vocational training early on, acquiring practical skills and securing apprenticeships before completing their high school education. This hands-on experience enables them to achieve job readiness sooner than their academically focused peers. For many it marks the first time they travel outside their provinces, fly on planes and stay in hotels, broadening their horizons and personal growth. These unique experiences enrich their educational journey.

#### 2024 NATIONAL SKILLS COMPETITION

In the 2024 edition, the competition featured participants from various provinces across 13 categories, with awards distributed to top learners in different trades. One example of the programme's success is Meladi Maabane from Derek Kobe High School in Limpopo.

### ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

Collaboration has been key to the success of the initiative, particularly with the DBE, technical institutions and NPOs like the Kagiso Trust. These partnerships not only provide funding and apprenticeships for top learners but reinforce the importance of technical and vocational education. Additionally, collaborations with educational institutions and industry partners, such as the Institute of Plumbing South Africa, Artisan Training Institute (ATI), Modena, Cad4ALL, Resolution Circle, FESTO and the DBE facilitate access to resources and opportunities that further enhance the training experience for students.

### FUTURE PROSPECTS

Looking ahead, Sasol will continue to promote the career growth opportunities associated with technical and vocational skills to inspire a shift in mindset among learners and parents who often prioritise academic pathways over trades such as plumbing and electrical work. In collaboration with the DBE, Sasol will continue to support the Three Streams Education Model, with the goal of shifting 60% of the country's educational focus towards these essential fields. This approach is vital for recognising artisans and technicians as key contributors to the economy.

Additionally, Sasol aims to align its competition with the WorldSkills Competition, targeting learners younger than 23 years, with aspirations to provide scholarships for top performers to participate in the international competition. This will not only elevate the prestige of vocational training but also expose South African learners to global standards and best practices in technical skills, preparing them for a competitive workforce.



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Vodacom

## Vodacom at 30 years: Celebrating socioeconomic impact

In 2024, Vodacom marks its 30th anniversary, a milestone that coincides with South Africa's 30 years of democracy. This milestone reflects a shared journey of resilience and hope, where Vodacom has evolved into a leading provider of information and communication technology (ICT) solutions, connecting over 203 million customers across emerging markets. Throughout its 30-year journey, Vodacom has navigated the diverse phases of South Africa's growth, becoming a trusted partner to the people of South Africa during times of crisis and triumph. Vodacom's technology and resources have been instrumental in addressing pressing community challenges, uplifting lives and creating opportunities countrywide.

The Vodacom Foundation, established in 1999, is the CSI arm of Vodacom South Africa. The Foundation utilises a portion of Vodacom South Africa's profit to empower society, leveraging its core capabilities in technological innovations. It aligns its initiatives with South Africa's national development goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since its establishment, the Vodacom Foundation has contributed more than R1 billion in social investments.

### EVOLUTION OF VODACOM'S CSI APPROACH

In the three decades since its inception, Vodacom's approach to CSI has evolved in line with broader trends, transitioning from traditional charitable giving to a more strategic and leveraged approach that seeks to achieve lasting societal impact. In the early years, Vodacom's CSI focused on donations and supporting immediate community needs, such as funding local projects or responding to crises. This charitable approach was an important part of the company's contribution to society.

Over time, Vodacom shifted towards a more strategic CSI model, where investments were aligned with both the company's core

business objectives and the challenges faced by the communities in which Vodacom operates. This meant targeting initiatives that not only addressed social issues but also leveraged Vodacom's strengths, such as connectivity, digital education and access to technology. An example is Vodacom's focus on education through technology, where the company implemented initiatives like the Vodacom e-School platform, providing free online educational content to learners in under-resourced areas.

Vodacom's approach has since evolved to leveraged CSI, where the focus is on driving systemic change. This approach recognises that complex societal challenges, such as poverty, education gaps and unemployment cannot be tackled by one entity alone. Vodacom collaborates with the government, NGOs and other corporates to pool resources, share knowledge and create large-scale impact. For instance, Vodacom's collaboration with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to roll out ICT infrastructure in schools across South Africa exemplifies how multisectoral partnerships can enhance the reach and effectiveness of CSI efforts.

Despite this shift towards long-term, strategic interventions, Vodacom has not moved away from traditional charitable giving entirely. The business understands the continued importance of responding to urgent community needs, disaster relief efforts and employee-driven initiatives. Its strategy balances charitable donations with strategic and leveraged CSI, ensuring that while it contributes to immediate needs, it also remains committed to achieving systemic change.

As approaches to CSI continue to evolve, Vodacom's experience demonstrates the importance of adapting to changing societal needs while maintaining a clear focus on collaboration and long-term impact. A key lesson learned is that charitable, strategic and leveraged CSI are interdependent approaches, each playing an important role in sustainable development. The intentional integration of these strategies into overarching plans is essential. Allocating resources across charitable initiatives addresses immediate needs while strategic CSI leads to more meaningful outcomes. Additionally, focusing on leveraged projects for long-term systemic development can drive sustainable impact, allowing corporates like Vodacom to address the complex challenges faced by society.

### PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS: EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Education is at the heart of Vodacom's socioeconomic impact. In 2018, the company unveiled a comprehensive **education ecosystem initiative** encompassing early childhood development (ECD) centres, Schools of Excellence and community ICT centres, including youth academies. This ecosystem is designed to improve the quality of education in underserved communities by creating a seamless interface between the different educational pillars, underpinned by partnerships with the DBE and Department of Social Development.

The Vodacom Foundation **Schools of Excellence** programme, which began with 13 schools in 2018, now supports 25 schools across the country. Each school is equipped with a fully functional computer centre, modern teaching devices and upgraded infrastructure, including security enhancements and the replacement of pit latrines with proper ablution facilities where needed. These interventions aim to improve both the safety and learning environment of the schools, particularly in the rural areas of Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.



Additionally, nine of the Schools of Excellence have been provided with **virtual classroom solutions**, allowing learners to receive live lessons and access prerecorded content via smart devices and internet connectivity. This digital innovation offers new learning possibilities, particularly in areas where access to qualified educators may be limited.

Vodacom has also introduced **coding and robotics** equipment and training in three schools as part of an extracurricular programme, to prepare learners for future careers in the digital world. To ensure the effective use of these technological resources, each school has ICT coordinators who support teachers and students, helping to integrate the technology into daily learning activities.

**Psychosocial support** is another critical element of Vodacom's education ecosystem. The company has placed 36 skilled psychosocial professionals in Schools of Excellence, reaching more than 26 000 learners. These professionals address issues such as gender-based violence (GBV) and bullying, helping to create safe and inclusive school environments. Evidence suggests that their presence has led to reduced bullying, improved academic performance and stronger relationships between learners, teachers and the broader community.

In line with its commitment to laying strong educational foundations, Vodacom has also upgraded and renovated 27 **ECD** centres near its Schools of Excellence, impacting over 1 800 young children. These centres have been equipped with ICT tools, mobile libraries, clean water supplies and improved sanitation, helping to close the education gap in early learning.

Educators play an important role in Vodacom's education initiatives. The company has worked closely with the DBE to train teachers in integrating ICT into their classrooms. To date, **86 teacher training centres** have been refurbished and connected to Vodacom's network, equipping educators with the tools they need to navigate the digital transformation of education.

Vodacom plans to expand its Schools of Excellence each year, ensuring that more learners benefit from these interventions. This multifaceted ecosystem represents Vodacom's larger purpose to drive inclusion for all, ensuring no one is left behind by providing access to connectivity, digital skills and quality education.

### VODACOM'S COMMITMENT TO TACKLING GBV

Vodacom is committed to tackling the widespread issue of GBV in South Africa, where the prevalence is alarmingly high. According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), the rate of violence experienced by women in the country is five times higher than the global average. This reality drives Vodacom's focused efforts to address GBV through a comprehensive programme centred on prevention, response and victim empowerment. These initiatives align closely with the

company's purpose-led inclusion strategy, which seeks to foster positive societal change.

In terms of prevention, Vodacom launched the Bright Sky mobile app in 2020. This zero-rated app provides users with essential information about GBV, helping them understand the issue and offering access to support services. The app ensures that people can seek help and resources without data costs becoming a barrier, an important factor in a country where many individuals face financial constraints.

On the response front, Vodacom has expanded its efforts in schools. Thirty-six psychosocial professionals work in schools across all provinces, providing assistance to educators and learners. These professionals have helped over 26 000 learners across 42 schools navigate the effects of violence, bullying and GBV. In 2024, an average of 30 000 people downloaded the Bright Sky app per month. Following the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign, Vodacom registered more than 76 000 clicks on the app. Vodacom has partnered with the National Prosecuting Authority to build Thuthuzela Care Centres, offering GBV survivors a safe space to report crimes.

Empowerment is another cornerstone of Vodacom's approach. Through the Vodacom Foundation, the company provides ICT training to survivors of GBV in shelters across the country. To date, more than 1 500 women have received training, equipping them with digital skills to enhance their opportunities and rebuild their lives. This empowerment initiative is vital in helping survivors regain independence and economic stability, and demonstrates Vodacom's commitment to creating a lasting impact.

### LOOKING AHEAD: VODACOM'S VISION FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS

As Vodacom approaches the next 30 years, the company remains dedicated to building a prosperous South Africa. Grounded in the principles of service, innovation and partnership, Vodacom will continue to uphold these values as it works towards a brighter and more equitable future. The vision for South Africa is one where every individual has access to quality education, lives free from GBV and can realise their full potential. Vodacom invites all stakeholders to join this mission and collaborate for lasting change.



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VWGA

# Moving people forward: Empowering South Africa's youth through Volkswagen For Good

As the manufacturer of the 'people's car', Volkswagen Group Africa (VWGA) is committed to driving positive change across South Africa's socioeconomic landscape. Through its Volkswagen For Good initiatives, the company implements initiatives to create a healthy, thriving and inclusive society for this generation and those to come. Embracing the African proverb, "Give me a fish and I will eat today, teach me to fish and I will eat for a lifetime," VWGA focuses on personal development and empowering the individual.

Central to this mission is the VW Community Trust, which spearheads the company's corporate social investment (CSI) activities from its base at the Kariega plant in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. The Trust drives social change by focusing on education, youth development, health and employee volunteerism.

## THE CHALLENGES SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH ARE FACING

Unemployment, poverty and inequality significantly hinder the growth and development of South Africa's youth. According to Stats SA, as of the second quarter of 2024, the youth unemployment rate stands at a staggering 33%, limiting access to economic opportunities and contributing to feelings of hopelessness. Many young individuals lack essential resources and access to education or skills training, while social inequalities further exacerbate their exclusion.

The factors contributing to youth unemployment include inadequate education and training, economic challenges, lack of work experience, limited entrepreneurship opportunities and broader labour market dynamics. For individuals, these challenges often translate into poor mental health, with issues such as depression, anxiety and low self-esteem becoming prevalent. Communities bear the brunt of these effects, with disaffected youth contributing to rising crime rates, substance abuse and social instability.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including improvements to the education system, enhanced support for young entrepreneurs and increased job creation through economic development.

## VWGA'S FOCUS ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Recognising the challenges South Africa's youth face, VWGA has developed a comprehensive youth development strategy. This strategy goes beyond education and skills development, and nurtures passions that inspire and motivate young people to reach

their full potential. VWGA's goal is to provide South African youth with a sense of belonging and the necessary tools to thrive at school, at home and in their communities.

## DRIVING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATION

A cornerstone of this youth development strategy is VWGA's partnership with loveLife, an organisation established in 1999 to combat HIV and Aids among young people in South Africa. Over the years, loveLife has evolved to promote a wider range of youth health initiatives, including youth empowerment and skills development.

In 2012, VWGA established the KwaNobuhle Y-Centre to create opportunities for the youth of KwaNobuhle in Kariega. VWGA then partnered with loveLife to run the centre, leveraging loveLife's experience in youth development and health promotion. Serving approximately 200 young people daily, the centre provides a safe and supportive environment with services such as HIV counselling, recreational activities, leadership training and computer literacy courses.

The KwaNobuhle Y-Centre promotes a culture of learning and personal growth. Through its diverse programmes, the centre, with loveLife's guidance, encourages young individuals to make informed lifestyle choices, develop essential skills and cultivate a sense of belonging, contributing to a brighter future for South Africa's youth.

## IMPROVING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUTH THROUGH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

VWGA's Work Readiness and Placement Programme, launched in 2023 at the KwaNobuhle Y-Centre, empowers young people to improve their employability. Through three months of training, participants become eligible for placements within VWGA's Youth Employment Services (YES) Programme or affiliated companies. Since the start of the programme, over 400 young individuals have been trained, gaining essential skills for today's workplace and many placed in various sectors. Partnerships with local organisations such as the Ray Mhlaba Skills Training Centre, Winforce Training



Academy, Wilderness Foundation Africa's Youth Development Programme and Sakha Amathuba also facilitate youth training in healthcare, retail, business administration and bakery skills, ensuring that even those with the lowest levels of education have access to meaningful employment.

The KwaNobuhle Y-Centre has helped to launch several promising careers. GroundBREAKERS, an initiative within the centre, selects exceptional young leaders to drive community empowerment efforts. In 2024, 10 such leaders took on key roles in their communities, engaging with fellow youth and facilitating positive change. These young leaders include Nakhana April, who, at 19, teaches computer literacy and Sinxolo Ruiters, a 22-year-old provincial basketball player who mentors young athletes. Ayabonga Manga, aged 23, broadcasts daily on L2K Radio, amplifying youth voices and addressing issues relevant to his peers.

In partnership with Selwyn Willis Consulting, the centre also offers media training, developing young talent in broadcasting and social media skills. This initiative is designed to nurture a new generation of broadcasters, enhancing their storytelling abilities and preparing them for media careers.

### SUPPORTING HOLISTIC WELLBEING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Beyond skills training, the centre prioritises holistic wellbeing. A dedicated psychosocial support unit provides wellness services through a nurse and counsellor. In partnership with Vitality Life and Health Insurance, nurse Danielle Windvogel offers family planning, HIV testing and health education to between 350 and 800 young people monthly. Meanwhile, counsellor Lutho Xintholo screens youth for mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, referring them to treatment centres when necessary.

Leadership training does not end at the centre. Programmes also extend to local schools, with each quarter dedicated to empowering one institution. In 2024, the centre focused on Solomon Mahlangu High School, among other schools.

### VWGA'S YES PROGRAMME

VWGA's commitment to youth employability extends beyond the KwaNobuhle Y-Centre. Since 2019, the YES Programme has seen over 3 000 young people gain work experience through placements at VWGA's operations and its dealer network. In 2024 alone, 508 candidates were enrolled in the programme, with placements at the Kariega plant and other sites in Gauteng, Cape Town and within VWGA's dealer network. Specifically, 282 participants were placed at the Kariega plant and across the sales, marketing and aftersales divisions in Gauteng and Cape Town. The remaining 226 joined the dealer network.

Additionally, a new pilot programme focusing on sales skills was piloted in 2024 and will prepare YES candidates for potential careers in the automotive sales industry. This initiative further illustrates VWGA's commitment to equipping young people with skills to help them secure long-term, sustainable employment.

### LESSONS FOR CORPORATES AND CSI PRACTITIONERS

VWGA's efforts provide valuable insights and lessons for other corporates looking to make a meaningful impact through their CSI initiatives:

- **Strategic partnerships amplify impact:** Collaborating with expert organisations like the VW Community Trust, Ray Mhlaba Skills Training Centre, Wilderness Foundation Africa, Sakha Amathuba and loveLife enhances the scope and depth of interventions. Corporates should seek partnerships that align with their mission and extend their capabilities.
- **Focus on holistic development:** Youth empowerment is more than skills training. Addressing mental health, physical wellbeing and social issues is essential for creating well-rounded, resilient individuals.
- **Invest in future-facing skills:** Identifying and nurturing emerging skills, such as digital media or niche trades, ensures that youth are prepared for the evolving job market.
- **Provide real-world job opportunities:** Integrating work readiness programmes with actual job placements, like VWGA's YES Programme, prepares youth for long-term employment and ensures they can contribute to the economy.
- **Create pathways for leadership:** Offering leadership roles to youth, as seen with the GroundBREAKERS initiative, empowers them to take charge of their future and drive community-level change.



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# RESEARCH ROUNDUP

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A summary of responsible business and developmental findings and insights from a selection of research reports released by other organisations in 2024.

- 212** CECP Investing in Society 2024 Edition

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- 216** The Sanlam ESG Barometer: Navigating ESG in Africa

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Photo credit: **Yellow Camouflage**, Vincent Montocchio. 2020. Mauritius.  
A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.



# CECP INVESTING IN SOCIETY 2024 EDITION

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

### SCORECARD

**POSITIVE PERFORMANCE**  
on 45 out of the 47 KPIs in the CECP Integrated Disclosure Scorecard.

CEOs believe corporate purpose is more important than ever, yet most employees do not know what their company's corporate purpose statement is.



Companies are rapidly linking environmental and/or diversity performance to executive compensation.

Strong female representation in leadership positions correlates with positive business performance.



Greater investment in actionable initiatives is needed to achieve gender parity, as the recent percentages of female CEOs, female executives and women in the workforce have seen minimal growth.

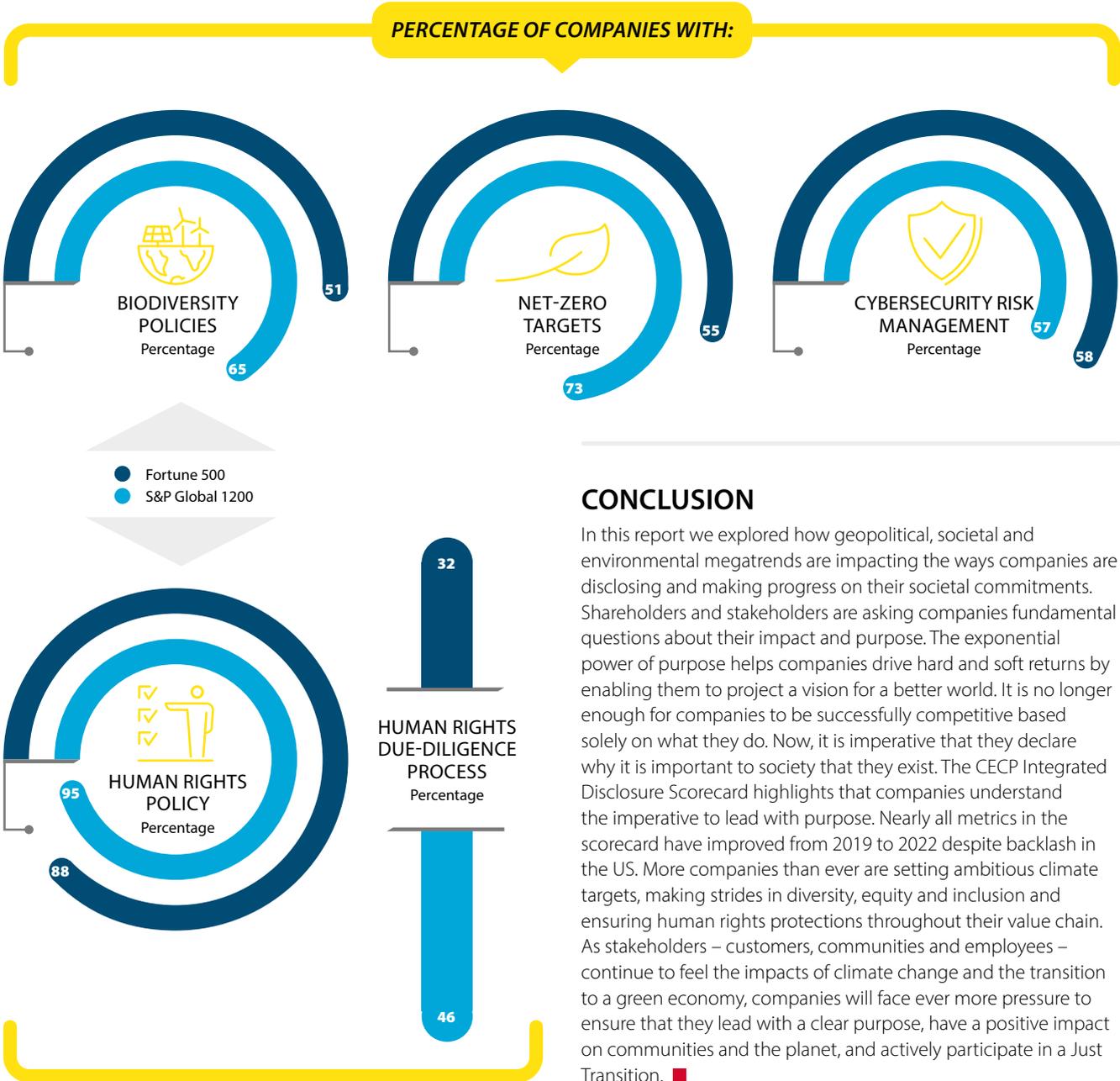
*Investing in Society* examines how concurrent social and political pressures are impacting the corporate sector's publicly facing disclosures. It also analyses the latest trends in environmental, social and governance (ESG) metrics for companies in the Fortune 500® and S&P Global 1200. Using the Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP) Integrated Disclosure Scorecard to summarise these findings, the report explores trends, presents case studies and provides the actionable insights that corporate purpose leaders need to inform their companies' long-term sustainable value-creation strategies.

## METHODOLOGY

The CECP Integrated Disclosure Scorecard evaluates changes in corporate sector performance in relation to CECP's Integrated Long-Term Plan Framework. The scorecard measures how well companies in the Fortune 500 and S&P Global 1200 embrace principles of stakeholder capitalism and long-term sustainable value creation. Using Bloomberg data, CECP, in partnership with KPMG, conducted an analysis of companies' key performance indicators (KPIs) from 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 across the Integrated Long-Term Plan Framework. Data from 2023 were excluded due to limited availability. The scorecard indicates the change in median values of these KPIs between 2019 and 2022 within a matched set of companies that disclosed data for all four years. Previous versions of *Investing in Society* have analysed trends for a three-year period. *Investing in Society: 2024 Edition* uses four years to account for a pre-Covid-19 baseline.

When choosing which KPIs to include in the scorecard, some data points were omitted due to a low number of company responses. To draw conclusions with a reasonable level of accuracy, we included only KPIs that had data for at least 50% of companies within each dataset.

Dialogue is the Southern African partner of the CECP Global Exchange, a network of country-based, mission-driven corporate engagement organisations that aims to advance business as a force for good around the world.



**CONCLUSION**

In this report we explored how geopolitical, societal and environmental megatrends are impacting the ways companies are disclosing and making progress on their societal commitments. Shareholders and stakeholders are asking companies fundamental questions about their impact and purpose. The exponential power of purpose helps companies drive hard and soft returns by enabling them to project a vision for a better world. It is no longer enough for companies to be successfully competitive based solely on what they do. Now, it is imperative that they declare why it is important to society that they exist. The CECP Integrated Disclosure Scorecard highlights that companies understand the imperative to lead with purpose. Nearly all metrics in the scorecard have improved from 2019 to 2022 despite backlash in the US. More companies than ever are setting ambitious climate targets, making strides in diversity, equity and inclusion and ensuring human rights protections throughout their value chain. As stakeholders – customers, communities and employees – continue to feel the impacts of climate change and the transition to a green economy, companies will face ever more pressure to ensure that they lead with a clear purpose, have a positive impact on communities and the planet, and actively participate in a Just Transition. ■

Find out more

- Link: <https://cecp.co/insights/>
- Contact information: Jenna Moore – [jmoore@cecp.co](mailto:jmoore@cecp.co)

# Tech-Tonic Shifts: Digitisation to Amplify Impact

By Nozizwe Vundla,  
Head of Foundation at Sanlam



Sanlam Foundation has benefitted **696 SMEs and stokvels** through our Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programmes from the inception of the Foundation.

**20 000 learners** have been empowered through the Matric Live app and **20 000 youth** will benefit from our digital Consumer Financial Education (CFE) platform, by year-end.



We've invested **+ R96 million** towards programmes that are delivered digitally end-to-end or in a hybrid manner (digital and in-person).



We've invested **R4.1 million** in tech to amplify impact through data-led feedback, measurement, and reporting.

Since the introduction of our new strategy in 2020, the Sanlam Foundation has undergone a significant transformation, evolving from a manual, clunky operation to one that embraces digitisation as a core focus. Harnessing the power of technology, we now deliver our programmes more efficiently and effectively. This includes equipping individuals with the tools to live with financial confidence through our financial literacy programmes and supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs)—the backbone of our economy—through our Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) initiatives. Our efforts reflect a steadfast commitment to fostering resilience and creating pathways for sustainable growth.

## The Vast Potential of SA's SMMEs

The NDP holds SMMEs responsible for generating 90% of the nation's jobs by 2030. Currently, SMMEs create about 60% of all jobs.

This means SA needs 3.2 million SMMEs by 2030, which could create about 11.9 million new jobs by then.

Tech is pivotal in ESD efforts to unlock potential through upliftment and inclusion.

Here, we share key learnings from our programmes on integrating tech to leapfrog shared challenges, scale impact, and build a brighter future for all:

## CASE STUDY 1: Sanlam Group Enterprise and Supplier Development Programme

The Sanlam Group Enterprise and Supplier Development Programme is the

Foundation's flagship initiative, designed to uplift high-potential black-owned businesses while ensuring equitable participation in the broader economy.

**Key Learning:** Embracing digital tools streamlines operations and enhances customer engagement. By leveraging technology for marketing and virtual support, SME owners can adapt and thrive even during crises like the Covid-19 pandemic, demonstrating that resilience and innovation can coexist.

## CASE STUDY 2: Sanlam Re Basadi Enterprise and Supplier Development Programme

The Sanlam Re Basadi Enterprise and Supplier Development Programme empowers black women-owned businesses through three tailored streams—Masakhe, Siyakhula, and Asindize. These streams support entrepreneurs at various stages of their journey.

**Key Learning:** Technology is a powerful enabler, as seen with the Virtual Incubator platform, which breaks down geographical barriers and provides entrepreneurs with digital access to resources and support. Integrated development tools allow participants to track their progress and benefit from data-driven insights tailored to their needs. This ensures that aspiring business owners can pursue their passions without constraints.

## CASE STUDY 3: Blackbullion South Africa

The Blackbullion South Africa platform equips youth (age 18-35) individuals

with essential financial skills that foster confidence and independence. This digital learning platform simplifies complex financial concepts into relatable content, ensuring that young people from diverse backgrounds can engage and thrive. Targeting 20 000 young individuals, Blackbullion empowers youth to navigate their financial futures with certainty.

Initiatives like the Blackbullion financial literacy programme leverage digital platforms to deliver essential financial education to youth, enhancing accessibility and effectiveness.

**Key Learning:** Engaging multimedia approaches, such as videos, interactive quizzes, and webinars enhance learning experiences. By instilling lasting financial confidence, the Sanlam Foundation prepares young people to navigate their personal finances with the requisite awareness and knowledge.

## CASE STUDY 4: Matric Live Application

The partnership between the Sanlam Foundation and the Matric Live application revolutionises learning for students, targeting 20 000 learners in underserved schools.

**Key Learning:** The app's diverse learning features make education engaging and intuitive. By providing comprehensive revision exams to enhance learners' preparation, it instils a love for learning that empowers students to excel academically and pursue their aspirations fearlessly.

## CASE STUDY 5: Unlocking Africa's Financial Potential Through Stokvels

In the rapidly evolving South African finance landscape, stokvels serve as

a powerful force for financial inclusion, with South Africa's stokvel sector valued at R50 billion and comprising over 800 000 groups. However, many stokvels operate informally, highlighting the opportunity for financial organisations to empower these structures in various ways, including through technology. The Sanlam Leruo Stokvel Programme, with the Foundation's Implementing Partner Zevoli Growth Partners, aims to transform stokvels into engines for community empowerment and wealth creation.

**Key Learning:** By harnessing digital tools for record-keeping, payments, and investments, along with financial education and regulatory alignment, stokvels can transition from informal operations to formal structures. This transformation unlocks their potential to invest in local businesses and drive sustainable development.

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

The Sanlam Foundation has embraced technology to scale and measure our impact in corporate social responsibility.

By transitioning to a digital grant management system, we ensure transparency and equitable opportunities for applicants while enabling efficient tracking of the impact that is achieved by our programmes. Meanwhile, our digitised employee volunteerism programme allows us to broaden engagement and provide an opportunity for our employees to give back to the communities where Sanlam operates in a measurable way.

These technological advancements empower us to maximise our social impact and operate as a forward-thinking foundation.



**Together, we can change South Africans' stories and our nation's narrative. We can create a legacy of empowerment that echoes through generations, transforming lives and building a more inclusive, prosperous future for all.**



# THE SANLAM ESG BAROMETER: NAVIGATING ESG IN AFRICA

The 2024 Sanlam ESG Barometer Report examines how listed companies in South Africa and Kenya are navigating the environmental, social and governance (ESG) landscape, with a particular emphasis on 'ESG additionality'. The additionality approach involves reallocating capital to not only enhance ESG compliance but also to achieve positive social and environmental outcomes. This strategy is crucial for making sectors such as energy, transport and agriculture more sustainable and resilient.

The ESG Barometer findings show that company commitment to additionality remains strong, despite growing anti-ESG sentiment in the US. By contrast, there seems to be a growing recognition that ESG principles are not only advantageous in contemporary global markets but also essential for sustainable development and strengthening the continent's climate resilience.

## PARTICIPANTS

The findings presented in this year's report are based on 69 listed companies, with 50 from South Africa and 19 from Kenya. The South African sample represents 19% of listed companies, and roughly 60% of domestic market capitalisation, on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) while the Kenyan sample represents 31% of listed companies on the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE). The survey was sent to approximately 200 JSE-listed and 40 NSE-listed companies, targeting the top performers and sector leaders, including the JSE Top 40 and the NSE Top 20.

The selection was strategically aimed at ensuring a broad representation across various sectors, particularly those known for their significant environmental impact or those showing substantial progress in ESG initiatives.

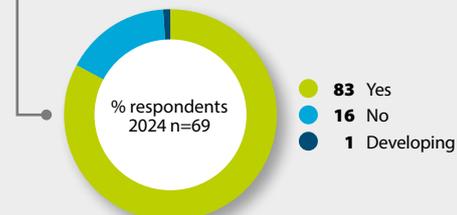
## KEY FINDINGS

1

### Prevalence of ESG strategies

This year's survey highlights the increasing importance of ESG considerations for African companies. Overall, 83% of companies report having an ESG strategy in place, reflecting widespread recognition of the importance of integrating ESG practices into business operations in both South Africa and Kenya. With 98% of South African companies and 100% of Kenyan companies either having or developing ESG strategies, ESG is becoming the new standard operating procedure rather than a niche or specialised approach.

#### DOES YOUR COMPANY HAVE AN ESG STRATEGY?



2

### Motivations for ESG strategies

In both South Africa and Kenya, attracting investors is the top priority for having an ESG strategy. This is closely followed by operational necessity, with the two factors being almost equally important due to their interconnected nature. However, the emphasis on attracting investment has slightly decreased this year compared to last, possibly because more than two-thirds of companies report that the cost of capital has remained largely unchanged since adopting ESG strategies. This suggests that investors view ESG integration as a baseline requirement rather than an added advantage.

Conversely, regulation is cited by only about 5% of South African companies as a motivation for ESG integration, compared to around 20% of Kenyan companies. This likely reflects the more stringent climate policy environment in Kenya.

While companies report that ESG strategies have enhanced their market reputation, which in turn positively influences their attractiveness to investors, few South African companies have reported losing investment due to ESG performance. This compares to about 40% of Kenyan companies who reported that they have experienced a loss in investment. This difference could reflect both the quality of ESG strategies and the standards of investors, although these aspects were not explicitly covered in the survey. It might be valuable to explore ESG strategies from an investor perspective in future surveys.

Given the importance of ESG strategies in attracting investment, it is not surprising that companies in both markets rank investors as their most important stakeholder when designing an ESG strategy. Employees and customers are ranked as having relatively low influence on ESG decisions, despite last year's survey finding that 30% of South African companies rated maintaining good employee relations as their most critical ESG risk.

#### MAIN REASONS FOR ESG STRATEGY



### 3

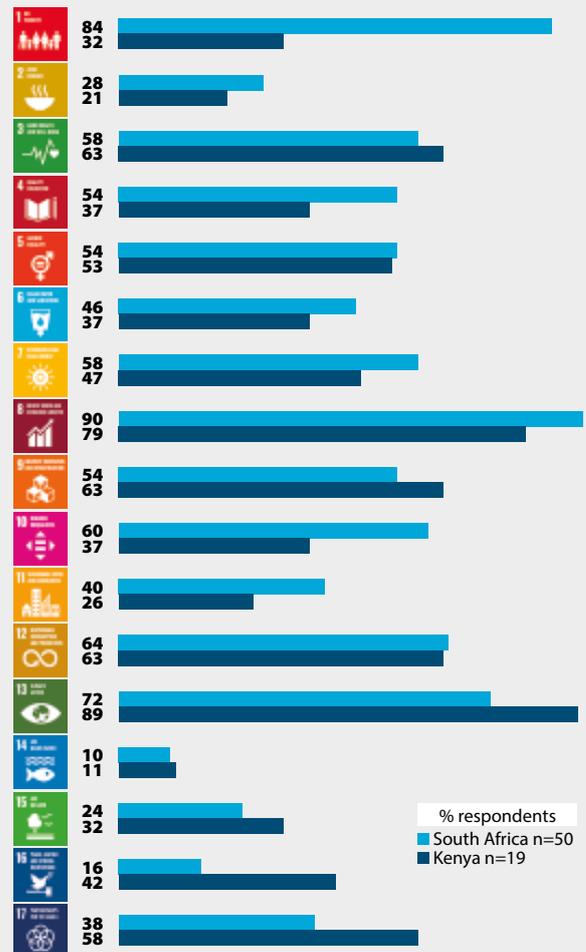
#### Purpose of strategies

Companies report that their ESG strategies prioritise 'purpose-driven impact', reflecting a balanced focus on ethical responsibility, operational sustainability and risk management. The concept of ESG additionality is gaining momentum and companies are increasingly pursuing forward-looking investments that deliver significant environmental and social impacts essential for sustainable low-carbon transitions in regions like South Africa and Kenya.

Most companies are adopting 'transition strategies' to enhance ESG performance, with a strong commitment to projects that offer positive social and environmental outcomes. This includes development additionality, governance additionality and financial additionality, all aimed at achieving tangible benefits.

There is also a growing emphasis on collaboration within value chains to address interconnected social and environmental risks. The interconnected nature of ESG factors is reflected in the use of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework in ESG strategy design. The majority (91%) of respondents align their ESG strategies with the SDGs and 87% report on their impacts related to SDGs. The findings also confirm how SDG priorities are shaped by local socioeconomic and environmental needs as well as regulations. For instance, in Kenya, ESG alignment emphasises climate action, followed by economic growth and employment. The focus on climate action is likely driven by the country's vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events such as droughts and floods that result in devastating economic losses. In South Africa, ESG alignment with SDGs focuses on economic growth and poverty reduction, reflecting persistent socioeconomic challenges such as a 32.9% unemployment rate, widespread poverty and stark income inequality.

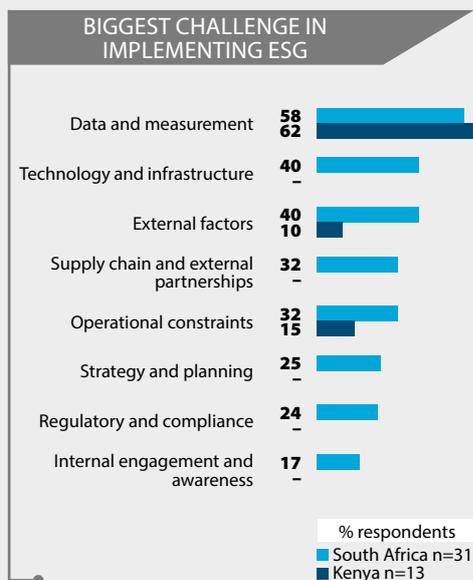
#### SDG PRIORITIES: SOUTH AFRICA VS KENYA



## 4 Challenges

Companies globally are under increasing pressure to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, but they face significant challenges in designing and implementing measurable and impactful ESG strategies. The most significant obstacle is related to data and measurement, particularly issues with the availability, accuracy and consistency of ESG data. Despite these challenges, many companies are confident in their ability to measure and report on the impact of their ESG efforts. However, this often leads to ESG strategies being shaped by what is easily quantifiable, potentially sidelining more ambitious or long-term initiatives like climate adaptation and resilience.

To broaden their ESG efforts companies could benefit from collaborating with industry peers, regulatory bodies and NGOs. Such partnerships could provide the support and resources needed to pursue more ambitious and long-term ESG activities that go beyond the immediate returns and tackle critical sustainability challenges.



## CONCLUSION

### A missed opportunity for climate adaptation?

The survey reveals that most companies plan to prioritise enhancing social development and community engagement in their future ESG efforts. Over two-thirds of these companies currently involve stakeholders in designing their strategies to make an impact in these areas and intend to continue doing so. This shift indicates a growing focus on the 'S' in ESG. Additionally, companies recognise the importance of improving disclosure practices to overcome challenges in accessing reliable ESG data, viewing better disclosure as essential for strategies that deliver both social impact and financial performance.

While social development, resource management, and investments in renewable energy and green technology are seen as key future priorities, the survey highlights a concerning gap in attention to climate adaptation and resilience. Despite escalating climate risks in Kenya and South Africa, adaptation remains a low priority, likely due to the focus on mitigation in ESG frameworks and the long-term nature of adaptation investments. This oversight suggests a missed opportunity for companies to bolster long-term sustainability by addressing critical climate challenges.

### Barometer focus

Going forward, we expect to further expand the geographic reach of the survey, eventually presenting a truly pan-African view on company approaches to ESG. Further, we plan to increase both the breadth and depth of the survey content, to enable even more robust analysis of what African companies are doing when it comes to ESG.

The Sanlam ESG Barometer is a Sanlam-sponsored annual report produced by research and advisory firm Krutham in collaboration with *Business Day*. Krutham's ESG team welcomes the opportunity to discuss this research and our broader ESG service offering with interested parties. For more detail, please email Krutham's Head of Impact Investing Research & ESG, Nicole Martens at [nmartens@krutham.com](mailto:nmartens@krutham.com). ■

Find out more

- Link to report: <https://sanlamesgbarometer.co.za/report-2024/>
- Contact information: Nicole Martens – [nmartens@krutham.com](mailto:nmartens@krutham.com)



# THE STATE OF ESG STRATEGIC INTEGRATION IN JSE-LISTED COMPANIES

## KEY LEARNINGS

- 1 Large and very large JSE-listed companies exhibit relatively high ESG maturity, with 62% having embarked on an ESG journey six or more years ago.
- 2 High collaboration between boards and executive teams in strategy development is a condition to ensure better ESG strategic integration and strategic change.
- 3 Pressure for ESG adoption and integration still comes primarily from regulators and governments. Corporates feel relatively low pressure from marketplace stakeholders and the corresponding relatively low engagement and consideration of these stakeholders towards ESG strategy development. The pressure is still more for compliance than for performance.
- 4 The JSE Sustainability Disclosure Guidance materiality factors are considered, on average, very highly material by sample firms. This may reveal a lack of focus in the ESG strategy. Social factors are considered more material, on average.
- 5 Companies report significant changes in the 'social' category, including in diversity and inclusion, improvement of health and safety conditions, improvement in the engagement and investment in community development projects, and the development of an ESG-aware culture throughout the business.
- 6 Among the strategic initiatives that scored lower are those that include greater commitment and more structural strategic moves, such as acquiring other companies to improve the ability to handle ESG priorities, divesting assets negatively contributing to ESG performance and changed distribution channels.
- 7 Among the top five ESG implementation challenges are the 'fight for resources among different business units', the 'pace of change in the regulatory environment' and the 'pressure on quarterly earnings, rather than long-term capital gains'.

The Henley Business School-Risk Insights comprehensive ESG survey aimed to provide a detailed overview of ESG adoption and integration in JSE-listed companies. As ESG performance becomes ever more a de facto competitive requirement for businesses to prosper, it is important to take stock of current practices and progress in South African companies. The hope is that the report can bring more awareness of the challenges posed by ESG, but also provide clarity on key aspects and opportunities for corporate South Africa.

## METHODOLOGY

The researchers developed a comprehensive survey divided into several sections, including demographics; motivations for ESG adoptions; stakeholder pressure and engagement; materiality approaches; board involvement and governance of ESG; ESG strategy implementation and barriers; and ESG reporting and frameworks. The survey was distributed to JSE-listed companies through several means, including through a market research agency. In total, there were 63 complete and valid responses which served as the basis of this report. Respondents completing the survey on behalf of their companies included chief operating officers (31), ESG/sustainability heads/senior management (21), company secretaries (four), chief executives (three), non-executive directors (three) and a chairperson (one).



### KEY COMPANY STATISTICS

**Most companies were large or very large**, with 30% employing over 10 000 employees, while 22% have a staff component of between 5 000 and 10 000.

**SALES**  
70% of companies reported annual revenues of R90 billion.

### COMPANY SECTORS:

- Consumer discretionary industry (18)
- Financials (14)
- Industrials (10)
- Consumer staples (8)
- Basic materials (6)
- Technology (3)
- Real estate (2)
- Energy (2)

The company characteristics indicate some self-selection bias in favour of large and very large companies. It is possible the survey was completed by companies that have already made significant strides in ESG integration. Therefore, results need to be interpreted with this caveat, as they may not represent the full picture of all JSE-listed companies. The likelihood is that the emerging picture is more favourable than the reality if we are to consider all JSE companies. A detailed analysis of the data revealed the below key findings by section.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Section

### Key findings

1

#### ESG maturity and motivation

The research reveals that ESG maturity among JSE-listed companies is relatively high, with a significant portion having adopted ESG practices over the past decade. The primary motivations for integrating ESG are linked to value creation, with risk mitigation, innovation and financial performance being the top drivers, while employee-related reasons and competitive advantages are less emphasised.

- **High ESG maturity:** 27% of companies adopted ESG over 10 years ago and 35% in the past six to 10 years.
- **Primary motivations:**
  - 46% cited risk mitigation and risk management improvement
  - 46% aimed to foster innovation within the business
  - Improving financial performance was also a significant motivator.
- **Less emphasised reasons:** Employee productivity, attracting and engaging employees, top-line growth, customer loyalty and competitive advantage were ranked lower.

2

#### ESG governance and leadership

It appears that many boards of JSE-listed companies are actively integrating ESG into corporate purposes and strategies. While most boards have overseen changes to reflect ESG, many have done so only recently. Boards are generally involved in ESG strategy development, with a significant portion working closely with CEOs. Execution responsibility often lies with a chief sustainability officer and a dedicated team, indicating a separation between business and ESG strategies. Boards believe they have the skills to oversee ESG, though formal performance reviews vary in frequency.

- **Corporate purpose changes:** 76% of boards have overseen changes to corporate purpose to reflect ESG, with 47% doing so in the past five years.
- **Active role in strategy development:**
  - 47.6% of boards co-develop strategy with CEOs/executive teams
  - 38% create a strategic framework for CEOs/executive teams to develop immediate strategy
  - 14% of boards have little to no role in strategy development.
- **Execution responsibility:** 57% of companies allocate ESG execution to a chief sustainability officer and a dedicated team.
- **Board skills and capabilities:** Boards believe they are well equipped to oversee ESG, with 75% formally reviewing performance against a plan, mostly every six months or annually.

3

#### ESG stakeholder pressure and stakeholder engagement

JSE-listed companies face the most pressure for ESG adoption from industry regulators, followed by environmental and social pressure groups, and large shareholders. However, engagement with these stakeholders varies, with regulators having the lowest engagement despite high pressure. Environmental and social groups are engaged indirectly, while large shareholders receive infrequent but direct engagement. Marketplace stakeholders exert relatively low pressure, which aligns with the finding that ESG motivations are not primarily competitive.

- **Pressure sources:**
  - Highest pressure from industry regulators
  - Significant pressure from environmental and social pressure groups
  - Large shareholders exert pressure but are engaged infrequently.
- **Stakeholder engagement:**
  - Regulators have the lowest engagement score
  - Environmental and social groups are engaged indirectly
  - Large shareholders receive direct but infrequent engagement.
- **Marketplace stakeholders:**
  - Low pressure from suppliers, customers and competitors
  - Correspondingly low engagement and consideration in ESG strategy development.

## 4

### Section

#### Financial materiality and materiality approaches

Most of the respondents follow a triple/contextual materiality assessment approach, integrating single and double materiality within local and global contexts. A smaller portion adopts double or single materiality, with a few lacking systematic assessments. Companies generally consider all 15 factors in the JSE sustainability disclosure guidance as financially material, with health and safety, and tax transparency being the most material. Social factors are also highly material, reflecting South Africa's social challenges.

## 5

#### ESG and strategic change

The research shows that the respondents have significantly integrated ESG, with notable improvements in diversity, health and safety, community engagement and fostering an ESG-aware culture. However, more substantial strategic initiatives like acquisitions and partnerships for ESG priorities are less common. Despite progress, companies face barriers such as resource competition, regulatory changes, pressure on quarterly earnings, lack of transformation resources, and poor integration of business and sustainability strategies.

### Key findings

- **Materiality assessment approaches:**
  - 65% use a triple/contextual materiality approach
  - 22% use a double materiality approach
  - 6.3% use a single materiality approach
  - Four companies lack systematic materiality assessments.
- **Financial materiality:**
  - All 15 JSE sustainability factors are considered financially material
  - Health and safety, and tax transparency are the most material (average score of 4.97 out of 6)
  - Social factors are highly material (average score of 4.73).
- **Significant ESG-induced changes:**
  - Improvements in diversity and inclusion
  - Enhanced health and safety conditions
  - Increased engagement and investment in community development
  - Development of an ESG-aware culture.
- **Lower-scoring strategic initiatives:**
  - Acquisitions to handle ESG priorities
  - Significant partnerships/joint ventures for ESG implementation
  - Divesting assets negatively impacting ESG performance
  - Changes in distribution channels.
- **Barriers to ESG execution:**
  - 73% face resource competition among business units
  - Over 70% struggle with regulatory changes
  - More than half feel pressure from quarterly earnings over long-term gains
  - 47.6% lack resources for business transformation
  - 46% experience poor integration of business and sustainability strategies.

## CONCLUSION

The Henley-Risk Insights survey revealed that corporate South Africa has made significant efforts towards the adoption and integration of ESG factors in their businesses. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done. Companies need to continue to work on the purpose and rationale for sustainability that make ESG an integral part of the corporate strategy. Competitive motives and marketplace stakeholders remain low in terms of motivations, pressure and engagement for ESG adoption and integration. Significant ESG-driven strategic moves, such as asset divestment, mergers and acquisitions, change of distribution channels and joint ventures are not so common. Until ESG becomes an integral part of the competitive game, the progress will be incremental at best and often illusive.

Most barriers to ESG strategic execution remain internal and within corporate control, depicting significant tensions between business and ESG rationales. There is a clear prioritisation of social factors vis-à-vis environmental and even governance factors. However, corporates must recognise that social and environmental factors are often intertwined and failure to keep up on the environmental side may cost companies and South Africa the ability to create jobs that are desperately needed. ■



Find out more

- Link to report: <https://content.henleysa.ac.za/the-state-of-esg-strategic-integration-in-jse-listed-companies->
- Contact information: Prof. Danie Petzer – [daniep@henleysa.ac.za](mailto:daniep@henleysa.ac.za) (Henley) | [andrey@riskinsights.co.za](mailto:andrey@riskinsights.co.za) (Risk Insights)



# 2024 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW: DEFINING PRIVATE SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY DELIVERY PATHWAYS

South Africa, as a member state of the United Nations (UN), adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. At the heart of this Agenda are the 17 SDGs. The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The UN established a voluntary accountability mechanism called the Voluntary National Review (VNR). Through the VNR process, the UN member states assess and present national progress on the 2030 Agenda, including their collective performance on the 17 SDGs.

South Africa presented its first VNR to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in 2019. Initially,

South Africa intended to submit its VNR in 2024. However, due to government changes, this could not be achieved. The 2024 report will now be presented to the HLPF in July 2025.

The UN Global Compact Network South Africa (GCNSA), a corporate sustainability platform, was once again tasked by the government to compile the second VNR for the private sector, measuring progress towards meeting the SDGs.

## METHODOLOGY

An interactive methodology was followed, grouping six top South African industries to provide comprehensive insights into sustainability trends, challenges and opportunities. Participating companies contributed keynote speakers who presented industry insights and shared sustainability frameworks.

Additionally, companies that registered for the VNR process submitted case studies and completed a broad-based survey to offer further insights, while also prioritising the SDGs. Tailored workbooks outlining the VNR process and key dates for industry discussions were crafted for each participating company. These companies engaged in six industry-focused round table discussions, guided by expert panels and moderators, and delved into 10 targeted topic discussions.

The use of diverse feedback mechanisms, including digital platforms like Mentimeter, facilitated rich, multidimensional dialogue. Post-discussions and one-on-one sessions were arranged to review the workbooks that companies completed, culminating in a collection of success stories. These narratives, alongside insights from the round table discussions, formed the basis of the report's findings.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

On Wednesday, 28 August 2024, GCNSA hosted the launch of the VNR on private sector South Africa's progress towards meeting the SDGs.

The *Private Sector VNR Report 2024* reiterates global trends, while highlighting that, on aggregate, we are off track on the SDGs. South Africa's public and private sectors, plus civil society, need to collaborate to 'move the needle' on the country's achievement of the SDGs, said Dr Achieng Ojwang, Executive Director of GCNSA.

1

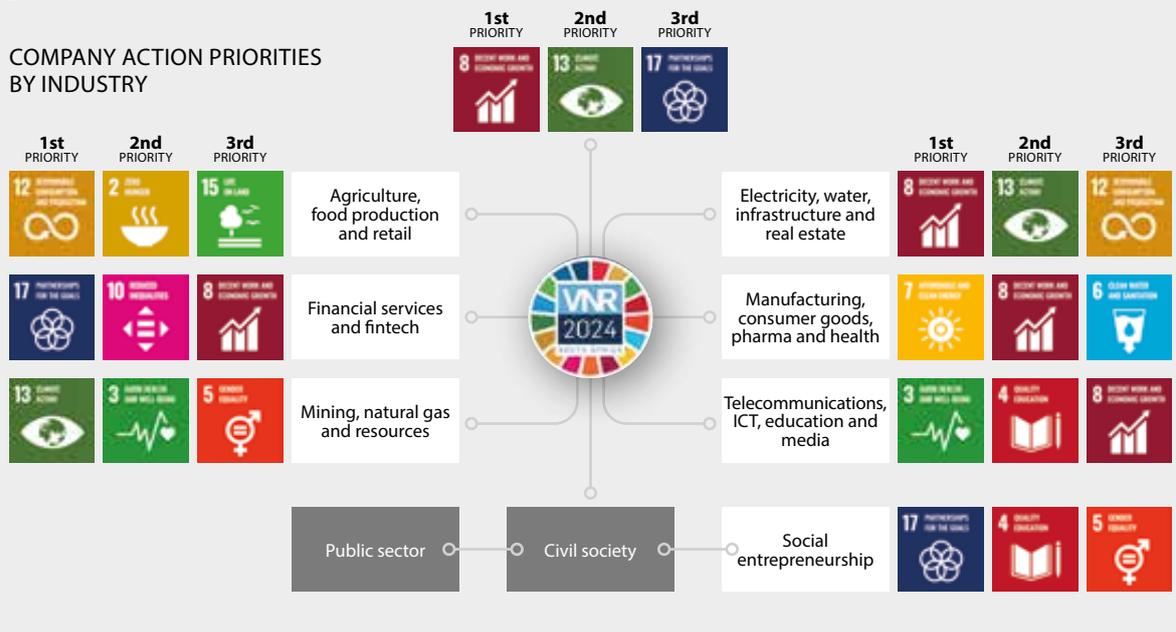
**The SDG priorities of the private sector** has changed significantly since 2019, as the graphic shows.

Companies continued to prioritise SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, the 'powerhouse' goal for the private sector. Beneath this there were significant changes; the three biggest increases were climate action, the focus on partnership for the goals and zero hunger. The SDGs which saw the most significant declines in priority were education, industry innovation and infrastructure, and responsible consumption and production. This likely reflects constrained purse strings, action to focus on forthcoming regulations and an increasingly clear understanding that companies cannot make optimised progress if they work alone.



2

**The top SDG priorities** vary significantly across industries, based on where they can maximise impact, as the graphic below shows.



3

**Policy enablement:**

Companies are deeply concerned that policy is not innovating quickly enough, with policy compliance remaining too difficult, too resource consuming and too punitive. Policy enablement matters recommended by the private sector to government include:

A

**Making it simpler to adopt:**  
e.g. streamline policy and process

B

**Having a 'one-stop shop':**  
such as online and digital portals

C

**Making it consistent:**  
harmonise local and provincial policies and integrate reporting frameworks

D

**Checking if it is working:**  
transparent policy review, spotlight effective policies

E

**Placing more focus on incentives:**  
more tax rebate and financing incentives, and incentivise collaboration

4

**Leveraging opportunities:** Multilevel stakeholder coordination is needed to maximise the material sustainability opportunities that could enable the South African private sector.

5

Companies identified the **top 10 risks for mitigation** as depicted below.

Top 10 risks		SDGs	Impact	Probability
1	Security and safety for staff and customers	3, 5, 9, 16	7.9	7.7
2	Energy management and cost efficiency	7, 12	8.1	7.3
3	Environmental impact and resource management	8, 12, 13, 14, 15	8.0	7.4
4	Policy, regulatory compliance and business integrity	16, 17	7.7	7.4
5	Market competition and economic stability	1, 4, 8, 17	7.4	7.7
6	Project implementation cost and complexity	9, 17	7.6	7.0
7	Social responsibility and inclusivity	1, 5, 10, 11	7.4	7.1
8	Sustainable supply chain and source of supply	8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16	7.6	6.8
9	Workforce development and labour dynamics	3, 4, 8	7.3	6.8
10	Innovation for sustainability	4, 9, 12, 17	7.0	6.8

6

Overall, many of South Africa's corporates are contributing to the country meeting its SDG targets by increasingly integrating the goals into their core business strategy, recognising that sustainable practices can drive growth and innovation, and give businesses a competitive advantage.

7

The private sector is also investing in sustainable solutions as well as in the research and development of sustainable products, services and technologies; collaborating with other businesses, NGOs and the government to tackle complex sustainability challenges; advocating for sustainable development policies and engaging in sustainable policy development; investing in community development projects that align with the SDGs; improving sustainability throughout the supply chain; and building awareness and reporting on its sustainability performance.

Significant progress is still needed to fast-track private sector contributions to the SDGs. Collaboration is essential for accelerating SDG implementation. GCNSA calls on South Africa's public and private sectors, along with civil society, to enhance collaborative efforts. Only through this unity can we achieve meaningful progress towards the SDGs.



Find out more

- Link to report: <https://globalcompactsa.org.za/special-initiatives/voluntary-national-review-2024/#handbook-insights>
- Contact information: Rethabile Mbokodi – [rethabilem@globalcompactsa.org.za](mailto:rethabilem@globalcompactsa.org.za)



# PARTNERING ACROSS SECTORS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT IN AFRICA

To effectively tackle the pressing social issues the continent and the world at large are facing, the public, private and development sectors must collaborate systemically and comprehensively. Identifying the potential for improved collaboration, the Roger Federer Foundation partnered with DNA Economics to highlight the potential of multistakeholder partnerships and draw attention to considerations for such partnerships in Africa, drawing on numerous case studies.

## IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATIONS

Social issues, including low-quality and insufficient education, unemployment, poor health and climate change are too intricate, deeply rooted and wide-ranging to be left to governments or development actors alone to solve. The need for the private sector to play a leading role in addressing these challenges has become clearer. However, collaborative partnerships are often plagued by misunderstandings and miscommunication between business, the government and nonprofit organisations. While the number of punctual collaborations between the public and private sectors are growing, many are not functional and effective.

The report is aimed at a diverse range of stakeholders across the government, business and nonprofit sectors, as they can all benefit from maximising the value of multisectoral partnerships and become inspired by successful approaches.

## METHODOLOGY

The report's findings were based on a literature review focused on multisectoral partnerships, funding collaboratives and public-private partnerships, defined below.

Its content is also based on interviews with stakeholders, ranging from corporates spanning the retail, financial and mining sectors of South Africa and other African countries as well as global development organisations, funding aggregator bodies and philanthropies.

## COLLABORATION MODELS

### Multisectoral partnerships

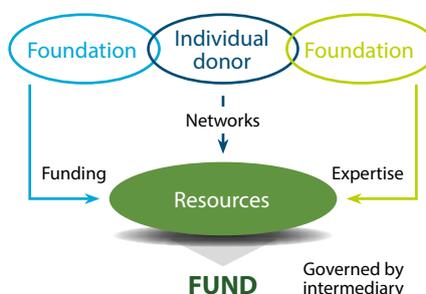
These are "formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis".<sup>1</sup> These partnerships can range from being transactional, short-term arrangements or integrated developmental projects. This report focuses more on the latter type of partnership.



**Involve sectors such as:**

- Education
- Health
- Economic development
- Environmental sustainability

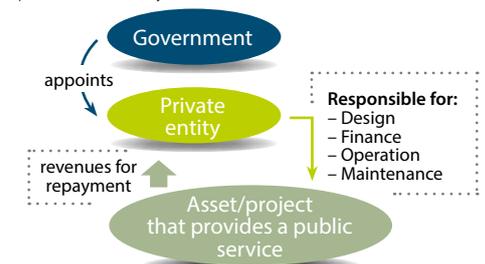
### Funding collaboratives



This is a model through which philanthropies pool resources to magnify their contribution towards a particular social cause.<sup>2</sup> An intermediary often governs collaboratives to ensure the fund is operated and governed by a neutral party.

### Public-private partnerships (PPPs)

In this report the term describes the contractual arrangements between the public and private sector, mostly in cases where private sector providers are appointed by a government to help deliver public services. The entity is repaid from the revenues generated from the asset or project by either the users of the asset or by the public authority.<sup>3</sup>



## KEY FINDINGS

## How to address common barriers to partnerships

Challenge	Solution
Mistrust	Involve a trusted broker
Risk	Implement appropriate governance structures
Duplication	Governments should keep track of development projects and alert businesses and donor organisations to similar efforts that are already ongoing
Language	Discuss and clarify terminology and develop a common understanding
Decision-making approach and processes	All actors should jointly agree on a process for making decisions collectively and agree on non-negotiable issues when the partnership is formed

## How business should approach the government

- The government needs to be in the driving seat. The success of a large-scale initiative often lies in the extent to which governments embrace a particular initiative and integrate it into broader government systems and development plans.
- The government is usually the guarantor of the sustainability of interventions or their continuous monitoring. Include all relevant government stakeholders as soon as possible. Give strategic consideration to the level of government with which you intend to work.
- Treat the government as a critical partner along the journey. Companies need to recognise that the expertise of governments lies in their ability to scale and roll out initiatives over time.
- Innovation is often not at the forefront of the government's thinking. Thus, initiatives must have individuals at prominent levels who are championing ideas and encouraging non-traditional approaches.

## Summary of recommendations for business

The recommendations have been structured according to three main themes:

'Seeing'	'What'	'How'
<i>Recognising the opportunities for collaboration</i>	<i>What agreements and structures to put in place</i>	<i>The 'how' of the collaboration</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Businesses need to recognise and identify opportunities where social investment can be made more impactful by partnering with governments. This will require you to put aside your fears of getting caught up in government bureaucracy and have a partnering-for-impact mindset.</li> <li>2 Actively pursue the opportunities to create a better business environment that can flow from collaborative co-production and funding social delivery programmes with governments.</li> <li>3 Learn to speak the language of governments.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Consider working with the government through existing collaborative structures. The business sector could also use its influence, resources and expertise to establish new structures and agreements.</li> <li>5 Explore and learn about the various legislative tools and formal and informal approaches available to partner with governments.</li> <li>6 Determine your time horizon. Will you be partnering for the short term (&lt; 3 years), medium term (3–5 years) or long term (&gt; 5 years)? This could influence your choice of the tools and structure of the partnership.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 Integrate ESG metrics, with a specific focus on the 'social' factor, into CSI approaches.</li> <li>8 Have or involve an ESG expert to build the bridge between CSI activities and ESG.</li> <li>9 Embed CSI focus areas and projects to ensure the longevity and sustainability of initiatives are not at risk when leaders leave or join the company.</li> <li>10 Invest in grant coordination to make all CSI efforts more leverageable. Think beyond only company-level projects and initiatives to collaborate at a higher level (national or even global).</li> <li>11 Prioritise simpler initiatives, some potentially beyond the comfort zone of the company, which are aligned with existing government and ministry strategies and policies.</li> </ol>

## Critical decision nodes for structuring a partnership agreement with a government partner



## NATIONAL EDUCATION COLLABORATION TRUST (NECT) (SOUTH AFRICA) – convening stakeholders in an independent body for collaboration

CASE  
STUDY

Established in 2013 in response to the country's National Development Plan (NDP) and its call for heightened collaboration to improve South Africa's educational outcomes, the NECT serves as a governance platform for joint education initiatives involving civil society, business, trade unions and the government. The Trust oversees the implementation of collaborative education programmes, ensuring their alignment with national education reform goals.

It is an example of how an aggregator can be established to bring different stakeholders to consolidate and share funding for a social development concern of shared interest.

### How the NECT arose

The NECT was initiated through an extensive dialogue process with stakeholders from the government, private sector, civil society and trade unions. Crucially, three major figures from various sectors – the Minister of Basic Education, the CEO of a large South African bank and an education development specialist – were responsible for the initial planning of the dialogue. Due to their business connections, the organisers secured support from Business Leadership South Africa.

### What does the NECT do?

The NECT seeks to strengthen the coordination of private sector-funded education activities, promoting good social returns on investment for both private and public spending on education. The Trust also engages specialised service providers, managed by the NECT's education specialists, especially in remote areas through its district development programme. It operates by pooling funding from the government, private sector and foundations each year to invest in its various programmes. In 2022 alone, the private sector donated R50 million to the NECT.<sup>4</sup>

### Why collaborate in a structure like the NECT?

Many South African companies consulted in the research of this project expressed a preference for collaborating

with the NECT, rather than developing their own education projects, due to its established networks and relationship with the government.

From the stakeholders interviewed who have an existing partnership with the NECT, the following reasons for participating in the aggregator body were mentioned:

- A proven track record and strong recognition throughout the country
- A national footprint with extensive reach across provinces that allows for more impactful initiatives and outcomes
- Extensive experience and knowledge.

### Challenges, risks and opportunities

In addition to its successful projects, the Trust plays a pivotal role in the South African education system by bringing together various stakeholders and fostering collaboration. However, in supporting broad collaborations and diversifying too widely in recent years, the Trust no longer plays a strategic role in the education sector and the innovation needed to drive it forward.

Given that it was founded a decade ago, comparative collaborations were not as prevalent and, therefore, it was innovative for its time. The Trust has successfully grown initiatives across the country and embedded novel approaches to teaching and learning into the Department of Basic Education.<sup>5</sup>

### Lessons learnt

The NECT arose from a specific government mandate to improve education outcomes in South Africa. In addition, its model of collaboration was also explicitly called for within the NDP. As such, the collaboration started with great momentum and political legitimacy. ■



### Sources and further reading:

- <sup>1</sup> 'Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address Social Issues: Challenges to Theory and Practice'. *Journal of Management* 2005.
- <sup>2</sup> 'Releasing the Potential of Philanthropic Contributions: The power of making collaborative giving platforms a part of every donor's portfolio'. Bridgespan 2021.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Public Private Partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa: Case Studies for Policymakers'. Uongozi Institute 2017.
- <sup>4</sup> *National Education Collaboration Trust: Annual Financial Report 2022*.
- <sup>5</sup> Refer to footnote 4.



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Find out more

- Link to report: <https://rogerfedererfoundation.org/assets/publication/pdf/Best-practices-multi-sectoral-partnerships.pdf>
- Contact information: Ramona Luminati – [ramona.luminati@rogerfederer.com](mailto:ramona.luminati@rogerfederer.com)



# COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CHANGE: DEMONSTRATING IMPACT IN AFRICA AND INDIA

Community-driven change (CDC) in Africa and India illustrates the transformative power of empowering local communities to lead their own development. By fostering self-determination and leveraging local knowledge, CDC initiatives create sustainable and equitable outcomes. This research, conducted by The Bridgespan Group, provides valuable insights for funders and organisations to support and enhance community-led transformations.

## PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

This research aims to address the fundamental need to shift from traditional top-down development paradigms to community-driven approaches. It focuses on understanding how building the power and assets of communities leads to lasting and equitable change. The primary audience includes funders, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) that are encouraged to adopt CDC methodologies to empower communities and enhance their self-determination.

## PROBLEM ADDRESSED

The research seeks to tackle the persistent issue of development projects failing to achieve long-term sustainability and equitable outcomes. By empowering communities to identify, design and implement solutions for their challenges, CDC ensures that the solutions are relevant, accepted and maintained by the community members themselves.

## SUMMARY

CDC initiatives demonstrate that empowering communities to lead their development results in sustainable and equitable outcomes. By enhancing community power and assets, CDC creates a foundation for lasting change. Funders and organisations are encouraged to support these initiatives, ensuring that the necessary conditions and flexible funding models are in place to facilitate successful community-driven development.



POWER AND ASSETS ARE AT THE CENTRE OF COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CHANGE

## METHODOLOGY

**Approach:** The research employs a comprehensive, mixed-methods approach to gather evidence on the impact of CDC initiatives in Africa and India. The methodology includes:

**Literature scan:** A thorough review of existing literature to understand the definitions and frameworks of CDC and to identify organisations implementing these approaches in India and Africa. This step identified nearly 100 organisations practising CDC.

**In-depth interviews:** Conducted over 60 interviews with NGO leaders, funders and community stakeholders to gain insights into the application and impact of CDC approaches.

**Focus group discussions:** Organised discussions with NGOs and CBOs in India and Kenya to delve deeper into findings, particularly on equity and the enabling conditions required for CDC to thrive.

**Surveys:** Partnered with six CDC-implementing organisations to survey approximately 800 households across Kenya, South Africa and India. The survey aimed to gather data on community power and assets, equity and inclusion, and enabling conditions for the CDC.

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1 Empowerment and self-determination

CDC initiatives significantly enhance community empowerment and self-determination. Communities reported substantial improvements in their ability to lead and manage their development projects. Key insights include:

- **Increased community involvement:** Communities that adopted CDC approaches showed high levels of participation in development activities. For instance, OneVillage Partners in Sierra Leone reported that 81% of community members contributed to community development projects.
- **Enhanced leadership:** CDC fosters the development of local leadership, enabling community members to take charge of their own development. This leads to sustainable and resilient communities.

### 2 Enhanced access to resources

CDC initiatives help communities secure resources from nonphilanthropic sources and government benefits, enhancing their capacity to address local challenges.

- **Access to financial services:** Organisations such as SPECTRA in India facilitated women's groups to access bank credit and improve their livelihood options. This has led to significant economic empowerment for women in these communities.
- **Government benefits:** CDC approaches increase community access to government services and social security schemes, ensuring a broader range of support for marginalised populations.

### 3 Holistic development

CDC promotes a holistic approach to community development, addressing multiple needs simultaneously, such as health, education, sanitation and livelihoods.

- **Comprehensive planning:** The Swades Foundation's village development plans in Maharashtra, India, exemplify how CDC enables communities to address a wide range of needs through integrated planning and local governance structures.
- **Improved living standards:** Communities involved in CDC initiatives reported improvements in various dimensions of wellbeing, including health, education and income levels.

### 4 Inclusivity and equity

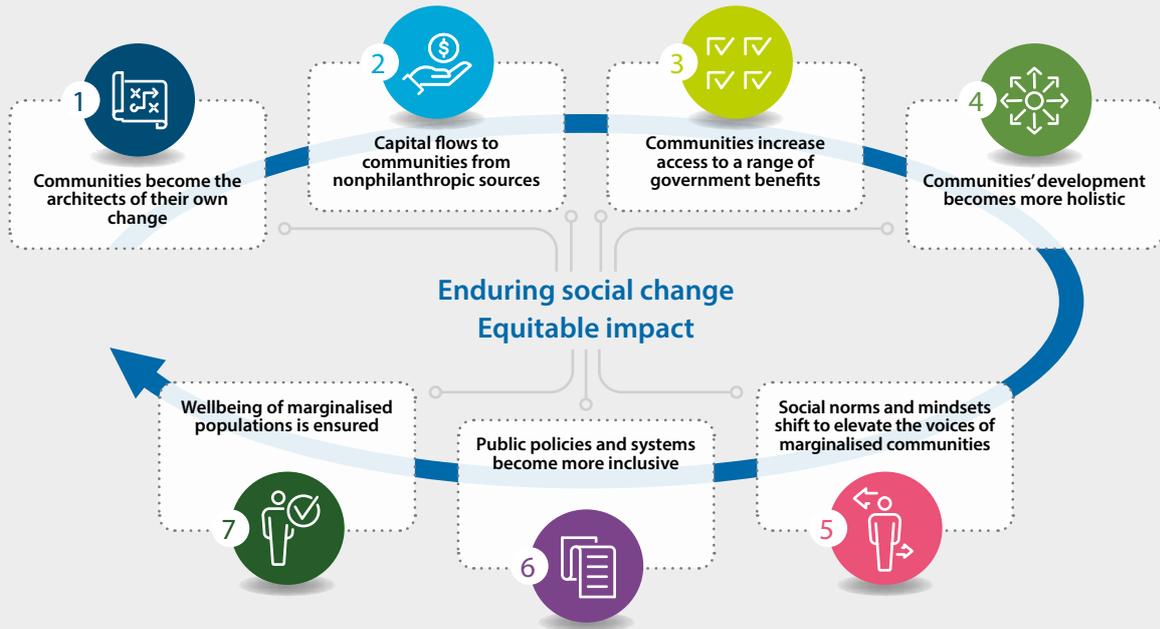
CDC initiatives shift social norms to elevate the voices of marginalised communities, fostering more inclusive decision-making processes.

- **Elevating marginalised voices:** Tostan's Community Empowerment Program in West Africa has significantly increased women's participation in community leadership and decision-making.
- **Gender equity:** CDC approaches promote gender equity by ensuring that women and other marginalised groups have a say in community development initiatives.

## 5 Social norms and mindset shifts

CDC initiatives lead to significant shifts in social norms and mindsets, promoting equity and inclusion.

- **Changing perceptions:** Programmes like Tostan's have successfully shifted community perceptions regarding gender roles and education, resulting in more equitable community practices.
- **Increased community cohesion:** CDC fosters a sense of unity and collective responsibility, which is essential for sustaining development efforts.



## CONCLUSION

### Implications and recommendations

The findings from this research underscore the transformative potential of CDC approaches in fostering sustainable and equitable community development. Key recommendations for funders and implementing agents include:

- **Invest in CDC initiatives:** Funders should prioritise investments in organisations that facilitate community leadership and self-determination.
- **Supportive ecosystems:** Creating a supportive environment with strong social cohesion and access to resources is crucial for the success of CDC initiatives.
- **Flexible funding models:** Providing multi-year, unrestricted funding allows implementing organisations to be adaptive and responsive to community needs.

The research highlights the importance of CDC approaches in achieving long-term, equitable development. By investing in community leadership and ensuring supportive ecosystems, funders can play a crucial role in enabling communities to become architects of their own futures. The findings and recommendations provide a roadmap for scaling CDC initiatives, ensuring that development efforts are both impactful and sustainable. ■

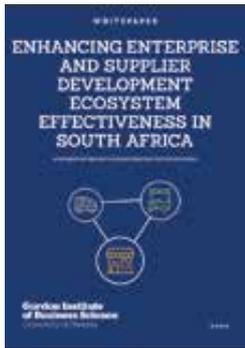
### CASE STUDY

#### Swades Foundation in Angrekond Village, India

The Swades Foundation's work in Angrekond Village showcases the power of CDC. By installing household water taps, they freed up significant time for women, who then formed self-help groups and started income-generating activities such as kitchen gardens and a dairy business. This holistic approach addressed water, sanitation and livelihoods, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of CDC.

Find out more

- Link to report: <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/community-driven-change-africa-and-india>
- Contact information: [info@bridgespan.org](mailto:info@bridgespan.org)



By Prof Kerrin Myres,  
Anne Cabot-Alletzhauer,  
Amanda Khoza,  
Prof Anastacia Mamabolo

# ENHANCING ENTERPRISE AND SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

## SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS:

Enterprise and supplier development (ESD) programmes have gained increasing attention as vehicles that support the growth and sustainability of small and growing enterprises, or the SMME sector, in South Africa. Fuelled by legislation such as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act 53 of 2003 and the Constitution, transformation and inclusion remain two of their core objectives. Currently, these programmes are estimated to draw between R20 billion and R30 billion of investment per annum.

An important unanswered question, though, is whether the substantial resources being dedicated to these programmes are actually producing the intended ambitious outcomes. Studies conducted on ESD in South Africa paint a picture of an initiative that runs the risk of veering precipitously off course.

This particular study, conducted over 2023/24 by Prof Kerrin Myres at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) through the GIBS Responsible Finance Initiative, begins to translate such concerns into specific insights as to why these programmes may not be hitting their targets. The observations derived from 41 comprehensive interviews with the three main stakeholder groups in the ESD ecosystem – corporate sponsors, training intermediaries, suppliers and entrepreneurs – offer critiques of the current state of the ESD ecosystem as well as indications of how ESD programme effectiveness could be improved.

What follows here is a summary of the key points from the study.

## INSIGHTS

1

**Varying degrees of commitment to transformation result in inconsistent levels of compliance and engagement with ESD programmes.**

**ESD effectiveness begins with the overall business philosophy** regarding the role of business and the need for a high level of commitment to transformation as a mechanism for bringing about a more equitable society. Such a commitment ensures that ESD extends beyond compliance and is actively integrated into the corporate vision, strategy and operations. This enables the corporate to benefit directly from ESD, while also addressing societal issues such as inequality and sustainability.

2

**Business-like approaches to ESD offer business benefits and help to address implementation challenges.**

It appears that a clear ESD strategy, which is linked to the corporate strategy and integrates the needs of the business directly into ESD programmes, is associated with enhanced effectiveness. Organisational structure, managerial incentives and regular reporting processes help to cement ESD programmes by adding value to the core, rather than being dismissed as 'not our business'.

3

**There is evidence that best-practice ESD requires a coherent, patient and customised approach.**

**ESD effectiveness may be improved by integrating corporate social investment (CSI), enterprise development (ED) and supplier development (SD) into a seamless development pipeline**

which mirrors the natural development of a small business and focuses on the long-term benefits to the business. An ESD programme should provide business development support that is customised to the needs of the businesses in question. As a result, the volume of businesses supported may be small, but the effectiveness will be greatly enhanced.

4

**A poorly defined and untested theory of change guides much ESD practices.**

**ESD effectiveness can be improved** when programmes are designed around an evidence-based understanding of what SMMEs need and how best to deliver developmental support that is aligned to corporate strategy and focused on meeting SMME needs. Evidence-based programming and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) not only have the effect of working for the entrepreneur but they also deliver value to the corporate.

5

**The ESD 'ecosystem' is not an ecosystem at all – it is corrupt and intensely competitive.**

**An enhanced, well-functioning and collaborative ecosystem** that is able to self-regulate and share best practices and data provides insights about what does and does not work.

This ecosystem could also be used to establish a code of ethics and quality standards associated with the practice of ESD. If the ecosystem fails to self-organise, there is a risk of more onerous and expensive regulations being introduced to extract more value from ESD spend than is currently being realised.

6

**ED tends to be broad-based, contracted out, at arm's length.**

**ED programmes may be improved by making them more business development-orientated** instead of treating them as social responsibility programmes. In particular, this means ensuring that they have an impact on the businesses being served. Best practice involves treating the ED programme as a stepping stone to SD. This could include a stronger focus on the relevant geography, industry or value chain.

Corporate contracting out of ESD programmes to business development service providers (BDSPs) should ensure that the latter are appropriately accredited and qualified. Furthermore, a strong, verifiable M&E system is essential for success.

7

**SD tends to be more customised, focused and intimate.**

**Ensure that SD programmes** are better integrated into the corporate's operations and strategy, and that a long-term view of development is taken. Successful SD programmes seem to involve heavily customised, one-on-one support and extensive involvement of corporate staff to ensure that the SMME can meet the required standards.

8

**Business development suppliers have an image problem – which can probably only be solved through more regulation.**

**ESD effectiveness can be improved** by enhancing the professionalism of the BDSP sector and improving the quality of the services provided. In many ways, BDSP quality, together with corporate indifference, is considered to be one of the main reasons for the lack of effectiveness of the ESD ecosystem.

9

**SMMEs are generally disinterested in and cynical about ESD but some are engaged and appreciative of the opportunity.**

**Listen to the voice of South African SMMEs directly**, rather than assume that, as corporates or BDSPs, we know what they need. ESD programmes are capable of delivering SMME growth, provided they are designed, executed and evaluated based on evidence of what SMMEs really need in order to grow.

## AN ACTION AGENDA

Given that ESD spend in South Africa is currently estimated to be around R25 billion per year, it seems worth it to develop an action agenda to maximise the benefits of ESD for businesses. The following is an action agenda for assessing the effectiveness of your ESD programmes – whether you are a corporate spending the money or a BDSP ensuring that the money is well spent:

- 1** Your business' philosophy and overall approach to transformation should be visible to stakeholders and **align with the design and execution of ESD programmes**. SMMEs doing business with you look for an authentic expression of this philosophy in the nature and outcomes of the programme.
- 2** Go beyond tick-box compliance. Ask yourself: how does ESD link to ESG? Does our ESD strategy include clear, measurable objectives? Is the execution of this strategy fully integrated into the business? Does reporting align with the importance of the programme?
- 3** Turn your ESD programme into a seamless development pipeline which mirrors the actual development of entrepreneurs. Make use of GIBS's research that shows how SMME needs differ at each stage of development. Understand exactly how long it takes to develop a business which can be part of your value chain.
- 4** Make your ESD **theory of change** explicit. This involves articulating what activities or actions in your ESD programme you expect will lead to particular outcomes and why you think these strategies and resources will achieve the goals you have set. Test your assumptions about what works and what doesn't.
- 5** Consider what success (or its alternative) really means, not just to your business but also to the SMMEs who need to benefit and to the country's development as a whole. Rethink ED as being the next-generation value chain, not just money that must be spent in return for BBBEE Scorecard points.
- 6** Give some thought to how your business can contribute. Can you collaborate to share data, information and experiences – even with competitors?
- 7** Our research shows that what seems to work best is the intimate involvement of the business in the process of identifying supply chain opportunities and finding SMMEs that have the potential to capitalise on them. Thereafter, a customised, one-on-one development process that is informed by the needs of the business and the SMME should be patiently implemented. In SD, what matters is depth, not numbers.
- 8** Does ESD need a watchdog of its own? This sector can be a breeding ground for corruption if managed irresponsibly.
- 9** **BDSPs need to emphasise their credentials and expertise** and back up their claims with hard evidence. More conversations need to take place among BDSPs that are directed at establishing an industry body to set quality standards and ensure they are met. The alternative is that this sector will invariably attract the attention of regulators who are not necessarily as knowledgeable about what will work best.

Now is the time to act, before regulatory pressures increase and make the ESD ecosystem more onerous than it needs to be. Let's work to rectify the situation. ■



- Link: <https://www.gibs.co.za/pages/responsible-finance-initiative>
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**IDC's**

# CSI SUPPORT

**towards SMALL, MEDIUM  
& MICROENTERPRISES (SMMEs)**



**A consumer education element has been introduced to the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Scorecard as part of the Financial Services Code of Good Practice.**

As per Statement FS904 of the amended Financial Sector Code (FSC) Scorecard, the required consumer education contribution is 0.40% of the corporation's previous year's net profit after tax (NPAT). This will award the corporation two points under socioeconomic development (SED). One bonus point is available when the corporation contributes a further 0.10% of the NPAT.



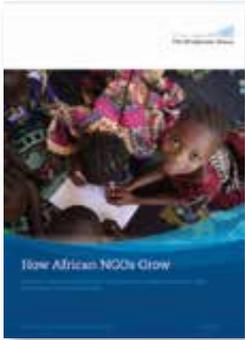
The IDC focus is on supporting initiatives that provide financial literacy and consumer training to small/micro businesses. The project is aligned with the IDC's Social Economic Development Mandate to fund financial education programmes that strengthen SMMEs and communities.

In the last three years the IDC, through its corporate social investment unit, has invested over R9.4 million supporting consumer education programmes which benefited SMMEs, Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers, university students and high-school learners through partnerships with implementing organisations, namely the Financial Services Consumer Education, Graca Machel Trust and My Dough Academy (My Dough).

Recognising the challenges faced by SMMEs and in alignment with IDC strategic objectives of enterprise development, the IDC collaborated with My Dough and supported 65 SMMEs to enhance their capacity. My Dough is a specialist organisation that helps businesses become sustainable and have an impact on society by creating and deploying business programmes that ensure businesses scale and grow as well as adapt to the changing world. The company currently has 4 000 entrepreneurs on their platform, across 34 sectors and has successfully increased revenue for these entrepreneurs.

SMMEs face challenges such as access to market, funding, business support and coaching, business operational tools, financial and compliance support, business rewards programmes, and effective finance and invoicing tools. My Dough assisted SMMEs in becoming funding-ready, equipping them with the necessary resources and guidance to scale their businesses and contribute to the overall economic prosperity of communities.

The programme covered financial education, compliance readiness, assessment of funding readiness and access to the My Dough platform which offers them daily access to the following services: access to market; access to funding; access to business operational tools such as sales, trackers, team task manager and Teams; communication tools; effective finance and invoicing tools; etc.



# HOW AFRICAN NGOs GROW

By: Niloufer Memon, Julia Standish-White, Nkanyiso Hlongwa, Dominique Wells, Mikal Kooiker, Bradley Seeman

Many African NGOs are well run and deeply rooted in their communities and countries, delivering powerful impact. Yet many operate in an environment of funding scarcity and uncertainty. Our research examines how these NGOs secured the funding needed to grow and sustain themselves. We analysed revenue data for 85 NGOs in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa with budgets over US\$1 million. We interviewed leaders of 33 large NGOs in those countries.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out between June and December 2023. We focused on NGOs in South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria because they are the largest economies in sub-Saharan Africa and have the largest and most mature social sectors.

Through conversations with sector experts and desk research, we identified 85 NGOs in the three countries with annual revenues of at least US\$1 million. The NGOs were headquartered in one of those countries. Since the database excludes international NGOs as well as smaller local NGOs, the research is not intended to be fully representative of the NGO sector on the continent but to provide information about larger NGOs in our countries of focus.

From this database we interviewed at least 10 leaders of larger NGOs in each of the three countries, amounting to 33 organisations. For Kenya and South Africa, 'big' was defined as US\$5 million; for Nigeria, we set the threshold to US\$1 million (see how 'big' differs in the different countries in the figure alongside). During interviews we asked leaders for more information on their funding models, including their first sizeable grant, current budget size, primary funding type and target funding mix.

## WHAT THIS RESEARCH ADDRESSES

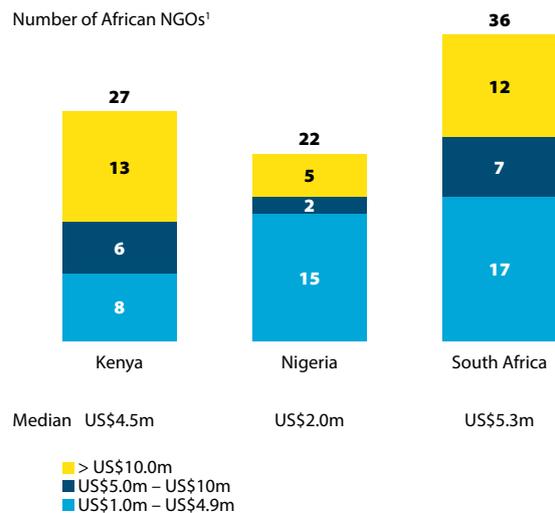
African NGOs play a vital role on the continent – so it is important to understand where their funding comes from and the strategies they pursue to grow and sustain themselves.

What we found is that African NGOs that have grown significantly rely overwhelmingly on international sources of funding – although, to be sure, only a small share of international funding for the African social sector goes to African NGOs. These sources include both philanthropy from outside Africa (foundations or high-net-worth individuals), and bilateral (foreign government) and multilateral (for example, World Bank) donors. Among the NGOs interviewed, over 90% rely on philanthropic, bilateral or multilateral funding from outside Africa for most of their revenue.

The research is aimed at two audiences – NGO leaders who want to understand the funding strategies of others in the sector and funders who are interested in pursuing funding strategies that support the growth and sustainability of these African NGOs.

## BIG LOOKS DIFFERENT IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Number of African NGOs<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> We defined African NGOs as those with an Africa-based decision-making 'locus of power', indicated by headquarters location, composition of an organisation's leadership team and board of directors, decision-making structures and norms, and the focus of the work on the ground

Source: The Bridgespan Group's 2024 research on funding of African NGOs

## KEY FINDINGS

The research revealed five key findings:

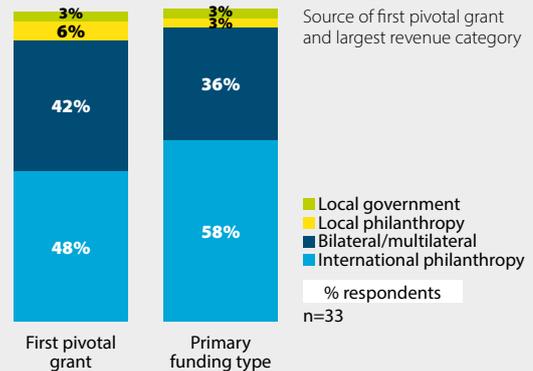
1

### International funding fuels growth

Across the 33 NGOs we interviewed, over 90% rely on funding from outside Africa for most of their revenue (see figure alongside). That funding came from a combination of international philanthropy and official development assistance (ODA) from bilateral or multilateral government sources in roughly equal parts. If you consider that nine times more capital flowed from ODA into the three countries of focus than from international philanthropy in 2022, it becomes clear how important international philanthropic funding is for African NGOs that strive to grow.

Nine out of 10 of the organisations interviewed across the three countries received a 'first pivotal grant' from a non-African funder. (This grant, irrespective of size, was described by the NGO interviewee as a significant early milestone in the NGO's growth trajectory.) About half of these first pivotal grants came from philanthropy, with a wide range of donors. The remainder received their first pivotal grants from bilateral or multilateral donors – 10 different governments or multilaterals.

#### INTERNATIONAL FUNDING FUELS THE GROWTH OF AFRICAN NGOS



Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding

Source: The Bridgespan Group's 2024 research on funding of African NGOs

2

### NGOs have adopted tactics specific to accessing this international funding

Given the need to focus on international funding sources, the NGOs we interviewed have adopted tactics specific to this category of funding.

These tactics often reflect the burden of conforming to the practices of funders from outside Africa. It is our hope that funders adapt the NGOs' practices and embrace norms that ease the way for local leaders and NGOs with close ties to communities. Tactics include:

- Building and sustaining relationships by leveraging personal connections and existing funding networks
- Establishing US or UK registration to facilitate fundraising
- Hiring and building a team that reflects the skill sets needed
- Establishing sufficient credibility with funders to move from being a subgrantee to a direct grantee.

*"If you're based in Africa, you need strong global connections to access international funding – whether it's philanthropy or bilateral funding. We've worked to develop our grant writing, storytelling and communications capabilities so that we can compete with the best."*

**Dr Éliane Ubalijoro**, CEO of the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry

3

### Domestic funding helps NGOs in South Africa much more than in Kenya and Nigeria

Our first two findings – the overwhelming dominance of international funding as a revenue source for African NGOs and the NGOs' efforts to develop specific tactics to access this funding – apply across all three countries we studied. The role of domestic funding, however, is quite different for NGOs in South Africa than for those in Kenya and Nigeria. Domestic funding is the largest revenue source for only two of the 33 NGOs we interviewed across the three countries – and both are South African. Although most South African NGOs we interviewed rely on international funding for much of their revenue, corporate or government funding and domestic philanthropy can play a key role in their growth and sustainability. Indeed, all but one of the 13 South African NGOs we interviewed had received a notable amount of domestic funding. For some, domestic funding helps support work or builds organisational capacity for which international funders will not pay.

## 4

**Flexible funding is relatively scarce but can be catalytic**

Most of the funding received by the NGOs we talked to is restricted by the funder – tied to a specific set of activities or goals. Only seven of the respondent organisations get most of their revenue as flexible funding, either unrestricted or lightly restricted. Yet we heard repeatedly how flexible funding – even if it made up only a small portion of the organisation's total revenue – has allowed African NGOs to develop their capacity and strengthen their resilience in ways that are hard to do with restricted funding.

One example of this type of funding is the Ford Foundation's Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) initiative, which provides multi-year general operating funding combined with targeted organisational strengthening support. LEAP Africa, a Nigeria-based NGO we interviewed which focuses on developing ethical youth leaders across Africa, used BUILD funding for strategic planning, back-office operations for expansion plans, talent acquisition and leadership development. LEAP credits these investments with helping strengthen its capacity and attracting additional international funding.

## 5

**African NGOs often seek to broaden their revenue mix to sustain their growth**

Given the overall scarcity of funding for African NGOs as well as the risk of shifting funder priorities, most of the NGOs we spoke to do not want to become too dependent on a single category of funding. Some have devoted a lot of effort to broadening or shifting their revenue mix – sometimes by choice, sometimes by necessity.

One example of a shift caused by necessity is the experience of the Wildlands Conservation Trust, a South African conservation-focused nonprofit created in 2004 through the merger of two other organisations. Previously, it relied heavily on funding from the South African government and local corporations for large-scale restoration projects. However, in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the government withdrawing funding and redirecting it towards the pandemic response, leaving the Trust with a big funding gap. The organisation refocused its efforts on international funders – bilateral and multilateral funders, and philanthropy. Today, half of the organisation's funding comes from these sources.

Other NGOs we spoke to have chosen to shift their revenue mix to unlock more funding, pursue greater flexibility or reduce risk.

*“Bilateral and multilateral funders are the biggest source of funding in Africa. So, we're dipping our toes into it.”*

**Katherine Potaski,**  
Chief Advancement Officer of  
Shining Hope for Communities, which  
receives most of its revenue through  
international philanthropy.

**CONCLUSION**

Not all African NGOs seek to grow. Indeed, many are working to sustain and deepen their impact within their current budgetary footprint. And almost all of them are operating in environments where the revenue they depend on is scarce and sometimes insecure, and comes from outside Africa.

The strength of the 33 NGOs we spoke to in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa underscores an enormous opportunity for funders who want to make a difference in Africa.

We are publishing this article at a time when the conversation around localisation is growing among international philanthropists

and ODA funders. Some are aggressively pursuing the opportunity to direct a larger share of their funding – and less restricted funding – to African NGOs. In practical terms, this might mean a funder making a grant to an African NGO without the track record of an international NGO, could revisit the way it looks at budget size as an indicator of organisational strength, substituting some degree of trust for rigid programme metrics or turning a one-year grant into a three- or five-year grant. And while African philanthropists may continue to pursue impact by funding the public sector or their own operating foundations, they can also support the high-impact work of African NGOs – for example, by providing pivotal early grants or potentially catalytic flexible grants. ■



Find out more

- Link to report: <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/how-african-ngos-grow>
- Contact information: [contact@bridgespan.org](mailto:contact@bridgespan.org)



# THE SITUATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN HAS WORSENERD BUT THERE IS NOW AN IMPORTANT WINDOW TO CHANGE COURSE

The *South African Early Childhood Review 2024 (Review)* found that young children are more likely to live in poverty and suffer from food insecurity than they were before the Covid-19 pandemic. The Review also finds that there are green shoots with regard to South Africa’s primary healthcare service delivery recovery and new approaches to early childhood development (ECD).

The Review is a joint publication and unique collaboration between the government, academia and civil society, namely Ilifa Labantwana; the Children’s Institute at the University of Cape Town; the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency; the DBE; the Grow Great Campaign; and DataDrive2030.

It provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of ECD in South Africa by tracking data on children under six years old, offering crucial insights into the challenges and progress in this critical area of national development. Key findings from the 2024 Review paint a concerning picture: young children in South Africa are more likely to live in poverty and suffer from food insecurity and malnutrition

than before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there are also signs of hope, with primary healthcare service delivery showing recovery and new approaches to ECD emerging.

Children’s long-term development is a function of a package of interrelated and integrated services covering the period from conception to six years of age.

These five services are collectively known as the Essential Package in Early Childhood Development (Essential Package). The Review examines each of these areas, highlighting challenges, progress and opportunities for improvement.



## MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly disrupted primary healthcare services, which are crucial for the first 1 000 days of a child's life. Nearly 90% of children under six in South Africa rely on public healthcare and thus the development of young children was directly disrupted by the pandemic.

Despite substantial disruptions in maternal and child health services, there has been a partial recovery. Antenatal attendance, postnatal follow-up and immunisation rates, which dropped during the pandemic, had mostly recovered or improved by 2022. The HIV/Aids treatment programme remains successful, with over 95% of eligible pregnant women receiving antiretrovirals, resulting in very low rates of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Unfortunately, under-five and infant mortality rates have increased since the pandemic, reversing previous improvements. Preliminary estimates by the Medical Research Council indicate that 30 out of every 1 000 infants born alive did not live to their first birthday in 2022, while the under-five mortality rate rose by just over a third from 2020 to 2022. The underlying reasons for rising mortality are unclear, but increased poverty and malnutrition are likely contributing factors. The pandemic underscored the urgent need to strengthen systems to ensure continuity in maternal and child health services even in times of crisis.

## NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY

Malnutrition remains a major challenge affecting young children, with poverty and food insecurity on the rise in South Africa. The Review found the following disturbing circumstances:

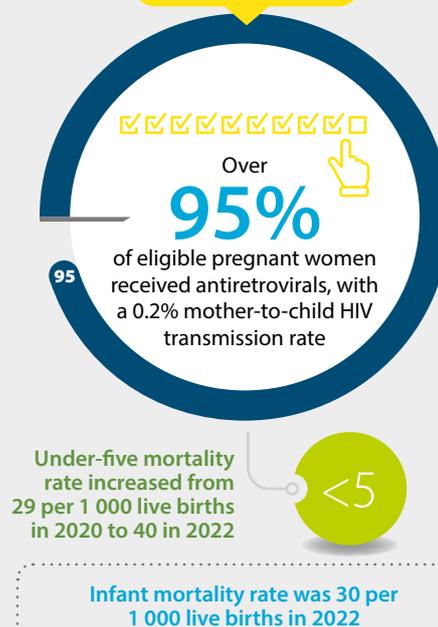
- Nearly 40% of children under six live in households below the food poverty line
- 20% of children under six lived in households that ran out of food in 2022
- One in four children under five is affected by stunting
- Exclusive breastfeeding rates declined from 49% in 2019/20 to 44% in 2021/22.

Children in rural parts of the country have historically been the most vulnerable to poverty and poor nutrition, although this is becoming a growing phenomenon even in wealthier urban provinces like Gauteng and the Western Cape. Poverty affects dietary diversity, which is key to good nutrition. While the child support grant (CSG) is helpful, it is substantially below the food poverty line, affecting its efficacy in ensuring adequate nutrition to address malnutrition and stunting, which are difficult to reverse and have lifelong consequences, including poverty, unemployment and being susceptible to chronic diseases.

Community healthcare workers (CHWs) play a crucial role in monitoring and improving children's nutritional status through home visits, administering vitamin supplements and screening for malnutrition. Their efforts have shown positive trends to reduce malnutrition and improve children's health.

**What is needed:** If South Africa is to achieve its national development goals and ensure young children's food security, social assistance to young children and expectant mothers, and nutrition programmes delivered directly through health services and early learning programmes must be prioritised.

### KEY STATISTICS



## SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY CAREGIVERS

The wellbeing of caregivers significantly impacts children's development. South Africa faces challenges in this area, including high levels of poverty, unemployment and perinatal depression. Supporting caregivers through comprehensive services is essential to building an environment where both caregivers and children can thrive.

The mental health of caregivers is crucial as it influences their responsiveness to their children's needs. In South Africa, approximately 40% of women experience perinatal depression, which can have intergenerational effects, including pre-term birth and low birth weight.

Fathers and other male figures can play significant roles in childcare, promoting gender equity in caregiving. However, in South Africa, fewer than 40% of children live with their biological fathers, but nearly 80% live with at least one adult male. Improving men's involvement in caregiving can reduce the maternal burden and provide practical and emotional support, enhancing child development outcomes.

A constellation of services is needed to support caregivers, including access to quality, timely and relevant parenting information through various channels; quality home visits by CHWs for healthcare, nutrition and parenting counselling; clinic-based support for caregivers; linkages to job opportunities; and reducing the cost of nutritious foodstuffs, among other needs.

## ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

The DBE has taken charge of ECD since 2022, leading to new data collection efforts to measure and address gaps, including the 2021/22 ECD Census, the *Thrive by Five Index Report 2021*, and the *ECD Baseline Assessment 2022* of pre-primary learning. The data shows that access to early learning is unequal.

It was revealed that children from wealthier families or households are 1.6 times more likely to attend an early learning programme (ELP) than those from poorer ones. Over 1 million children aged three to five years are not enrolled in any ELP, losing out on important early learning opportunities and potentially making it difficult for them to transition successfully into school.

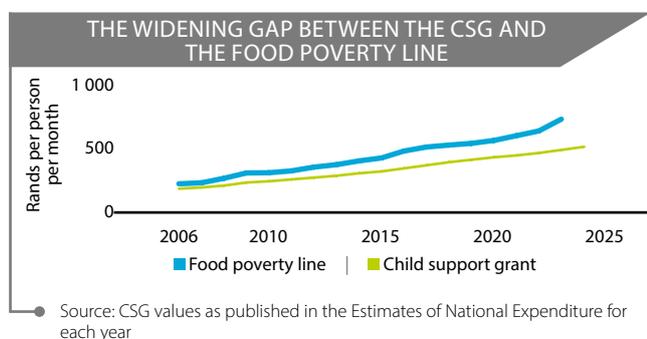
The quality of learning in ELPs is also of concern, as the *Thrive by Five Index Report* shows that only 46% of four-year-olds attending ELPs are developmentally on track for their age. Meanwhile, the value of the government's early learning subsidy has been severely eroded by inflation. Until there is a significant increase in funding and support for ELPs, children's outcomes may suffer.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE: THE CHILD SUPPORT GRANT

The CSG is a crucial tool for supporting young children, but challenges remain. In 2023, 4.27 million children under the age of six received the CSG (R530 per month), representing 63% of all children in this age group. More poor children are being excluded from receiving the grant. In March 2024, nearly 200 000 fewer infants were receiving the grant than in March 2020 when South Africa went into lockdown.

The CSG has received annual increases, although the grant value has not kept pace with food inflation and is, therefore, insufficient to cover the minimum cost of feeding and clothing a child.

Disturbingly, we have seen a notable decrease in the grant take-up among infants due to mothers lacking identity documentation and delays in birth registrations. The estimated number of unregistered infants in South Africa rose from 190 000 in 2019 to 255 000 in 2020.



 Find out more

- Link to report: <https://ilifalabantwana.co.za/early-childhood-review/>
- Contact information: [info@ilifalabantwana.co.za](mailto:info@ilifalabantwana.co.za)

Even after a substantial increase in birth registration rates in 2021, the uptake of grants for infants continued to decline.

Eligible children must receive the CSG from birth to fully maximise the associated developmental benefits, such as improved nutrition and health outcomes. Achieving this will require improved linkages between health facilities, where 83% of births take place, the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Social Security Agency.

## ENHANCING INITIATIVES TO ENSURE THE WELLBEING OF ALL YOUNG CHILDREN

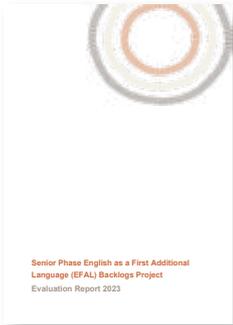
ECD is central to reducing socioeconomic inequality. Despite the many achievements of the post-apartheid period, progress across the various domains of ECD is unacceptably slow.

The high rates of poverty, malnutrition and exclusion from services are long-term challenges that preceded the pandemic and were exacerbated by it. While South Africa faces significant challenges in ECD, there are also opportunities for transformative change. Recovery requires finding different and better ways of ensuring that a holistic package of services and support reaches all young children.

Leadership on ECD by the DBE, National Planning Commission and social partners is already showing progress. Building on this, the new Government of National Unity presents an unmissable opportunity to improve coordination among the national and provincial departments responsible for ECD and accelerate the expansion of essential and quality ECD services.

To improve the state of young children in the country, South Africa needs:

- An effective central mechanism to mobilise, communicate and coordinate a national programme for young children
- The ability and capacity to deliver quality services at scale – in particular, to implement strategies for nutrition support for pregnant women and young children, early learning, caregiver support, child protection for all children who need it and enhanced support for children with disabilities
- Aggregated and individual-level data systems to routinely monitor access to and quality of ALL the services defined in the Essential Package. ■



# ZENEX FOUNDATION SENIOR PHASE ENGLISH BACKLOGS PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

Zenex Foundation initiated the Senior Phase English Backlogs Project in 2021 to address learning backlogs in English in grades 8 and 9. It was made up of four pilot projects in 40 low-quintile public schools across four provinces and conducted over two years. Two pilots targeted teachers, while two pilots worked directly with learners. The pilots revealed significant challenges in the Senior Phase that are both structural and content-specific.

The emphasis of the pilots in the project was on reading skills in English, which are essential for accessing and assessing the Senior Phase curriculum.

High levels of English language proficiency for academic purposes are essential for academic success in the South African education system. Despite this, low levels of performance are common.

The Western Cape Education Department's annual systemic test results for 2023 reflect a 51.6% pass rate in languages in grade 9.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, challenges begin much earlier. Results from the 2021 round of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) showed that 81% of grade 4 learners in South Africa, and 56% of grade 6 learners, are not able to read for meaning in any language.<sup>2</sup>

The impact of these language challenges generally affects learning outcomes and, in particular, enrolments in key subjects such as mathematics and science, which are gateway subjects to scarce-skill careers. As a result, Zenex Foundation has supported programmes in the Senior Phase for several years, focusing on both English and mathematics. Zenex has collaborated with the government and other partners to mitigate these adverse learning outcomes.

## DEFINITIONS

**English language proficiency** is the ability to use and understand spoken and written English at a sufficient level for a given context.

**Learning backlogs** refer to an accumulation of gaps in learners' foundational knowledge. Backlogs consist of a complex interplay of factors including the quality of teaching, availability of learning and teaching resources, assessment and progression policies, language policies, curriculum pacing and socioeconomic factors.

## METHODOLOGY

The project evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach to gather the information presented in the report.

**Case studies:** Two rounds of data collection, in two to three schools per pilot, were conducted in the selected schools in 2022 and 2023. These datasets were analysed using limited coding to allow emerging themes and causal logic to surface.

**Exploratory learner assessments:** A total of 925 randomly selected grade 8 learners across pilot schools were assessed in 2022 to evaluate their reading fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension using adapted assessment tools. The aim was to understand the scale, nature and distribution of English language reading proficiency backlogs rather than to measure impact.

**Implementation fidelity:** The fidelity evaluation aimed to determine how closely the pilots adhered to their intended activities.

**Training materials review:** The review assessed the quality and relevance of the materials used to support teachers and education assistants in implementing the pilot methodologies to shift learning backlogs.

## FINDINGS



### English reading backlogs are severe

Three-quarters of learners have not mastered basic English vocabulary and many are reading well below the fluency rates expected for their grade (whether compared to international or local benchmarks). Around half of pupils scored 30% or less for the reading comprehension task. Minimal independent reading occurs, which significantly affects English reading backlogs.



### Reading backlogs are complex

Addressing reading backlogs is a multifaceted challenge with interconnected causes, highlighting the need for a multipronged and multistakeholder approach. Due to this complexity, intervention programmes must be thoroughly researched and facilitators extensively trained to address backlogs. School management and government should be involved for maximum impact.



### School functionality and contextual factors matter

These issues present challenges in the intervention environment that impact implementation and outcomes. Common practices which impact functionality include the movement of teachers across grades, mismatched placement of teachers in the Senior Phase to fill posts and time off school for pupils due to matric learner programmes being prioritised.



### Changing attitudes is a positive first step

Affective aspects of the pilots' Theories of Change such as motivation, confidence and interest were effective, resulting in better adoption of practices by teachers, learners and facilitators. This is a key first step towards changing practice.



## WORKING WITH TEACHERS

- A high level of teacher attrition and movement, along with dynamic school conditions, impact training and implementation programmes
- Professional development of individual teachers and facilitators is an expensive model at scale
- Expecting teachers to cover curriculum content and address learning backlogs simultaneously within the classroom is unrealistic
- Teachers' own English language proficiency affects their ability to develop learners' language skills
- Content-area teachers require training to support learners' English skills, in addition to English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers
- Implementing a bilingual/multilingual education approach requires a deliberate pedagogical strategy, which in turn demands time and support
- Frequent interaction between teachers and intervention facilitators is needed to ensure continuity between classwork and intervention activities.



## WORKING WITH LEARNERS

- Attrition can be high in after-school programmes which rely on voluntary attendance. Often self-motivated learners attend, not learners who would benefit most from the intervention
- Personalised support from facilitators can have a significant impact on learner interest and confidence levels
- More practice in class and at home leads to better performance
- Reading culture and motivation to read can increase swiftly through reading clubs
- Extensive training and support for novice facilitators is required
- Expenses such as transport and catering for after-school classes increase the costs of interventions.

## KEY EMERGING THEMES AND QUESTIONS

### 1 Multiple roles of English and the design of intervention programmes

English occupies a complex role in education, functioning as the language of learning, teaching and assessment, a content subject (EFAL and Home Language) and a language of communication in society. Developing effective programmes requires considering these complex but interconnected roles.

### 2 Systemic shortcomings in addressing literacy deficiencies

Since basic literacy is not mastered in the Foundation Phase as assumed, it logically follows that its teaching be extended into primary and high school. However, this practice is rare as teachers in the Intermediate and Senior Phases lack sufficient pedagogical training in basic literacy and contend with a curriculum assuming prior skill mastery.

### 3 The absence of a mutual understanding and shared language on the nature of backlogs

A knowledge gap exists when describing reading backlogs in English in terms of specific skills and competencies. There is a need for a more explicit articulation of specific components of skills that constitute backlogs in English and how intervention programmes explicitly address them.

## CONCLUSION

### Dealing with backlogs requires a considered response

- Projects should consider what realistically can be remediated and over what duration, given the extent of backlogs.
- Should learners be selected for interventions following a diagnostic assessment?
- When should programmes take place?
- Support needs extra time which might require lengthening the school day, pull-out 'remedial' lessons or afternoon classes.

### Resource provision requires careful planning

- Teachers and facilitators must be supported with structured pedagogical resources.
- Reading resources must be supplied as a priority item.
- The cost of collateral resources such as transport, catering and printing should be considered.

### A review of the curriculum is needed

- The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement assumes mastery of basic literacy skills and high levels of English language proficiency for academic purposes which is not evident in classrooms.
- The curriculum should take contextual factors into account as well as intentionally build language and literacy skills across the curriculum.

### More research and intervention studies are needed

- A greater understanding of the nature of backlogs in English must be determined and an evidence base built to support the understanding of backlogs. ■



### Sources and further reading:

- <sup>1</sup> '2023 systemic test results show improvement across all school phases'. Western Cape Education Department 2024.
- <sup>2</sup> *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2021: South African Preliminary Highlights Report*. Department of Basic Education 2023.



Scan for the online version of this article with sources.

# TACKLING LEARNING CHALLENGES IN THE SENIOR PHASE

**1**

PRIMARY SCHOOL

ENGINEER

ARTISAN

ENTREPRENEUR

HIGH SCHOOL

LOSS OF TEACHING TIME

LACK OF RESOURCES

DENSE CURRICULUM

TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS ARE A BARRIER TO LEARNING

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BARRIERS

WHY THE LEARNING CRISIS?

**Gr 8 English**  
(2022 Zenex evaluation)

41% of learners attained less than 30% for reading comprehension

Only 25% of learners mastered basic speaking English vocabulary

**Gr 9 mathematics**

TIMSS (2019): Only 41% of learners reached the low benchmark

Western Cape Systemics (2023): Only 20,5% of learners passed

MOTIVATION FOR INVOLVEMENT

**2**

ZENEX FOUNDATION

MATHS IS KEY

A GATEWAY TO SCARCE SKILLS CAREERS

ENGLISH IS A NECESSARY PRE-CONDITION AS A LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

**3**

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM OUR PROJECTS

LEARNERS	TEACHERS
EXTRA CLASSES ARE EFFECTIVE	TRADE-OFF BETWEEN CURRICULUM COVERAGE AND ADDRESSING BACKLOGS
PERSONALISED LEARNING HELPS, ESP. USING EDTECH	SUPPORT BILINGUAL TEACHING APPROACH
READING CLUBS PROMOTE A CULTURE OF READING	DIFFICULTY INTEGRATING EDTECH IN CLASS
	ALL TEACHERS SHOULD BE LITERACY TEACHERS

**4**

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE CRISIS

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN DONORS & GOVERNMENT

MORE EVIDENCE-BASED STUDIES

EXTEND THE SCHOOL DAY TO ADDRESS BACKLOGS

COMPLETE MORE IN-CLASS AND HOMEWORK EXERCISES

FINALISE CURRICULUM REVIEW

TERTIARY EDUCATION

EMPLOYMENT

ECONOMIC GROWTH

THE FUTURE

For more information please contact Zenex Foundation



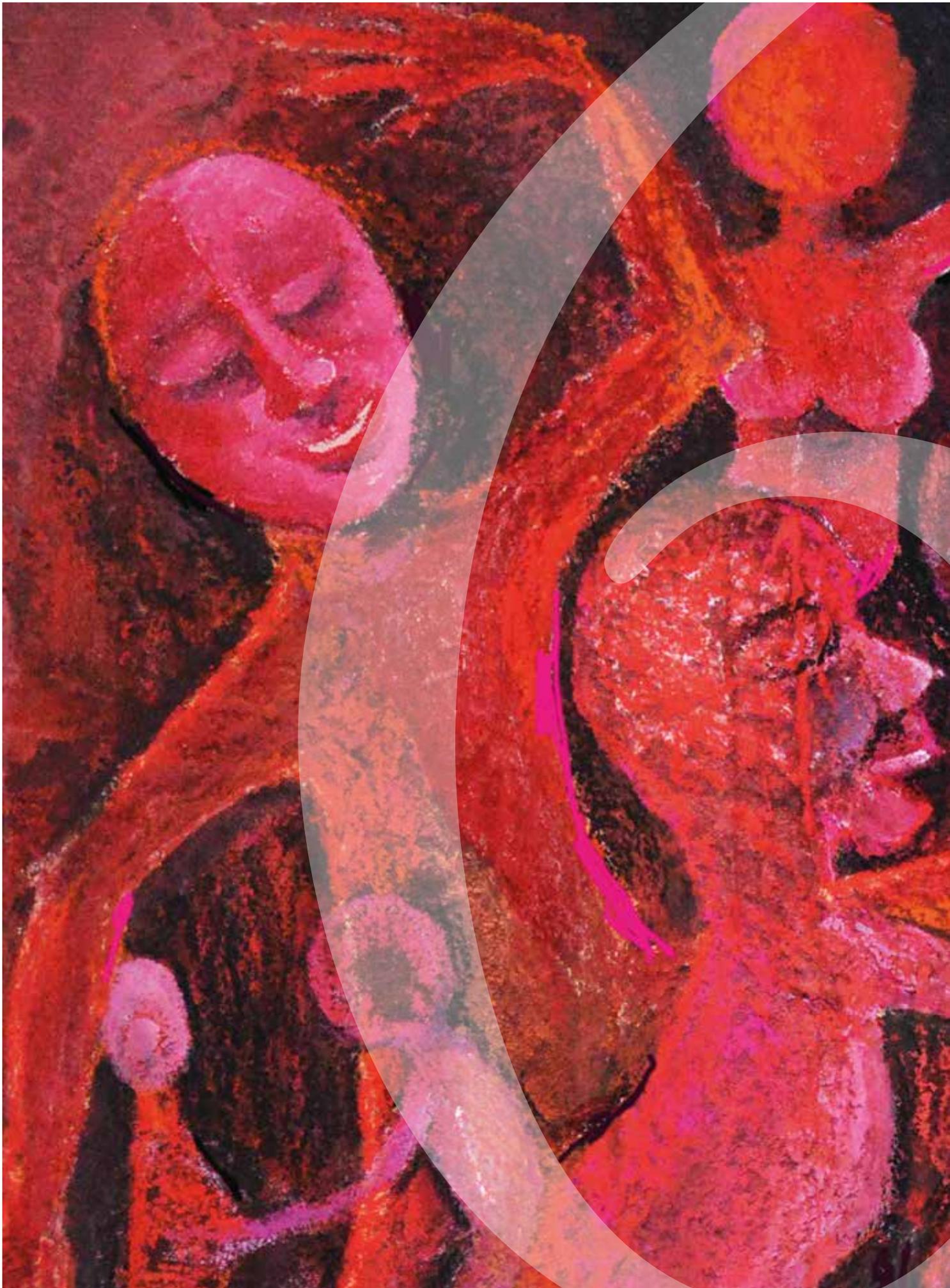
[www.zenexfoundation.org.za](http://www.zenexfoundation.org.za)



+27 11 481 7820



[info@zenexfoundation.org.za](mailto:info@zenexfoundation.org.za)



# NONPROFIT INSIGHTS

## 6

An overview of nonprofit income in South Africa, followed by insights of nonprofit collaboration and a link to the NPO Directory, which is available on the Trialogue Knowledge Hub.

- 248** Overview of NPO income in South Africa
- 254** Social change awards drive M&E good practice
- 258** Lessons in nonprofit collaboration
- 265** Knowledge Hub
- 266** NPO Directory
- 268** Insight: Strengthening township economies

Photo credit: *colour of a Nation*, Eva Chikabadwa. 2020, Malawi.  
A featured artwork of Colours of Africa, a Design Indaba and Google Arts & Culture project.

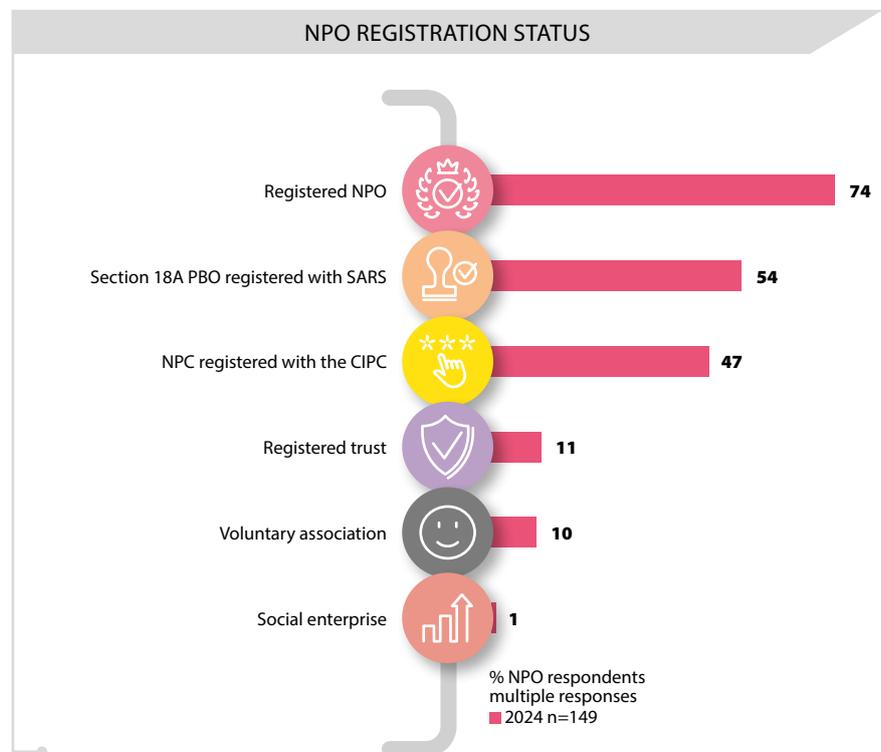
# OVERVIEW OF NPO INCOME IN SOUTH AFRICA

Nonprofit organisations (NPOs) are a critical partner for companies to deliver on their social aims. In 2024, 93% of companies surveyed directed funding to NPOs, which on average received nearly three-quarters (71%) of corporate contributions. In this article, Trialogue draws on data from 149 NPOs surveyed online between May and July 2024. Of the 149 NPOs that participated in the 2024 research, only 14% (or 21 organisations) also participated in the 2023 research.

## NUMBER AND TYPE OF NONPROFITS

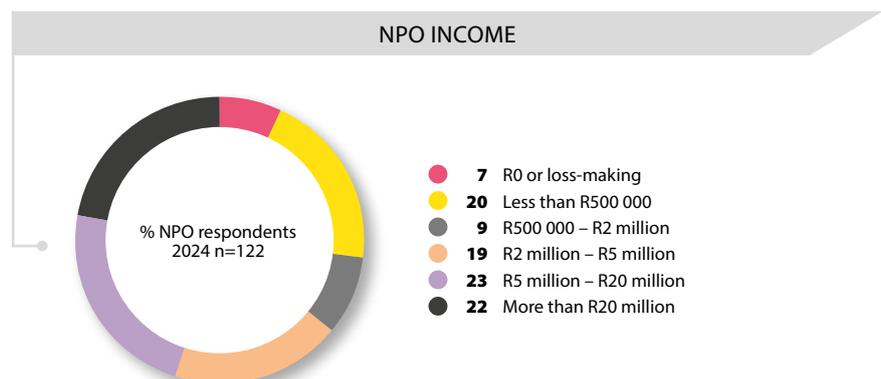
According to the Department of Social Development (DSD), there were 295 051 registered NPOs in South Africa at the end of September 2024, up from 280 329 in September 2023 and 266 531 in 2022.

In Trialogue's sample, the most common forms of registration were as an NPO registered with the DSD (110 organisations, 74%) and as a public benefit organisation (PBO) with Section 18A status registered with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) (80 organisations, 54%). Just under half of the sample (65 organisations, 44%) were registered as both an NPO and PBO. None of the 2024 research participants were registered as a local branch of an international NPO.

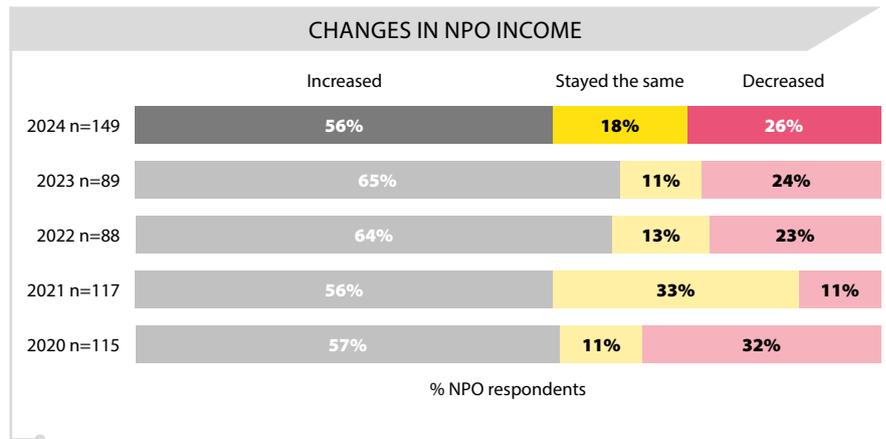


## NPO INCOME

- The NPO sample was relatively evenly distributed in terms of total income in the 2023/24 financial year, although weighted towards medium to large organisations with an annual income of between R2 million and R20 million (42%). Around a fifth of the sample (22%) had annual incomes of more than R20 million.

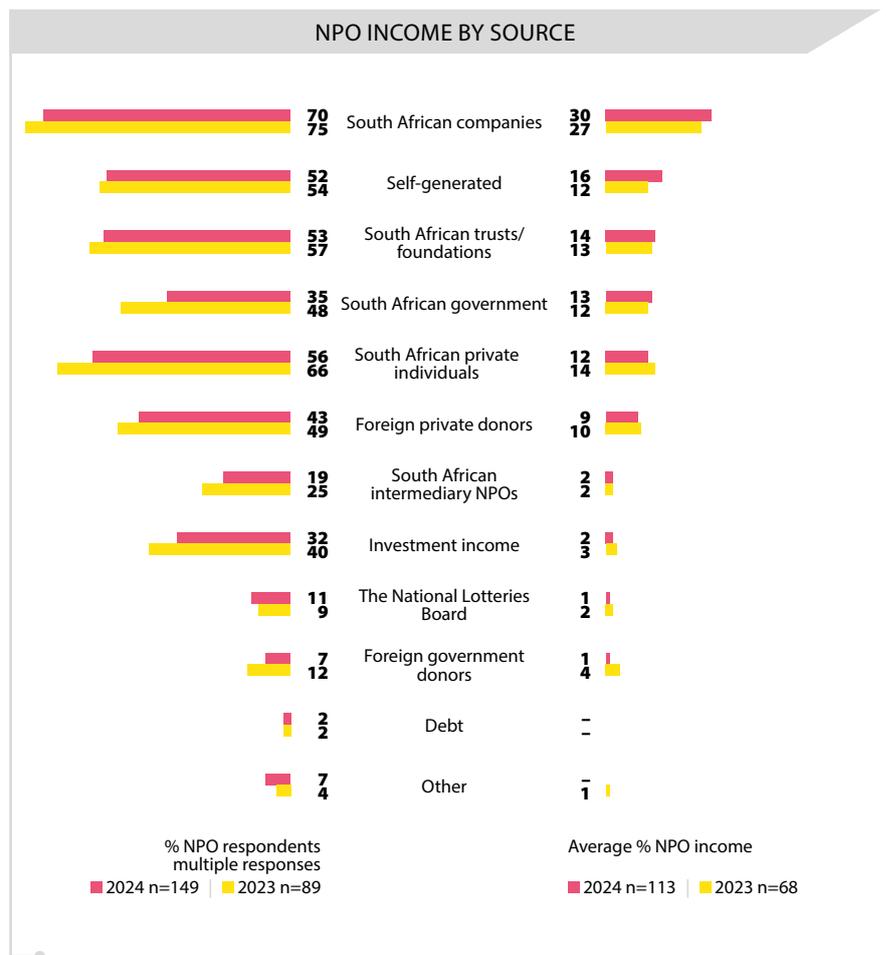


- In 2024 over half of NPOs (56%) reported that their income had increased from the previous year, slightly lower than in 2023 (65%), while 26% reported a decrease in their income. No discernible relationship between the nonprofit sector or the size and change in income was found.
- Almost seven in 10 NPOs (69%) expect their organisation's income to increase in the next two years, up from 53% in 2023.



## SOURCES OF NPO INCOME

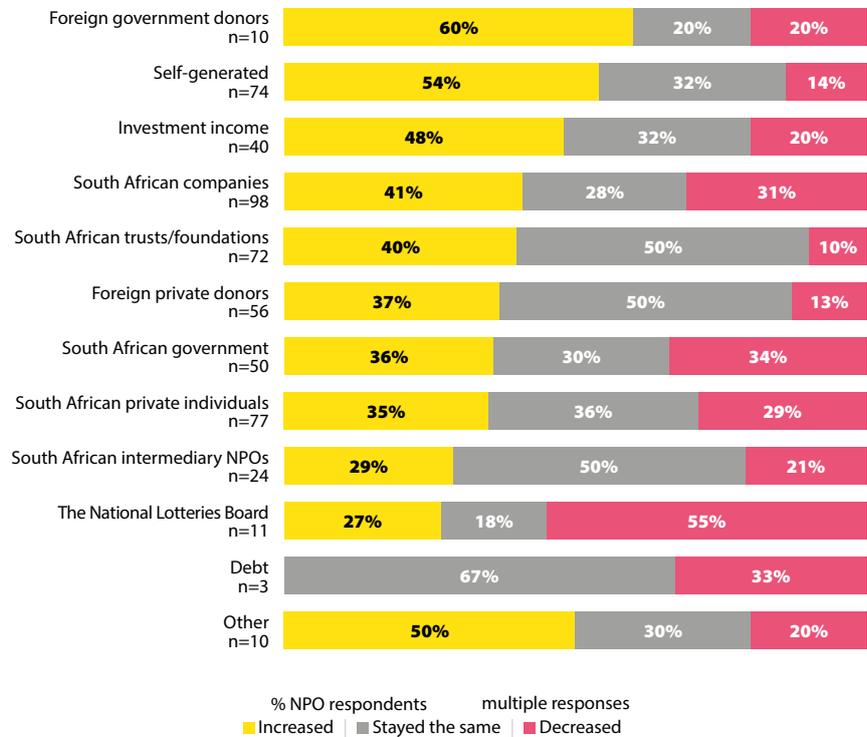
- The average number of donor types across the sample was 3.9, with the most common being one. The maximum number was 10, reported by one organisation.
- Almost three-quarters of NPOs in the sample (70%) received income from **South African companies**, with corporate funds accounting for an average of 30% of NPO income in 2024, the largest share of income. Of these, 41% reported that funding from companies had increased in the past year, while 31% reported a decrease from companies.
- NPOs had funding relationships with a median of five South African companies, with responses ranging from one to 361 companies.
- Thirty-nine percent of NPOs receiving corporate funding said they received funding for one year or less, while 24% received funding for two to three years, 11% between three and five years, and 15% for more than five years at a time. The remaining 11% did not know the duration of their corporate funding.



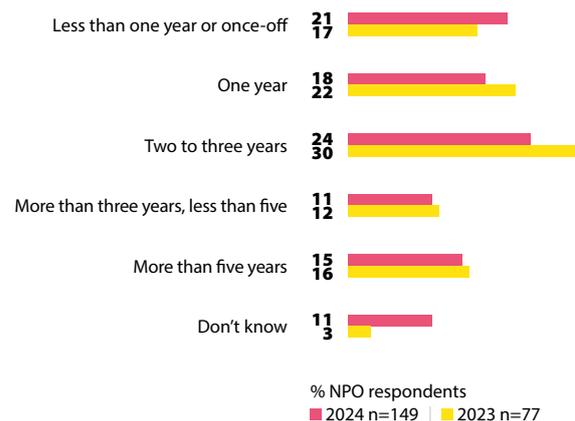
Sources of NPO income (continued)

- When asked about income sources, over half of NPOs (52%) reported that 16% of their funding was **self-generated** on average in 2024; the second-highest income source, higher than the average funding received from South African sources including trusts/foundations (14%), the government (13%) and private individuals (12%).
- Just over half of NPOs (53%) received income from **South African trusts/foundations**, which accounted for 14% of NPO income on average. Forty percent of these NPOs reported an increase in funding from local trusts/foundations.
- NPOs reported receiving support from between one and 50 South African trusts/foundations, with a median of three.
- More than half of NPOs (56%) received funds from **South African individuals**, accounting for 12% of NPO income on average. Around a third of these NPOs (35%) said that income from this source had increased.
- The number of funding relationships with South African private individuals ranged from one to 20 000 with a median of 15 individuals.
- Forty-three percent of NPOs received funding from **foreign private donors** (compared to 49% in 2023), with an average income of 9%. Thirty-seven percent of the NPOs who received income from foreign private donors reported an increase in funding from this source over the past financial year.
- Thirty-two percent of NPOs received **investment income**, although this constituted a small percentage of average overall income (2%) in 2024.
- Only three NPOs (2%) reported **debt** as a source of funds, and this contributed less than 1% to the average overall income.

CHANGES IN NPO SOURCES OF INCOME

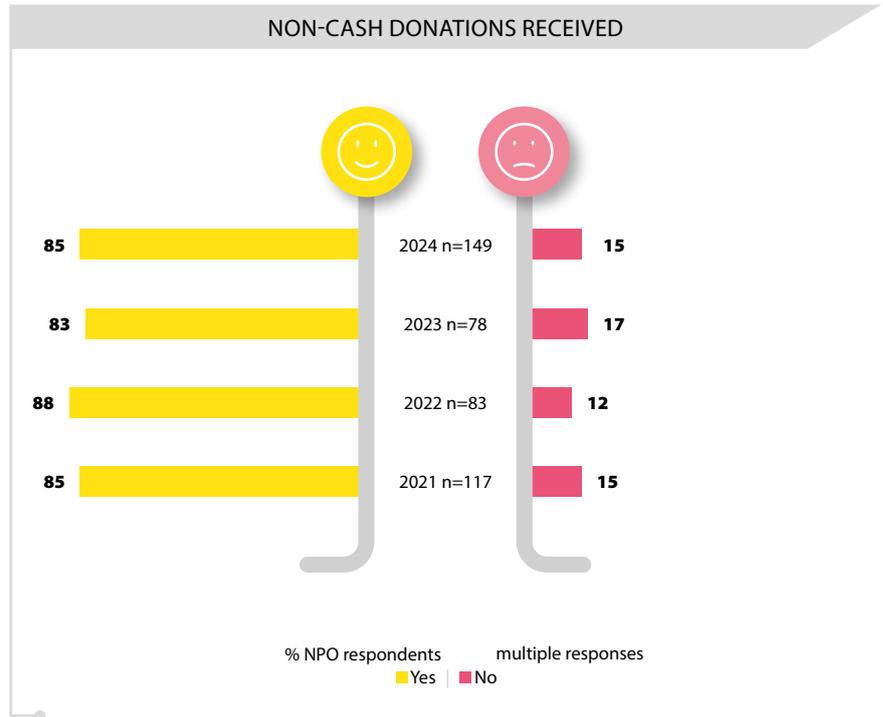


DURATION OF CORPORATE SUPPORT



## NON-CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

- In line with previous years, most NPOs (126 organisations, 85%) received non-cash donations in 2024 (products, services and/or volunteering time). Of these, 80 organisations quantified the value of their non-cash donations.
- The rand value of non-cash donations ranged from R10 to over R80 million, with a median of R135 000 and an average of R2.2 million.
- As a percentage of NPO income, non-cash donations ranged from less than 1% to 100%, with a median of 3% and an average of 17%.



# With us, you can make an impact

- Mobility**  
38 000 bicycles distributed including 4100 new Bike4Alls
- Learner Outcomes**  
Bikes improve punctuality, discipline and grades
- Community Safety**  
Cycle patrols cover more territory and are more visible
- Skills and Jobs**  
Mechanic training contributes to job creation
- Sustainability**  
Bicycles are 'greener', cheaper and efficient
- Safer Roads**  
28 000 people trained in safe cycling and 300 schools visited
- SMME Support**  
Bikes empower small businesses through deliveries, rentals and tours

We offer 18A certificates and an opportunity to earn Socio Economic Development points

## Bike4All

A JOINT INITIATIVE OF

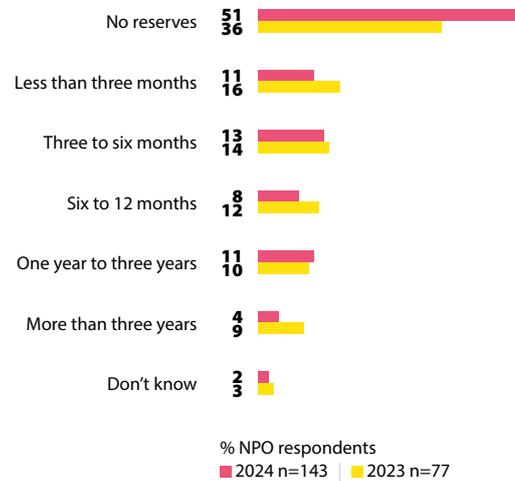
PEDAL POWER ASSOCIATION / BICYCLING EMPOWERMENT NETWORK



## RESERVES

- Worryingly, the percentage of NPOs without any financial reserves increased to 51% in 2024 from 36% in 2023.
- Only 15% of NPOs reported having one year or more of operating costs in reserve.

## OPERATING COSTS IN RESERVE



Founded in 1987, the Southern African NGO Network (SANGONeT) has evolved into a key civil society organization aligned with South Africa's transition to democracy. As one of the few African NGOs specializing in information communication technologies (ICTs), SANGONeT provides diverse services to support civil society.

Our work focuses on enhancing NGO capacity, helping organizations integrate ICTs to address Southern Africa's development challenges. While many NGOs already use ICTs, SANGONeT continues to push for greater adoption to strengthen the sector's long-term sustainability.

SANGONeT's mission is to drive social transformation through the use of ICTs.

NGO Pulse, SANGONeT's information portal, serves NGOs, NPOs, CSIs, and development agencies by offering valuable resources to empower development practitioners. These include a weekly eNewsletter, job adverts, campaigns, press releases, and educational articles.

The platform features specialized job adverts for CSIs, NPOs, NGOs, FBOs, foundations, and non-profit companies—offering more affordable options compared to the private sector.

Reach: NGO Pulse connects with over 70,000 subscribers in Southern Africa and engages more than 2 million followers across its social media platforms, including graduates, job seekers, non-profit organizations, and international institutions.

## NGO PULSE SERVICES INCLUDE

- PREMIUM ADVERTISING BANNERS
- CLASSIFIED PREMIUM ADVERTS
- DISCOUNTED ADVERTS
- WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT AND HOSTING
- WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
- DOMAIN HOSTING (EMAILS AND WEBSITES)
- PUBLICIZING AND SHARING CIVIL SOCIETY NEWS ON FACEBOOK (20,000 DIRECT FOLLOWERS & 2,500,000 RECIPROCAL FOLLOWERS)

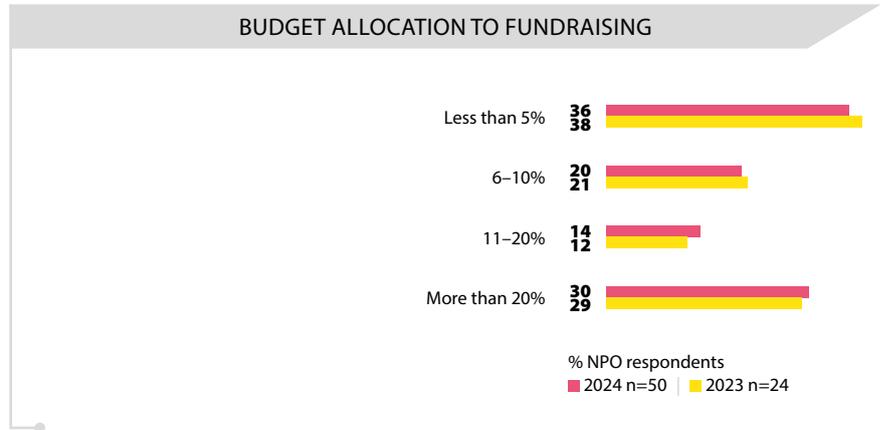
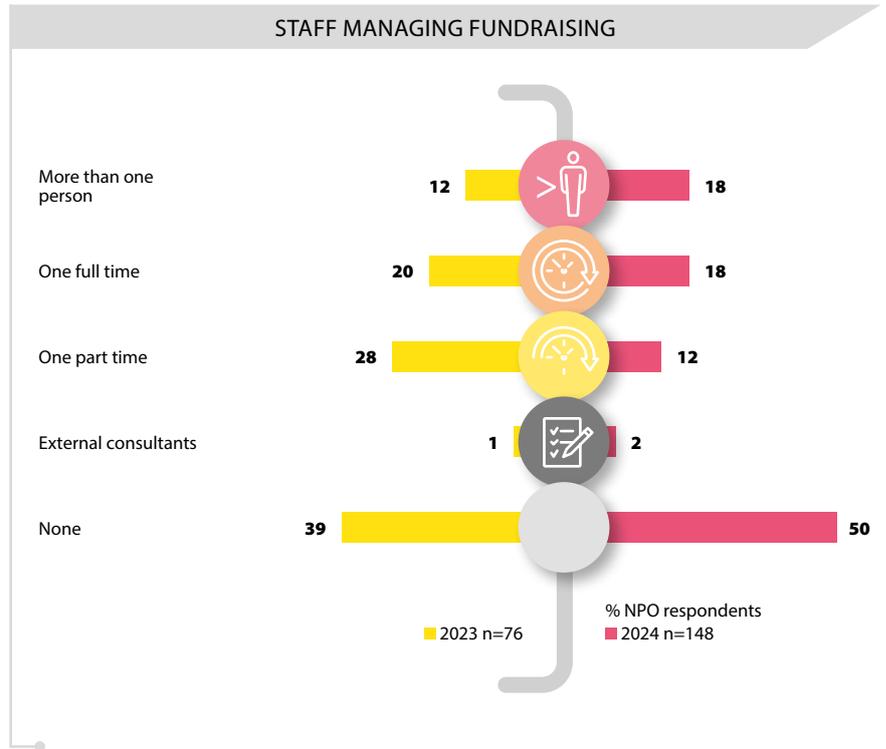
Company Registration Number- 9104/03/06 (Association incorporated under section 21 of the Companies Act, 61 of 1973)  
 Section 18A  
 PBO Registration Number - 930004261  
 Nonprofit Corporation - 045729  
 VAT Number - 475054371



Email: info@sangonet.org.za  
 Website: ngopulse.net  
 Twitter: twitter.com  
 Facebook: www.ngopulse  
 LinkedIn: SANGONET  
 Instagram: ngopulse  
 X: @ngopulse

## FUNDRAISING

- Almost half of the NPOs (48%) had at least one part-time internal staff member to manage fundraising, down from 60% in 2023. Most of the rest (50%) had no staff to manage the function, up from 39% in 2023. Only 2% used external consultants for fundraising.
- Less than half of the NPOs (60 organisations, 40%) had a budget for fundraising in 2024. Of those NPOs that provided detailed budget information (50 organisations), 36% allocated less than 5% of their budget to fundraising and one-fifth (20%) allocated between 6% and 10%. Thirty percent of these NPOs allocated more than 20% of their budget to fundraising. The median allocation to fundraising was 14% of the organisation's budget. ■





# SOCIAL CHANGE AWARDS DRIVE M&E GOOD PRACTICE

The MTN Awards for Social Change, a collaborative initiative between the MTN SA Foundation and Trialogue, contributed positively to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices in South African NPOs. Launched in 2019 and concluded in 2022, the annual competition aimed to encourage and reward good M&E practices in the nonprofit sector, offering generous prize money to winning NPOs across different size categories.

The awards were structured to accommodate NPOs of varying sizes, categorised as small (annual income less than R5 million), medium (annual income between R5 million and R15 million) and large (annual income exceeding R15 million). Each category winner received R300 000, with an additional R100 000 awarded to the organisation demonstrating the most advanced M&E practices in a bonus category.

The competition garnered significant interest from the NPO community, with participation peaking at 141 entries in 2020. However, the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic led to a steep decline in entries in subsequent years.

Entrants were evaluated based on their general M&E practices, project design, outputs and outcomes. The bonus category assessed factors such as ethical considerations in M&E activities, theory of change, identification of unintended outcomes, understanding of long-term systemic changes, exploration of causality and addressing findings that impact success.

To assess the impact of the awards on M&E practices within participating organisations, Trialogue conducted a comprehensive review combining quantitative analysis and qualitative research methods. This review included an analysis of the judges' scores

for shortlisted organisations, a survey of competition entrants and in-depth interviews with competition judges.

The review revealed several noteworthy trends:

- 1 Improved M&E practice scores:**  
Entrants generally demonstrated improvement in their M&E practice scores over the years, with large organisations consistently scoring higher than smaller ones.
- 2 Enhanced project design:**  
Small and large organisations showed consistent improvement in project design throughout the four years.
- 3 Limited project output improvement:**  
Average scores for project outputs across all organisation sizes increased dramatically between 2019 and 2020 but decreased significantly in 2021, likely reflecting the impact of Covid-19 on the sector's output capacity.
- 4 Consistent improvement in project outcomes for small organisations:**  
Small NPOs were the only category to show a consistent increase in average scores for project outcomes across all years.

The qualitative evaluation revealed that participation in the awards positively influenced organisations' M&E practices:

- **Improved knowledge of M&E:** More than half of the respondents (57%) reported that the awards influenced their internal M&E knowledge, with small organisations showing more significant improvement
- **Broader application of improved M&E knowledge:** 87% of respondents who acknowledged improvement in M&E knowledge indicated this improvement was applied more broadly within their organisations, leading to enhanced overall M&E processes, improved project designs and better stakeholder reporting.

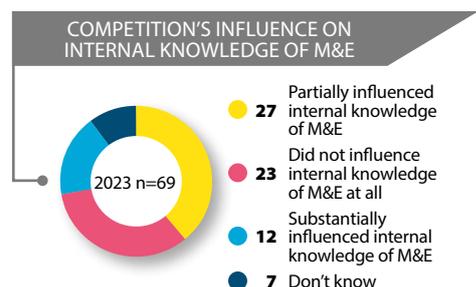
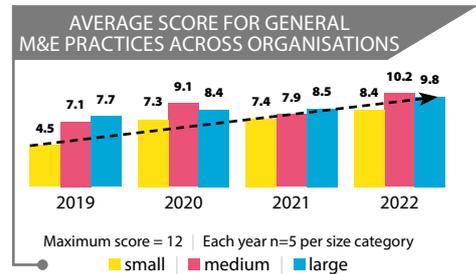
Additional benefits of participation included implementation of new organisational processes, generation of publicity and additional funding, strengthened credibility with funders and enhanced funding applications.

Winners who responded to the survey reported using their prize money to strengthen their M&E systems and processes, expand data collection methods, scale up projects, increase sustainability funds and bolster general M&E programmes within their organisations.

The MTN Awards for Social Change provided a valuable opportunity for participating organisations to reassess their M&E efforts; it fostered a drive for continued improvement in this critical practice. The application process helped participants evaluate their M&E frameworks, improved their awareness and understanding of the significance of M&E, and highlighted the importance of integrating it into organisational strategy and project design.

The competition not only benefited the participating NPOs but also reinforced the MTN Foundation's dedication to development, garnering positive media attention and enhancing its credibility in the sector. Participant feedback underscored the value of MTN's support for M&E, affirming its role in advancing developmental efforts in the nonprofit sector.

With the curtain drawn on this impactful initiative, its legacy lives on in the improved M&E practices of scores of NPOs, setting a new standard for accountability, efficiency and impact measurement in the sector.





## NOAH'S M&E TRANSFORMATION

The journey of Neighbourhood Old Age Home (NOAH) through the MTN Awards for Social Change provides a compelling case study of how participation in such initiatives can transform an organisation's approach to M&E.

NOAH, a Western Cape-based NPO, provides safe, affordable housing to the elderly poor through a holistic support model. Operating in six communities across Cape Town, the organisation focuses on six key areas: home, health, happiness, social enterprise development, sustainability and organisational development. NOAH serves over 730 pensioners, managing 12 communal houses and two clinics that offer psychosocial support and community-based care.

When NOAH first entered the Awards in 2019, the organisation was shortlisted as a potential prize winner. The judges' feedback acknowledged NOAH's well-designed programme logic with clear activities, outputs and outcomes. They noted the organisation was still in the initial stages of its M&E journey. The judges recommended strengthening NOAH's M&E practice by improving its theory of change to reflect the quality and broader impact of the organisation's work, extending beyond monitoring service access to assessing community impact.

NOAH's 2021 entry showed less progress than anticipated. While the judges found the logical framework comprehensive, they identified confusion between outputs and outcomes, and between outcomes and impact. This feedback highlighted the need for further refinement of NOAH's M&E approach.

The turning point came in 2022 when NOAH was adjudged the winner in the medium NPO category. The organisation's application showcased a unique M&E model that focused on a

comprehensive approach to its work and demonstrated an improved implementation of its M&E framework. NOAH had successfully identified methodologies that best suited its unique approach, drawing on management data from its M&E system to enhance programme execution. The organisation's logic framework had been practically applied to ensure improved adaptability and responsiveness, with a shift in focus from delivery outputs to achieved results.

NOAH Director Anne Dobson reflected that completing the competition application helped acknowledge gaps and "brought about a determination to do better". This gap analysis facilitated several significant shifts for the organisation:

- 1 Recognition of the need for a dedicated M&E function, leading to the hiring of an M&E consultant in 2020 using unattached donor funding
- 2 Transition from inconsistent monitoring to streamlined data collection processes embedded in overall management processes
- 3 Integration of formal evaluation learnings into planning processes
- 4 Use of monitoring data to inform strategic planning, with M&E becoming integral to organisational development rather than an add-on
- 5 Increased internal awareness of the value of good M&E practices
- 6 Creation of an enabling environment for M&E within the organisation.

Dobson noted how the practical and meaningful integration of data into the organisation's work contributed to shifting NOAH's organisational culture. This cultural shift was exemplified by the experience of the organisation's health manager in running a diabetes support group. Initially resistant to M&E as an additional administrative burden, the health manager reluctantly began collecting health data. As the data began to indicate improvements in the group's health outcomes, the manager had an "aha" moment, exclaiming, "I finally get M&E!"

NOAH's investment of the R300 000 prize money into M&E further underscores the organisation's commitment to improving its practices. The funds were used to retain an M&E consultant and conduct several surveys, enabling NOAH to "tighten up what we were looking for, and really focus on what was relevant", said Dobson.

Dobson acknowledged the pivotal role the competition played in accelerating NOAH's adoption of stronger M&E practices, noting the organisation "probably would have taken much longer to get to where we are now without the competition".

NOAH's journey through the MTN Awards for Social Change illustrates the potential for such initiatives to drive meaningful change in NPO practices. By providing a structured framework for assessment and improvement, coupled with tangible rewards for progress, the competition motivated NOAH to critically examine and enhance its M&E processes. The result is a more effective, data-driven organisation better equipped to serve its beneficiaries and demonstrate its impact to stakeholders.



# Empowering the Next Generation of Digital Talent

Digital Skills for Digital jobs

Like many countries across the world, particularly developing economies, South Africa grapples with a stubborn challenge of youth unemployment. This is supported by findings from Statistics South Africa released in May of 2024 indicating that the unemployment rate among youth (individuals aged 15 – 34 years) sat at 45.5%, opposed to the national average of 32.9% in the first quarter of 2024. Facing and reducing these concerning statistics is the responsibility of the public and private sectors and as South Africans, both sectors must provide opportunities to create a culture of learning among the youth.

In a world undergoing rapid digital transformation, access to technology, digital skills and financial literacy are crucial for empowering the next generation of South Africans to thrive in the modern economy. As the digital environment rapidly evolves, it is natural that South Africa should aspire to become an 'e-skilled' economy. There are, however, stumbling blocks on the path, including our lack of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates and, where these skills do exist, the development of entrepreneurial skills is required to broaden participation in the digital and technology sector.

It is up to us to work together to enable young South Africans to compete internationally in the sector – and this is where the MTN SA Foundation has stepped up. At MTN we believe that the journey to sustainable development lies in equipping young people with the tools, knowledge and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader economy. This commitment is at the heart of our efforts to bridge the digital divide in South Africa.

The MTN SA Foundation has a longstanding commitment to supporting technical and digital education and in 2023 MTN launched the Digital Skills for Digital Jobs (DS4DJ) initiative. The DS4DJ programme combines digital qualifications with life and the entrepreneurship skills required to achieve personal, economic freedom – through rewarding professional careers. The programme moreover offers a hybrid model of training and equipping unemployed youth in the form of in-person together with the online training the MTN Skills Academy offers.

The training courses offered by the MTN SA Foundation in partnership with the EBL Institute and Datacomb Development Hub, are designed to be inclusive and are open to unemployed youth who are not enrolled in any formal education or training programmes. Students receive training that includes data analytics, cybersecurity, digital marketing, job readiness, basic end-computing, coding, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI) and other essential skills to prepare them for a future in the competitive digital economy.

In 2023 a total of 900 unemployed youths across all nine provinces (100 learners per province) were registered for the 12-month programme with a total of 674 learners (of whom 60% were females) completing the programme and graduating in December 2023. This year MTN has been barraged by an overwhelming influx of applications with a total of 5 330 received.

As part of the many training and education initiatives at MTN SA, the **MTN Skills Academy** platform – run by

the MTN SA Foundation – is another groundbreaking online learning initiative and partnership that offers free licences and accredited qualifications for the youth.

The MTN Skills Academy is aligned with MTN's core belief that everyone deserves the benefits of a modern connected life. Through the online Skills Academy platform, MTN promotes inclusivity and access to digital opportunities, ensuring that young people in South Africa have the skills and knowledge needed to participate fully in the digital economy.

The platform has been designed to be inclusive and accessible, giving young people access to free digital career guidance, and digital and financial courses via the MTN web-based platform. The offering of the Skills Academy has been developed to equip unemployed youth with the necessary skills that will enable them, upon completion, to launch their own small businesses. The platform also leverages the strengths of partners, including PACE Career Centre (to provide comprehensive career guidance) and online learning provider Coursera (to provide basic, intermediate and advanced technology and business skills training).

Free access to the MTN Skills Academy ensures that youth can look forward to digital and financial career pathways such as **technology consultant, business analyst, IT project manager, user experience (UX) designer, IT support specialist, project manager, sales operations specialist, solutions architect, cybersecurity professional, front-end developer and social media marketer**, among others.

To ensure that all can benefit from what the platform offers, it has also integrated accessiBe to reach differently abled people who experience difficulties in accessing the online content. Twenty percent of the global population (1.5 billion people) have disabilities that exclude them from using devices



to connect online. By integrating accessiBe into the Skills Academy platform, users can tailor their experience to meet their specific needs, whether they are sight impaired, hearing impaired, or experience other cognitive or neurodivergent challenges. Features such as low data usage allows for reach to marginalised communities and affords cost effectiveness.

In another cornerstone of MTN's youth empowerment initiatives, the MTN Foundation partnered with youth development leaders Primestars, The YouthStart Foundation and FNB as they launched the **Rands & Sense Programme** – an innovative new programme specifically designed to enhance financial literacy and to embed an entrepreneurship mindset that fosters success and wealth in high-school learners by providing them with the tools and understanding needed to manage their finances effectively, teaching them how to budget, save, invest and understand credit. The programme empowers them to build solid financial foundations.

Youth education is also a key component of the Rands & Sense Programme, which emphasises the importance of financial responsibility from an early age. By instilling these values in young South Africans, MTN is fostering a generation that is financially savvy and well prepared to meet the economic challenges of adulthood. The Foundation is leveraging the programme's national access to the market and encouraging users to take advantage of the MTN Skills Academy platform.

With an emphasis on practical financial management and entrepreneurship development skills, Rands & Sense is set to empower participants with essential financial skills that include budgeting, saving, investing and debt management. These skills will allow them to make informed financial decisions, manage their money effectively and navigate the complexities of modern economics.

The MTN SA Foundation is key to MTN's goal of fostering impactful and quantifiable development in underserved and rural communities across South Africa. Our activities leverage technology to propel social progress, especially in education and entrepreneurship, ensuring that all South Africans enjoy the benefits of a modern connected life.

As we reflect on the progress made, MTN remains steadfast in its commitment to bridging the digital divide and empowering South Africa's youth. The achievements of the MTN Skills Academy and the impactful reach of the Rands & Sense Programme are just the beginning. As we look ahead, our focus is on building on this momentum and continuing to deliver on our promise of a more connected, inclusive and prosperous future for all.

For more information on the benefits and programmes offered by the MTN Skills Academy, visit the zero-rated website on <http://skillsacademy.mtn.com/signin>



# LESSONS IN NONPROFIT COLLABORATION

NPOs play an important role in South Africa's socioeconomic landscape, driving initiatives that address pressing challenges such as inequality, poverty and education. Collaboration has become increasingly important to address the social and economic disparities in the country – but what should nonprofit collaboration look like? This article outlines a series of case studies to demonstrate various models of nonprofit collaboration.

NPOs in South Africa have a mixed history of collaboration. However, NPOs must work together to address the growing complexity of socioeconomic problems and achieve shared goals. Uniting their strengths, resources and expertise allows NPOs to enhance their operational capabilities, respond more effectively to community needs and drive systemic change that resonates nationally. In this way, they can achieve impact beyond what a single organisation could accomplish.

However, not every NPO will benefit from collaboration. In certain contexts, collaboration can dilute the mission, stretch resources or create conflict between partners with divergent goals. In multistakeholder collaborations, larger or more influential partners may steer the agenda. If an NPO cannot maintain its core values and mission within the partnership, it risks diluting its impact and losing its identity. While collaboration can undoubtedly amplify impact, NPOs must assess whether they have the internal capacity and strategic alignment to thrive in such an environment.

There are various models for collaboration ranging from information sharing to

collective impact initiatives, each with its unique approach and structure (see *Co-creating the future: Collaborating to amplify change* on page 90). There are also some models specific to the nonprofit sector, including the lead agency model commonly used in social services, where one agency takes full responsibility for service delivery while coordinating with others; and the integrated service delivery hub model, often used in health and community services, where services are offered from a single location, whether physical or virtual.

## NONPROFIT COLLABORATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Trialogue's 2024 primary research with 137 South African NPOs, the top four reasons that nonprofits collaborate are to: leverage existing relationships (47% of NPOs); extend the reach of initiatives (37%); enhance relationships with organisational stakeholders (36%); and access additional funding (36%).

Collaboration most commonly occurs with other NPOs – over 80% of NPOs

collaborate with other nonprofits in the same or different sectors and with community-led groups. Implementing programmes jointly is most often done with NPOs in the same sector (53%), community-led organisations (48%) and NPOs in different sectors (35%). Over 40% of the nonprofit respondents share research and information with other NPOs in the same sector (47%), community-led groups (44%), NPOs in different sectors (43%), and universities and research organisations (41%).

Collaboration with companies is less common, with 43% of NPOs saying they do not collaborate with companies. One-fifth of NPOs (20%) fund programmes jointly with private sector companies and 29% implement programmes together.

NPOs reported the least collaboration with regional multilateral organisations (92% had no partnerships), international aid agencies (80%) and international multilateral organisations (85%). See *Co-creating the future: Collaborating to amplify change* on page 90 for more on the research results.

## COLLABORATIVE CASE STUDIES

### SCAT enhances rural resilience through collaborative climate action

Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT) is a social justice NPO that supports CBOs in rural areas with funding and capacity building. SCAT's work encompasses access to justice, gender equality, food security and youth development. Its food security initiatives focus on small-scale agriculture and promote agro-ecological methods to enhance resilience. It recognises that for communities to adopt agro-ecology they must understand the climate crisis and the necessity of using climate-adaptive methods.



In response to the urgent need to help communities build resilience against climate change, SCAT collaborates with two like-minded organisations: the Southern African Faith Communities, Environmental Institute (SAFCEI) and the Heinrich Böll Foundation Southern Africa (HBF). Both organisations are part of SCAT's network and share a commitment to supporting grassroots organisations in addressing the climate crisis. SAFCEI engages faith communities and leaders to confront environmental, climate and socioeconomic injustices, while HBF focuses on environmental and economic justice, providing funding, expertise and research grounded in feminist practice.

In 2019, this collective submitted a proposal to the European Union (EU), securing funding for a three-year project. The project's success later attracted additional funding from the Irish Embassy, allowing an extension until 2025. The project's theory of change places local actors at the forefront of determining and leading climate adaptation efforts.

The collaboration follows a partnership model where SCAT acts as the lead partner, coordinating the collaboration and facilitating communication and alignment among the partners.

A memorandum of understanding guides the partnership and decision-making is handled collectively. The three NPOs have established a Directors' Forum for final decisions and a steering committee that initially met monthly, later transitioning to less frequent meetings. An operations team, comprising SCAT's programme director and staff from each organisation, held weekly meetings in the early stages of the project to ensure smooth execution. Knowledge products are shared among partners for collective input, promoting transparency and collaboration.

The project aims to raise climate awareness among rural communities, focusing on food and water security. This is achieved through learning festivals, regional workshops and quarterly online seminars on climate topics, involving 45 community-based and faith-led organisations. Small grants are also provided to support workshops and campaigns at the community level. A second focus is equipping rural CBOs with

tools and alliances for climate action, with eight organisations selected to implement projects in climate awareness, agro-ecology, beekeeping and alien plant clearing. Lastly, the project amplifies CBOs' voices in policy discussions by encouraging engagement with platforms such as the Adaptation Network, tracking legislation and launching a Youth Citizen Journalism Programme to spotlight rural climate impacts through media.

Regular communication and joint decision-making are critical to ensure trust and transparency among the partners, says Joanne Harding, Executive Director of SCAT. SCAT manages financial oversight with transparent reporting mechanisms to meet the EU's stringent funding requirements. Each organisation contributes to human resources by collaborating on job descriptions and participating in hiring processes for project staff. Regular meetings and retreats help to solidify relationships and clarify roles within the project.

The project is not without its challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions, particularly in the early stages when travel restrictions made in-person workshops impossible. "The team adapted by moving workshops online; however, engagement with communities improved significantly once in-person meetings resumed," says Harding. "Staffing challenges, including the resignation of key team members, also led to delays. However, these obstacles were eventually overcome, allowing the project to continue."

An external evaluation conducted in 2024 confirmed its effectiveness in building climate change awareness and resilience within rural communities. "CBOs have embraced the project, using the information and resources provided to implement climate adaptation activities such as food gardening, which contribute to food security and generate income for communities," Harding explains.

As the partnership develops, all parties are committed to exploring future funding opportunities and continuing their collaborative efforts to build climate resilience in South Africa's most vulnerable communities.

## Jala Peo Initiative: Strengthening partnerships for sustainable school nutrition

The Jala Peo Initiative (JPI) is a collaborative effort aimed at establishing and sustaining school food and nutrition gardens (SFNGs) across South Africa. As a vehicle for the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), the initiative mobilises community resources through District Forums, facilitating collaboration among NPOs as well as government entities and funders.

A key part of JPI's success is improving the systems that support SFNGs, making it easier for everyone involved to work together effectively. The initiative prioritises resource mobilisation, with the District Forums serving as catalysts to unlock assets within the community that support its objectives. JPI places significant emphasis on developing human capacity and skills, equipping stakeholders with the knowledge necessary to establish and maintain SFNGs effectively.

One of the initiative's primary goals is to embed curriculum integration, allowing SFNGs to provide meaningful learning experiences while promoting nutrition and agriculture among students. Additionally, advocating for knowledge management plays a critical role in facilitating open communication and knowledge sharing among stakeholders, enhancing project visibility and impact through newsletters, social media and various competitions.

A National Steering Committee oversees the JPI, with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) serving as the project owner. Funding is provided by organisations such as the WesBank Fund and FirstRand Foundation, while managing agents such as Tshikululu Social Investments and JET Education Services support the initiative. Each District Forum consists of multistakeholder partnerships, chaired by a provincial education department official and supported by a dedicated project coordinator, ensuring local accountability and engagement.

According to a report produced by JET Education Services, the JPI had successfully established SFNGs in 86 schools across Limpopo, Free State and the Western Cape since the pilot began in 2018. By the end of the pilot phase in June 2022, 95% of participating schools had established functional gardens, improving food security and providing fresh produce for the NSNP. Additionally, the integration of SFNGs into the curriculum has progressed well, with the percentage of schools using the gardens as a curriculum resource rising from just 1% at baseline in 2018 to 35% at the end of the pilot in 2022.

The JPI has faced challenges, including inconsistent engagement from stakeholders in some provinces, which slowed progress. Despite these obstacles, the flexibility and adaptability demonstrated within the District Forums allowed many activities to continue, even during disruptions such as Covid-19. Moving forward, securing sustained funding partnerships and ensuring active involvement from the DBE will be crucial for the long-term success of the JPI.

## Empowering communities through radical collaboration – LEAP Institute's Eastern Cape collaborative

Collaboration within South Africa's education sector has long been fraught with challenges, often leading to superficial partnerships that fail to produce meaningful impact. In response, the LEAP Institute has championed the concept of radical collaboration to enhance educational outcomes. All parties have to be committed to a shared goal and must actively engage in co-creating, co-designing, implementing and evaluating initiatives. This model not only facilitates shared governance but also encourages collective ownership of the process.

One of the standout initiatives in South Africa's education sector is the collaboration in the Eastern Cape, supported by Mteto Nyati, a prominent business leader and educational advocate. Nyati has previously worked on initiatives to improve schools in the Eastern Cape and now supports the work of the LEAP Institute. This project seeks to revitalise rural villages through educational enhancement, aiming to improve literacy rates, which according to Statistics South Africa, currently stand at around 72%, well below the national average of 82%.

Coalition building is a key focus, as the LEAP Institute collaborates with the Seed Educational Trust, business leaders and the Eastern Cape Department of Education to create a community-driven educational reform. This coalition addresses the gap in knowledge about existing educational initiatives in the province. A comprehensive database of organisations and initiatives in the Eastern Cape is being developed to facilitate communication and collaboration among stakeholders.

Collaborative governance is a distinguishing feature of this initiative. Unlike traditional hierarchical structures, the coalition operates on a self-funding model, where participating organisations contribute to the cluster's initiatives. This governance model fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among all partners.

To ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives, the LEAP Institute and its partners have established mechanisms for documentation and evaluation. Joint documentation requires each partner to record their contributions and experiences within the clusters. This shared responsibility promotes transparency and enables continuous learning. Regular reflection and evaluation sessions allow partners to assess their collective progress, identify challenges and adapt strategies as needed.

The LEAP Institute's commitment to radical collaboration is a model for transformative change in the education sector. Deep partnerships that prioritise co-creation and shared goals help address the immediate educational needs and lay the groundwork for sustainable, community-driven reform. As these clusters evolve, they hold the potential to redefine how organisations collaborate, ultimately enriching the educational landscape for future generations.



## Innovation Edge's collaborative approach to father involvement in early childhood development

Fathers' involvement in the first 1 000 days of their children's lives is central to positive developmental outcomes. Research indicates that engaged and supportive fathers influence early childhood development (ECD), stability in employment and mental health. In South Africa and globally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of active father figures, regardless of cohabitation status, as key players in nurturing children's wellbeing.



Recognising this critical need, Innovation Edge, an impact-first investor in the ECD ecosystem, has funded various nonprofit initiatives aimed at promoting positive engagement between male caregivers and their young children. Through these investments, they have gained valuable insights into the unique social and economic barriers fathers in the country face as well as the tools and interventions necessary to motivate and empower them. Acknowledging that much remains to be learned about effective social interventions for fathers, Innovation Edge has sought to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among nonprofits working in this space.

Innovation Edge supports the Fathers Matter Coach app, which complements the Fathers Matter training programme for ECD practitioners, and addresses the ongoing support needs of fathers with children of all ages. The app functions as both a chatbot and a knowledge hub, accessible via WhatsApp, with over 1 700 users benefiting from its resources. Recognising an opportunity to support fathers further, the Fathers Matter Coach team expressed interest in expanding its content to include engaging activities for fathers to do with their children. This led to a partnership with the Hey Dad! team, creators of an app designed for fathers of 4- to 6-year-olds, which promotes interactive learning in areas such as maths, science and literacy.

As part of the collaboration, Heartlines, an organisation which produces values-based films and resources to spark conversations and social change in South Africa and beyond, plans to use the Fathers Matter Coach platform to engage fathers through nudges featuring Hey Dad! video content, alongside

hosting activity videos within the platform. EISH and COUNT will license Hey Dad! video content for the Fathers Matter WhatsApp chatbot while cross-promoting the Fathers Matter Coach on the Hey Dad! Ayoba channel. This reciprocal sharing of resources exemplifies the synergy created through collaborative efforts.

Central to the partnership's success is the socioecological model of behaviour change, which posits that individual behaviour is shaped by personal knowledge, attitudes and the surrounding environment. This environment encompasses relationships with family, community institutions and societal influences. Both Hey Dad! and Fathers Matter focus on knowledge sharing, attitude and behaviour change to enhance fathers' engagement in their children's lives.

Despite still being in the early stages of the Hey Dad! and Fathers Matter partnership, significant milestones have been reached. An external communication strategy has been established to ensure effective outreach and a content distribution plan is in place to efficiently deliver resources to their target audience. The promotion programme has been developed to ensure messaging remains consistent and impactful.

Looking ahead, the partners want to expand their collaboration to advocate more broadly for fatherhood initiatives and mobilise support within South Africa. Lessons learned will guide future initiatives and the collective vision for supporting fathers can inspire similar partnerships across various nonprofit sectors.

*“Central to the partnership's success is the socioecological model of behaviour change, which posits that individual behaviour is shaped by personal knowledge, attitudes and the surrounding environment.”*

## A model for impact in education

South Africa's educational landscape is marked by significant disparities, particularly in the resources available to schools. In response, Click Learning, the Global Teachers Institute and Penreach have partnered to deliver educational technology (EdTech) to under-privileged primary schools, particularly in no-fee schools catering to learners from grades 1 to 3. The project goes beyond merely providing digital tools – it seeks to create a supportive environment through components such as connectivity, security and the employment of youth to manage the technology. This holistic approach aims to enhance literacy and numeracy through carefully selected, high-quality software from global providers, coupled with rigorous assessment methods to measure learning outcomes.

The Global Teachers Institute (GTI) and Penreach lead the efforts by providing teacher assistants and delivering professional development training to educators. Their partnership is not only with each other but also extends to engaging governmental bodies and private sector contributors. While companies like Rain, a telecommunications provider, ensure connectivity for classrooms, the driving force behind the initiative remains the NPOs, whose collective expertise addresses the critical challenges schools face, from overcrowded classrooms to insufficient teaching resources.

The collaborative has partnered with the Eastern Cape Department of Education to launch the DoubleClick initiative. This pilot project is designed to assess the impact of EdTech software in real classroom environments. With tools being trialled across 20 selected schools, alongside a control group, the initiative aims to rapidly gather insights into the effectiveness of the technology and its potential to improve educational outcomes. This partnership highlights how NPO-driven efforts can strengthen connections with public institutions to bring about meaningful change in education.

The governance structure of this collaborative effort is carefully managed to ensure clarity and efficiency. Although Click Learning, the lead partner, handles project management and financial oversight, each partner maintains its areas of expertise. Delineating roles is crucial for effective execution, but it also introduces complexities that must be navigated through ongoing communication and a shared understanding of responsibilities.

One of the critical lessons learned from this collaborative model is the necessity to plan upfront and establish clear expectations.

Regular check-ins and structured reporting are essential to maintain alignment and address emerging challenges as the project progresses. The cultural fit between organisations can also influence the partnership's success – it helps to recognise the need for shared values and to commit to the collaborative effort. This ensures that potential pitfalls do not derail the project and there is cohesive action towards common goals.

As with any collaborative initiative, there have been successes and setbacks. The importance of acknowledging failures as opportunities for improvement has been underscored throughout the process. Creating an environment where feedback is welcomed and used constructively allows the partners to adapt and refine their strategies, continually enhancing effectiveness.

Looking ahead, a critical aspect of future collaborations will be the development of a unified measurement framework. Currently, the lack of standardised metrics poses challenges in assessing impact and attracting additional funding. Establishing clear indicators of success and aligning these with organisational strategies can make collaborative efforts more appealing to potential funders, ultimately leading to greater support for initiatives aimed at transforming education in South Africa.

As the project continues to evolve, it may well serve as a model for future partnerships, demonstrating that when organisations work together with a shared purpose, the possibilities for impact are limitless.



## A unified approach to education: NASCEE

Since its establishment in 2018, the National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE) has become an important role player in South Africa's educational landscape. NASCEE's mission is to empower NPOs by improving their visibility, capacity, effectiveness and commitment to collaboration to magnify their impact and influence.



It aims to maximise the potential of NPOs and align their collective goals with national and global development priorities, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and South Africa's National Development Plan. This alignment enables NASCEE to bridge the often complex gap between grassroots educational initiatives and larger policy objectives, creating a unified approach towards inclusive, high-quality education accessible to all South Africans.

NASCEE's collaborative capabilities were evident during the Covid-19 pandemic when it served as a representative voice for educational NPOs in South Africa. Recognised by the DBE as a key partner, NASCEE developed the 'National Compact', which defined collaboration principles. It was widely shared among over 2 800 stakeholders. This framework shaped NASCEE's role as a conduit for communication and cooperation among NPOs, government bodies and other education sector stakeholders, illustrating the power of coordinated action in times of crisis.

Beyond emergency response, NASCEE has strengthened networks among education-focused organisations, enhancing trust and resource-sharing among its members. Relationships with other influential associations, such as the Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa and the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association, expand NASCEE's network, amplifying member influence and operational capacity.

*"NASCEE's collaborative capabilities were evident during the Covid-19 pandemic when it served as a representative voice for educational NPOs in South Africa."*

Through initiatives prioritising skills development, governance enhancement and capacity building, NASCEE addresses the unique challenges educational NPOs across South Africa are facing. This inclusive approach allows NASCEE to meet the diverse needs of both small grassroots organisations and larger civil society entities countrywide.

NASCEE's journey highlights the value of building credibility and inclusivity within a diverse membership base. NASCEE adapts its offerings to suit organisations of various sizes and

goals, meeting the evolving needs of its members. Through this approach, NASCEE exemplifies how associations can achieve a significant impact across a challenging sector through strategic networking, resource-sharing and alignment with policy objectives.

## COLLABORATION CONSIDERATIONS

Multistakeholder collaboration can be a powerful strategy for NPOs, enabling them to tackle complex, systemic issues that no single entity could solve alone. However, careful consideration must be given to the capacity and strategic alignment required for such collaborations.

To maximise the benefits of collaborative models, NPOs must understand the diverse governance structures and models available and learn from successful case studies. A well-structured governance framework, including steering committees or boards, helps ensure strategic alignment and effective resource allocation while maintaining engagement from all partners. Establishing transparent decision-making processes is also key to building trust and facilitating timely, effective decisions, which can reduce potential conflicts. Additionally, developing a comprehensive communication plan is crucial for sharing information and reporting progress, as regular communication keeps all partners informed and encourages collaboration.

Although often overlooked, conflict resolution mechanisms are essential to maintain strong relationships and ensure that differences of opinion do not derail the collective effort. Building systems for accountability and transparency, particularly in financial matters, not only strengthens trust among partners but also reinforces the collaboration's credibility with external stakeholders. Financial transparency ensures that all parties contribute equitably, which is key to maintaining balance and avoiding resentment within the partnership.

Ultimately, collaboration thrives on a shared vision and common goals. Partners must feel a sense of ownership and commitment to the initiative, as this shared purpose drives the momentum necessary to achieve systemic change. Regular evaluations and learning loops should be incorporated within the collaboration, encouraging adaptability and continuous improvement. Embracing collaboration allows NPOs to position themselves to develop sustainable solutions and more resilient and empowered communities.

## COLLABORATING TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED BY NPOs

CASE  
STUDY

### Case study 1: **The NPO Working Group**

The NPO landscape is complex and NPOs face various challenges, including legislative and regulatory issues. In October 2021, a webinar was held by Inyathelo to discuss how to respond to developments in the regulatory environment, such as the Non-Profit Amendment Bill 2021 and the General Laws Amendment Act 22 of 2022 (GLAA) (which was a response to recommendations made by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)). One of the outcomes of this webinar was a decision to convene an NPO Working Group, made up of ten independent organisations nominated by 190 webinar participants. A core aim of the NPO Working Group is to foster dialogue and create a collective voice for nonprofits. The group also works on capacity-building initiatives, knowledge sharing, and engagement with the government and other stakeholders to ensure that the interests of NPOs are represented in policy discussions.

The NPO Working Group was involved in numerous meetings and events during the 2023/24 financial year. The member organisations participated in 10 regular working group meetings, two open webinars and four FATF Southern African Development Community (SADC) subgroup meetings facilitated by the International Centre for Nonprofit Law (ICNL). Additionally, they attended two sectoral risk assessment (SRA) oversight meetings, two focus groups and two public meetings that provided updates on the social sector and the General Intelligence Laws Amendment Bill (GILAB). The NPO Working Group also contributed two sets of comments on the GILAB and participated in several National Task Team (NTT) meetings focused on the Draft NPO Policy Framework.

South Africa has now completed its sectoral terror financing risk assessment for the nonprofit sector. This assessment was conducted in collaboration with the nonprofit sector and included a survey of 301 NPOs and data submissions from law enforcement, regulatory and supervisory institutions, intelligence agencies and financial institutions. South Africa received technical assistance from the EU's framework for its anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) facility. The assessment was completed using the methodology provided by the Greenacre Group.

The NPO Working Group hosted a webinar in August 2024 to share the assessment report and discuss the implications for NPOs. Feedback from registered people before the webinar revealed a relatively low level of understanding of AML/CFT regulations, as they apply to the nonprofit sector: only 6% claimed to have an excellent understanding of the legislation, with, 46% a poor understanding, 34% a fair grasp and 14% a good understanding.

The nature of the potential threat to NPOs in South Africa ranges from NPOs raising funds or other support for foreign terrorist groups to facilitating foreign travel for terrorist causes and ransom payments by NPOs to terrorist groups. Recommendations range from general awareness-raising and advice for NPOs to targeted advice or guidance and government engagement. There are also self-regulation measures. For example, NPOs should be empowered to elect ethical and untainted leadership and be capacitated on their roles and

responsibilities. They should also implement a risk assessment process which allows them to identify risks associated with different donors, projects and regions. They should also ensure transparency in financial management practices and reporting to maintain public trust.

Unfortunately, in some countries, governments have imposed severe restrictions, justifying them by citing FATF recommendations. NPOs have been forced to limit their activities or shut down. Banks have frozen or closed NPO accounts or implemented burdensome due diligence requirements. These restrictions have reduced NPOs' ability to raise funds. Given such critical issues affecting civil society and NPOs, the NPO Working Group is playing a vital role in informing and educating nonprofits. This dispels unnecessary fears and enables organisations to navigate the new regulatory landscape.

### Case study 2: **Unmute Civil Society Coalition**

Unmute Civil Society Coalition is a movement of civil society organisations initiated by the Kagiso Trust, in the context of South Africa facing a multilevel and deepening social, economic and political crisis. While civil society faces its own significant challenges on a day-to-day basis, and in relation to its regulation, it has a vital role to play in re-mapping the future of the country.

Kagiso convened a National Consultative Conference of the NPO sector in Johannesburg in November 2022, which 200 organisations attended. They resolved to go back to provinces, communities and constituencies as they saw a need for a proper mandate to constitute UnMute. Inyathelo serves on the steering committee and is the provincial convenor in the Western Cape. Ten volunteer organisations representing various districts make up the Western Cape Provincial Unmute Civil Society Coalition.

Inyathelo hosted a Cape Town consultation on behalf of the Coalition in October 2023, to form a provincial coalition of NPOs. Attended by over 50 civil society representatives from across the Western Cape, the hybrid meeting aimed to identify key issues the nonprofit sector is facing, initiate the formation of a provincial coalition and build a collective approach.

Kagiso Trust and the UnMute Civil Society Coalition then held a civil society summit, in collaboration with the Social Justice Assembly, in November 2023. The concrete outputs of the summit were (i) the framing of values and principles; (ii) the adoption of a social compact; (iii) the adoption of an electoral compact; and (iv) the identification of key intervention priorities and actions.

A Western Cape provincial consultation then took place at the Inyathelo Civil Society Resource Hub in May 2024. The major finding was the recognition that there is insufficient information and accessibility to 'hold things together' at a district level. A central hub/help desk was proposed – similar to the Inyathelo Civil Society Resource Hub. Another proposal was establishing a structure/team building campaign to bring people together. There were also discussions around generating resources, for example, establishing the Western Cape provincial coalition as the go-to place for local and international donors to access those requiring funding. ■

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The NPO Directory is a searchable directory of NPOs in South Africa featured on the Trialogue Knowledge Hub – the go-to website for business and other roleplayers that invest in development. It showcases NPOs and helps connect companies and NPOs for potential partnerships.

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### TIPS FOR LISTING YOUR NPO

- 1 Know in which development sector you operate. If a company is searching for an organisation that works within its focus area, make sure you are in the relevant section. If you work in multiple sectors, choose one as your primary sector.
- 2 Clearly state your vision and mission in a professional way. The reader should be able to quickly grasp this.
- 3 Use headings and short paragraphs to make your listing clear and readable.
- 4 Write in the 'inverted pyramid' style, which means putting your most important information upfront. Quickly establish which problem you solve and why you are the best at solving it. Use your knowledge of what donors want to communicate these key points.
- 5 Focus on the benefits of partnering with your organisation. Why should a company partner with you and what are the benefits of doing so for them? You could include an example of a successful current or previous partnership. Ensure you can demonstrate that you are trustworthy.
- 6 Include a call to action. What do you want the reader to do after reading your listing? Articulate your needs clearly. Are you looking for a partnership? Donations of goods and services? The opportunity for a short phone call? Make this clear.
- 7 Use images and video to make your post more engaging.
- 8 Ensure your contact details are correct.

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# Strengthening township economies



The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) puts township unemployment at 60%, which is almost double the rate of the country as a whole. This presents a significant challenge but also a huge opportunity – how can we grow small businesses in townships and lock in the wealth created there?

In March 2024, Trialogue and Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA) presented a webinar that explored how companies and NPOs can help boost township economies. Panellists **Nonkubela Maliza**, Director of Corporate and Government Affairs at VWSA, **Andrew Charman**, Director of the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, and **Fikiswa Bokwe**, Founder of Vuka Recycling, discussed ways to create and grow sustainable small township businesses.

Doing so is vital, as entrepreneurship is expected to generate around 90% of all newly created jobs in South Africa by 2030, according to the government. Of the estimated 63 million people in South Africa, at least 22 million live in townships and informal settlements.

## Understanding township economies

The more than 500 townships in South Africa represent an economy with an estimated market value of around R900 billion, according to ANDE. Although township economies are vibrant, the environment is not straightforward, with challenges, among other hurdles, being the availability of greenfield space for development, the scourge of crime and an absence of regulation. Worryingly, of the more than 1 000 township businesses surveyed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation in Kariega (adjacent to the VWSA factory), only 30% were found to be profitable and of those, 80% were not owned by township dwellers. However, Charman noted opportunities such as the emergence of township high streets and the affordable rental housing boom. “These findings are essential to inform local government strategies with respect to the development of these spaces,” he noted.

One of the biggest challenges to overcome is the leakage of wealth, with income generated in townships invested

elsewhere. “We need to stimulate business and make sure the money circulates and is reinvested in further opportunities,” Charman said.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation’s research informed VWSA’s Kariega Township Economic Development Project, an ambitious programme to improve entrepreneurship in local ecosystems that was rolled out in 2018. The Foundation conducted a detailed census and survey of microenterprises and spatial development opportunities. This was followed by a 10-month pilot project that involved selecting 48 industrious entrepreneurs in the fields of automotive services, hair-care services and waste collection, and coaching them in personal finance, skills development and personal development. “The aim was to shift these microenterprises from purely survivalist to genuinely sustainable, profitable, value-adding businesses over time,” explained Maliza.

She outlined three key learnings:

### 1 Context matters

Although townships have commonalities, they also have their unique features. “We expected to find a lot of young people running businesses in Kariega but discovered that a lot have left to find better opportunities elsewhere,” Maliza explained. “An understanding of the ecosystem in your area should be rooted in solid, testable research, rather than what you believe and think is right.” She added that research and interventions need to be participatory and inclusive to be meaningful.

### 2 Short-term interventions are limited

It takes more than 10 months to learn a skill, so there is a need for longer-term coaching for entrepreneurs. “We have measured an improvement in financial record-keeping, customer growth, marketing strategies and so on, which

means it’s valuable to offer ongoing coaching and business development services,” Maliza said.

### 3 Collaboration is vital

One company can make a difference, but more can make a greater impact. “You need collaboration and partnerships to get sustainable results over time,” noted Maliza, since the challenges are complex and interwoven.

## How can companies support township economies?

Bokwe outlined some of her challenges as an entrepreneur, including access to finance, locating space to grow a business, finding committed staff, and overcoming nepotism and “favouritism”. Other challenges include transitioning from informality to formality and taking advantage of online opportunities. Bokwe noted the need for ongoing assistance. “For example, there may be a long application you can’t finish alone, but you have nobody to help you.” She urged companies to remain invested and “come back from your offices to see how far we’ve come”.

Companies can help small businesses to formalise where appropriate, and thus become part of the broader economy – a sign of progress and sustainability. Companies can also work with NPOs to build social infrastructure in the townships, which requires strengthening.



  
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