



FirstRand  
VOLUNTEERS

# “Inspiring Employee Volunteering” Conference Report 2019

inspiring employee volunteering

**CAF**  
Southern  
Africa

**BEYOND  
PAINTING  
CLASSROOMS**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 11 and 12 September 2019, the fourth Beyond Painting Classroom (BPC) Employee Volunteering (EV) Conference was held at the Wanderers Club in Illovo, Johannesburg. This biennial conference is a premier gathering of practitioners from the corporate and non-profit sectors and elsewhere who drive employee volunteer programmes.

The conference theme was “Inspiring Employee Volunteering” and had three streams: making employee volunteering count; collaborating for change; and the future of employee volunteering. Conference outcomes were:

- learning and knowledge exchange among conference delegates on employee volunteering practices;
- enhanced insight on the future of employee volunteering and its broader implications for stakeholders;
- shared understanding of the ways in which quantitative and qualitative measures can generate value for employee volunteering; and
- shared lessons and experiences on different collaboration models.

Over two days, delegates shared insights, experiences and challenges related to their EV practice, engaged robustly and learnt from each other about the role of employee volunteering in society and in enabling individual and corporate citizens to actively address some socio-economic challenges.

There were 150 delegates, 25 corporates and 35 NPOs. There were 33 speakers covering plenaries and breakaway sessions and five of these were international speakers, namely Michael Mapstone of CAF UK; Lorrie Forster of IAVE; Chris Venter of Benevity; Agnetta Nyalita of IAVE in Africa; and Aarathi Krishnah of International Federation of Red Cross. This conference had four co-sponsors and in alphabetical order, they were: forgood, LegalWise, MomentumMetropolitan and Volkswagen South Africa (Pty) Limited. For the second year, Kaya FM was the media partner to the conference.

Prof Gumede was the keynote speaker and he addressed the audience on “Inspired to help – employee volunteering as a form of service”. He focused on how the socio-economic and political challenges in South Africa and elsewhere, create opportunities for initiatives like volunteerism to craft alternatives to the current status quo, in terms of institutions and leadership.

The rest of the conference carried varied in-depth content through plenaries and breakaways. A new segment was introduced, namely, “Featured Speaker” which channelled thought-leadership content from local and global leaders on broader macro issues that either directly or indirectly impact the understanding, thinking and practice of employee volunteering. This segment covered three topics: Giving as a behaviour, global employee volunteering trends in a changing world, and the future(s) of volunteering in a changing world.

A workshop on “Time to Think” was held where the facilitators shared the basic ten components of the “Time to Think” philosophy as espoused by Nancy Kline with the delegates. The workshop empowered delegates with a practical tool to support reflective practices and also allowed time for connection.

One of the additions was the conference app. The app aimed to connect BPC to the technology revolution and to give delegates an interactive conference experience. The app also served as a resource repository of all material and information on the conference.

The second Beyond Painting Classrooms Employee Volunteer Programme Awards were also held during the conference. These were initiated in 2017 and aim to celebrate the

achievements of corporates and NPOs in the EV sector. This year's awards identified EV initiatives in the following three categories:

- inspiring leadership;
- partnering for change; and
- creating real value.

A total of 29 applications were received and were adjudicated by a team of six judges who used criteria to decide on the winners of the different categories. For the category of Creating real value, there was only one award: Volkswagen South Africa (Pty) Limited, based on the strength of its submission.

The winners received a certificate and a gift. In addition, each winner was interviewed live by John Perlman, the host of "Today with John Perlman" during his prime time slot, to speak about their work. The following were announced as winners at the Awards Ceremony in the respective categories.

- **Category 1:** Inspiring leadership
  - Corporate: Momentum Metropolitan
  - NPO: U-Turn
- **Category 2:** Partnering for change
  - Corporate: forgood
  - NPO: The Do More Foundation
- **Category 3:** Creating real value
  - Corporate: Volkswagen South Africa (Pty) Limited
  - NPO: No award was awarded here.

The 2019 conference was highly rated by delegates, both during and after the conference, through the feedback survey. Of those who completed the post-conference survey, the overwhelming view was that the conference did in indeed meet the stated outcomes.

The next steps:

- complete and launch the conference report in March 2020;
- use the conference and subsequent conference report to inform and develop a programme of action for BPC 2020;
- launch the new BPC internet site in 2020; and
- host themed workshops in Cape Town, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KZN in 2020/21.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

I think we can do better. It's amazing. I get excited when I see the synthesis of volunteering. But we've got to look at the narrative around volunteering. Volunteering is actually a key portal of development and growth, it's a tool for transformation, and it's so much more than what we think it is. We can push the edges of the conversation, further.

This sentiment came from Dr Robyn Whittaker of Partners for Possibility, a conference delegate. It captures a common and repeated sentiment at the conference, that EV is much more than a 'feel good' activity.

On September 11 and 12 2019, the FirstRand Beyond Painting Classroom (BPC) Employee Volunteering (EV) Conference was held at the Wanderers Club, in Illovo, Johannesburg. It was the fourth one to be held since the inception of the Beyond Painting Classrooms platform, in 2013.

This biennial conference is a premier gathering of practitioners from the corporate and non-profit sectors and elsewhere, who are directly and indirectly involved in employee volunteer programmes. The conference theme was "Inspiring Employee Volunteering". Outcomes of this conference were:

- learning and knowledge exchange among conference delegates on employee volunteering practices;
- enhanced insight on the future of employee volunteering and its broader implications for stakeholders;
- shared understanding and of the ways in which quantitative and qualitative measures can generate value for employee volunteering; and
- shared lessons and experiences on different collaboration models.

Furthermore, this conference sought to build on the three previous BPC EV conferences. These conferences have individually and collectively contributed to the discourse and practice of employee volunteering in companies and NPOs, and have tangibly driven the design and implementation of strategic and impactful employee volunteering, wherever it is practiced.

Over two days, delegates shared insights, experiences and challenges related to their EV practice, engaged robustly and learnt from each other on the role of employee volunteering in society and in enabling individual and corporate citizens to actively address some socio-economic challenges. This experience aligns with the conference objectives to offer a BPC platform that inspires and informs.

### 1.1 Conference profile

The conference was attended by 150 delegates. It brought together individuals passionate about employee volunteering from business, civil society and change-makers (and thought leaders and experts) from different sectors of society. For the conference, the BPC team reached out to their international networks for speakers, to broaden and deepen the EV content and expose delegates to global thinking on EV, amongst others.

Conference numbers are shown below.

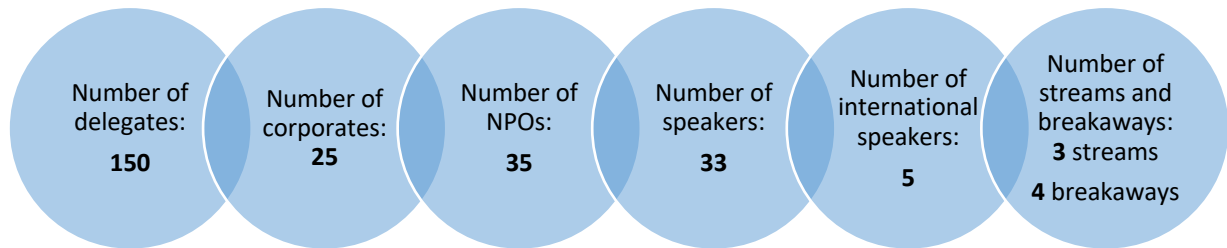


Figure 1: The BPC Employee Volunteering Conference, in numbers

As per the figure above, there were 33 speakers in total covering plenaries and breakaway sessions. Five of these were international speakers, who were invited to anchor some conference segments. These five speakers were, in order of appearance on the programme: Michael Mapstone, Head of International at CAF UK; Lorrie Forster, Director of Corporate Strategy at International Association for Volunteer Efforts (IAVE); Chris Venter, CEO of Benevity; Agnetta Nyalita, a Regional Representative, Africa of IAVE, based in Kenya; and Aarathi Krishnah, Global Futures and Foresight Coordinator at International Federation of Red Cross, based in Switzerland.

There were four co-sponsors for various conference segments. These were in alphabetical order: forgood, LegalWise, MomentumMetropolitan and Volkswagen South Africa (Pty) Limited. Kaya FM, for the second year, was the media partner to the conference.

## 1.2 Conference themes and sub-themes

The conference had three streams: making employee volunteering count, collaborating for change, and the future of employee volunteering. The streams were decided upon after extensive consultative and learning processes were undertaken in 2018 and in early 2019. A summary of the consultative processes to solicit guidance and input for the conference includes input from the FirstRand strategic committee that oversees the BPC team, input from attendees of various BPC workshops and breakfasts, and from the BPC team attending local and international learning gatherings focusing on social initiatives.

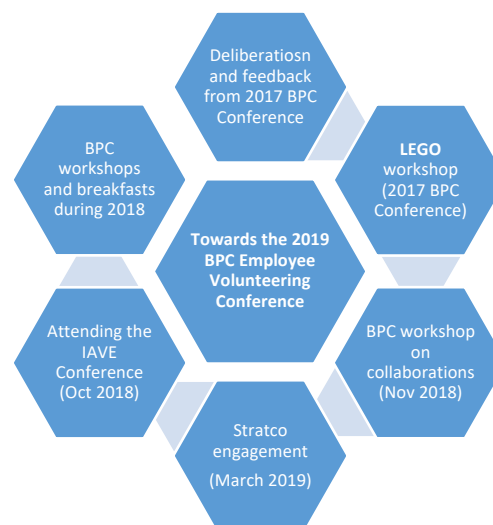


Figure 2: A visual summary of the various channels used to consult on the 2019 BPC EV Conference

The final decision on the conference streams also included challenges currently being experienced by the EV community as well as issues aligned to the recently revised overarching strategy for BPC. Finally, the EV sector has seen the themes of measurement, collaborations and the changing world grow in significance. Lorrie Forster of IAVE confirmed this during her address on the key global trends of corporate volunteering, thus strengthening the logic of their inclusion.

## **2. THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2019 BPC EV CONFERENCE - OPENING SESSION**

The opening session was anchored by representatives of the two organisations that were responsible for this biennial conference; FirstRand, represented by Bongiwe Njobe and CAF Southern Africa, represented by Jo Pohl.

In her welcoming and opening remarks, Bongiwe as Head of Social Investing at FirstRand, shared some of FirstRand's thinking as "holders" of the BPC platform. She said FirstRand sees BPC as a platform that seeks to solicit, hold and nurture different perspectives around EV, which it sees as a growing trend and recognises through BPC. She said that "volunteerism is part of corporate South Africa (and it is a) contribution to build trust between business and society whilst enabling collaboration with other stakeholders, including government, to ameliorate the adverse impacts of structural and multidimensional poverty and historical inequality". Therefore, to the business, EV demonstrates how things could be done by actively drawing on skills of the corporate sector.

Bongiwe challenged delegates to reflect on some tough questions, such as 1) Why do we do it? 2) How best can we do it? 3) How can we assure ourselves that it is being done, efficiently and effectively? and 4) To what extent is our EV altruistic or self-serving? She said this reflection was necessitated by the challenges the country faces, which she labelled as "wicked challenges", a term borrowed from Horst Rittel. "We are dealing with wicked challenges – complex and interconnected problems, which require more than just research and whose solutions lie in combining research and requires end-users to come up with solutions".

In terms of FirstRand's response to these challenges, she spoke about FirstRand as a natural role player due to the 'nature, size and scale of the company's business activities'. She shared some data of the company's contribution, through the FirstRand's Volunteers Programme. Since its inception, this programme has donated over R71 million to organisations and schools, across the country. In the 2017/2018 FY, employees of the group donated R11.9 in time and money.

Bongiwe said the above confirmed that EV and in particular, skills-based volunteering is "uniquely placed to contribute to how things could be done, by drawing on individual and organisational knowledge, capability and experience within previously disadvantaged organisations and communities".

She concluded by thanking all speakers for agreeing to participate and contribute their extensive knowledge with delegates. To the delegates, she implored them to "allow ourselves to reimagine our actions to make an important and enduring difference, in the world we live in".

Jo Pohl, CAF Southern Africa board chair, thanked FirstRand for partnering with CAF Southern Africa and for the opportunity afforded to it to combine its "work in social investment, philanthropy, employee volunteering and advocacy". She tackled the appropriateness of the conference theme of "inspiring employee volunteering" at this time in South Africa, when the dominant and visible narrative is for the dramatic, the crisis and the negative, which she called "an over dramatic worldview", a term used by Hans Rosling. She said this view needs to be reframed, starting by rethinking what can be done by working together, including through volunteering. "Volunteering brings us together as a community,

helps keep businesses and other organisations afloat .... It is important because it helps better our communities and improve and grow ourselves as individuals...in fact, it is a free way to feel good about our contribution and purpose”.

She described the BPC platform and this conference, as an “opportunity to pause, reflect and recalibrate ... to find our way as a collective group that can make a difference through what we do and will do together, what we say and how we share good news stories that impact lives, communities and our country”. In this vein, Jo stressed that EV is “in fact in our DNA” and as a result, it should go beyond the annual 67 minutes campaign in memory of Nelson Mandela’s life and become more strategic.

Jo concluded by encouraging delegates to use the conference to “power us forward as socially conscious citizens” by letting it change us as individuals, so that we can change lives. “We may not be able to change the world but we can change someone’s world and every act, counts”.

### **3. KEYNOTE ADDRESS – PROF WILLIAM GUMEDE**

The keynote speaker for the 2019 BPC Employee Volunteer Conference was Professor William Gumede. His topic was “Inspired to help – employee volunteering as a form of service”. He began by sharing his thoughts on the act of volunteering and thereafter focused on corporates as corporate citizens and the possible role of employee volunteering, specifically. Following his address, Prof Gumede engaged in a conversation with the session facilitator, Bongiwwe Njobe, and the audience.

Prof Gumede traced his own foray into volunteering, as a young black teenager in the 1980s, growing up in apartheid South Africa. He followed this historical and personal journey with a brief look at the role of volunteering in driving industrialisation. Prof Gumede deliberately linked volunteering to industrialisation because, as he put it “we seldom study volunteering and its contribution to growth and development. Employee volunteering was a critical part of this. We cannot underestimate the power of volunteering”.

He then analysed some of the country’s much publicised challenges, like state capture and the corruption associated with it, state failure and its capacity limitations and diminished trust between the various state institutions and citizens. He said these were some of the reasons for the sense of pessimism in the country, presently.

From the state, he then analysed the private sector and its challenges, such as what he termed its own version of corporate failure, capture and scandals. He said that corporates are also citizens and it is important for them to see themselves as such, but importantly, as citizens, they must realise that they need a “social licence to operate”. He said that for corporates to retain this “social licence to operate” they must reflect on their own behaviours. Each corporate, he argued, must introspect on pertinent questions like: Are you a company that is seen as corrupt? How do you treat your staff? How do you treat the environment? If the answers are no and/or negative, then communities may withdraw their licence for you to operate”. Ultimately, citizens want corporates that behave positively and democratically, both internally (such as on issue of organisational culture) and externally (in how it conducts its core business). “A social licence to operate is absolutely critical. If employees are engaged in communities, it creates the social licence to operate”.

Furthermore, he argued that challenging times also offer opportunities and this is where employee volunteering can play an important role. In his view, EV is an opportunity to “create alternative types of institutions and leadership, in a time of crisis”. He said that EV practitioners will need to drive a very different kind of EV if they are to embrace the opportunities emanating from the crisis. This EV must actively and positively contribute to address the socio-economic challenges. In his view, the EV that is required must:



- Fully connect corporates to NPOs, by utilising skills from the corporate sector to advance the NPO sector. In his view, “corporates are not as involved and as engaged as they could be with our NPOs”.
- Drive the use of talent surplus in the corporate sector. “Yes, we have an unemployment problem, but in South Africa, we do not use and manage talent correctly”.
- Effectively use this corporate surplus. “We have corporates that our BRIC countries do not have. If we calculate the capacity of these corporates (human and financial), then we compete on an equal footing with corporates elsewhere in the world”.
- EV should not be viewed as a kind of “a corset”. “Corporates must work more for society, as opposed to for-profit”.
- The problem with our EV of one day a year (is that it) does not become part of the formal corporate strategy. The Nelson Mandela Day helps, every bit helps, always, but that day also tells us what is wrong with our EV. We need to have Nelson Mandela Day every day. “EV should not be treated as a once off, event”.

In conversation with the facilitator and the audience - some key nuggets:

Bongiwe engaged Prof Gumede on some his ideas from his address, in particular on his view on the role of EV in political activism and its potential to be a tool for social change. She posed the following three questions:

- What should we be doing differently from a volunteering perspective? How can we channel anger and outrage, into a force for good and something positive?
- We seldom think of EV as having the potential to provide alternative leadership. The failure of corporates seems to be to demonstrate impact, which can be said to emanate from how they talk about their work. What does this mean in a society where perceptions are key and they are in the eyes of those who look?
- Do you think we are proving more robust in talking about impact of what we do? If we do this, can we start to change how people think about what corporates do?

In response, Prof Gumede stressed that “citizens should think less of the state as a leader of society that will provide answers” and as we “move away from that, it will open new possibilities and new opportunities”. He encouraged citizens to reflect on their individual role, as businesses, individuals and NPOs, as opposed to the more common approach of talking about “what can government or the state do”. He said corporates have an opportunity to provide alternative leadership, as leadership will not come from the traditional places we are used to.

His advice to corporates was that before they think about strategy, they must factor in the reality that citizens want to see genuine and compelling involvement by corporates in a range of socio-economic challenges. “If it’s (EV or CSI) a checklist or a checkbox exercise, if it’s superficial, it will not work. We must think of ourselves as citizens in a society and ask ourselves: What do corporates need to do in this society?” For example, “I did a report on South African NPOs, which are not very efficiently run. There is a lack of funding and many get funding from foreign taxpayers. Our government and corporates do not do enough in that regard. This says that corporates, through skills-based volunteering, for instance, can help NPOs become more efficient. Importantly, companies can use CSR to channel funds into social justice”.

In Prof Gumede’s perspective “as South Africans, we are not doing enough to use corporates in our society and not doing enough about the capitalism we see in our society. Even as universities, we have not engaged and looked at what will work in our context in terms of getting corporates more engaged. Our approach has been to criticize and we have not done it sufficiently. It is important to look into what sort of corporate behaviour works and is appropriate”. He also said that volunteering can be used to absorb the unemployed youth bulge, in response to the unemployment crisis.

In closing, Prof Gumede implored delegates to revisit some of their positions and practices in response to the issues he highlighted in his address. Bongiwe also reiterated the need to “institutionalise EV in how we do it and where ever it gets done”.

#### 4. FEATURED SPEAKER

The 2019 conference included a new segment, namely “Featured Speaker”. This served as another channel to share thought-leadership content from local and global leaders, on broader issues in the macro environment that either directly or indirectly, impact the understanding, thinking and practice of EV. It covered the following topics: Giving as a behaviour, global employee volunteering trends in a changing world, and the future(s) of volunteering in a changing world.

The following speakers anchored the featured speaker segment, in order of their appearance on the programme:

- Michael Mapstone - Volunteering, including employee volunteering as an entrenched behaviour of giving;
- Dr Bheki Moyo - Giving on the African continent and how corporates can get in on the act;
- Lorrie Forster - Global employee volunteering trends in a changing world; and
- Aarathi Krishnah - The future(s) of volunteering in a changing world.

##### 4.1 Featured speaker 1: GIVING AS A BEHAVIOUR!

The two speakers who anchored the session were respected thought-leaders in the philanthropy and giving arena. One was Michael Mapstone, who is the CAF Global Alliance Director of International at CAF UK and he was joined by Dr Bheki Moyo, who is the Chair at the Centre for Philanthropy and Social investment at the Wits Business School.

Michael’s topic was Volunteering, including employee volunteering as an entrenched behaviour of giving. Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) describes itself as “a charity, bank and champion for better giving, and for over 90 years we’ve been helping donors, companies and charities make a bigger impact”.<sup>1</sup>

His address was on “Volunteering as Giving” and it was framed on the latest giving trends and findings from the World Giving Index (WGI). He explained to delegates the rationale of the WGI and then shared key nuggets from its latest research report. The WGI is an annual survey that covers 148 countries and which tracks giving trends and has been doing so for the past ten years. It focuses on three key issues, namely, helping a stranger; giving money; and volunteering time.

Over the past ten years, the trends have been as follows:

- Have you helped a stranger? - this indicator has gone up slightly over five years:
  - Global North - trend is flat or is declining;
  - Global South - trend is going up. Africa is the most generous continent on the planet.
- Have you given money? – stable.
- Have you volunteered? – stable

Michael also shared some data pertaining to specific categories of findings in the WGI, specifically those on gender and age breakdowns, youth and giving, and skills-based volunteering.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cafonline.org](http://www.cafonline.org) , Accessed on 1 November 2019

# World Giving Index: A snapshot



## HELPING A STRANGER

- Over 50s: donations going down
- In emerging markets: 30 - 49 year olds give the most

## VOLUNTEERING

- Men more likely to volunteer globally
- Men more likely to help a stranger than women
- The more gender equality there is, the more money will go to civil society



## LEVELS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ARE RISING

- 87% of people in SA see civil society as having an impact
- People see value in civil society
- These young people are going to expect employers to help and enable them to volunteer and engage their civic passions



- Skills-based volunteering is the fastest growing programme in Corporate Social Responsibility

- 50% of companies have EV volunteer programmes

- "EV is a must have to retain talent"

- Skills-based volunteering has a triple impact as it affects employees, employers and NPOs in the civil society sector

Figure 3: A snapshot of the key findings from the World Giving Index

Dr Bheki Moyo of Wits Business School, spoke on Giving on the African continent and how corporates can get in on the act. He focused on African philanthropy and how it can be better understood and used as a transformative tool. His address concentrated on three areas: Understanding and defining philanthropy; Examples of successful institutionalisation of volunteerism at a national level, including building a governance system for volunteering; and Corporates, philanthropy and volunteering, as a risk capital.

Dr Moyo tackled the definition of the word philanthropy and discussed it in the African context. He addressed some of the more common uses of terms like philanthropy and charity. He reasoned that the discussion on definitions was necessitated by his observation that the focus on terminology has tended to distract from the actual substance of philanthropy. He said the preoccupation with definitions resulted in intellectual debates about semantics rather than substance, especially as "some of the big names or words we use, sometimes do not help us understand the terms".

Philanthropy has different definitions, according to the context. In our context, philanthropy and charity is the same. Philanthropy is seen as innovative. Charity is seen as a basic act, but "take a girl child to work" is actually transformative. Let us not emphasise one over the other. The word philanthropy does not resonate in Africa. Because of our social challenges, we have all had an experience of philanthropy, no matter what form.

His argument was that since volunteering (of time, money or skills) itself is a form of social good, therefore, it is itself, philanthropy.

He then shared examples from the African continent where volunteering is embedded and he used Rwanda as a case study. He zoomed in on Rwanda's well-known monthly cleaning campaign, called "Umuganda". He said that the Rwandan government has embedded this culture, through amongst others, developing a strategy that includes this campaign, and also measures and calculates volunteer time for it and includes fines for those who do not participate.

Dr Moyo then introduced the concept of risk capital in the discussion on philanthropy. He said volunteering is a risk capital mainly because philanthropy has become such a big positive force that it is considered a risk capital. “Volunteering is considered a risk capital, which means it can go beyond where others can go”.

He encouraged corporates to introspect on the effectiveness of their responses to social problems. He urged them to invest time embedding volunteering in organisational culture and to be intentional about including young people in these programmes, more as a necessity than as a nice-to-do.

We find it difficult to work with young people in the sector. We need to ask ourselves: What do they want to say?; why are they fed-up?; and how do they want to do it? There is a movement of ideas, of people and of positions.

In his closing, he echoed Prof Gumede’s point on the importance of the social licence to operate and its role in strengthening accountability of corporates to communities. He challenged delegates and EV practitioners to support the following actions:

- corporates must move their CSI to a shared value approach;
- philanthropy must start to play an active role in policy-making;
- to think of ways to turn High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) into a giving force. “These do not only have money, they also have time, expertise and networks”; and
- for the proponents of philanthropy in South Africa, to think and find ways to use philanthropy to convene movements around GBV and Afrophobia, as these are some of the key challenges of our times.

In conversation: Michael Mapstone and Dr Moyo with the audience

Sample size of and data from WGI: In response to a question on the sample size of WGI, Michael said that although this research focuses mostly in urban areas, which is problematic, the survey is representative. He shared briefly about another research that CAF UK is conducting in several African countries, specifically Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and SA, and their hope that it will provide more in-depth analysis on giving behaviours and preferences in Africa.

Dr Moyo made the following additional comment to the sample size and data discussion:

The lack of data does not mean that volunteering is low. There is volunteering that is seldom counted. The fact that we have not conducted extensive research, does not mean that it is not happening at a higher level.

Instilling of values: Dr Moyo spoke on the importance of the need to change thinking about volunteering. He argued that changing behaviours and mindsets about volunteering will not happen on its own and that new values can and should be inculcated, as Rwanda has done and continues to do.

Start with what you have: Both speakers gave examples of ways and practices in the local environment that reflect the values of volunteering and both advised that these be used to embed and cultivate volunteering. Dr Moyo also noted that historically, many people grew up thinking volunteering came with the Peace Corps and so it is necessary to “decolonise the thinking” about it and its origins and manifestations. This process will give recognition of and visibility to the work done by many young girl children in African villages and households, who help their gogos with bathing and feeding, rightly, as volunteering.

Michael gave examples of different national cultures that resonate with volunteering. Here, he mentioned the Ubuntu philosophy, in Rwanda he referenced the culture of creating pride, in Indonesia, the genesis was something else and the point was “there are strong cultures of giving all over the world and these are given different words. What we need is to better

understand how culture and policy can influence each other”. He said it is not just religious and cultural contributions that matter here, there are other factors, in other contexts.

Ultimately, both speakers agreed that it is possible to change mindsets about volunteering and by tapping into historical and current practices, and rekindling practices and behaviours, this process can start. This approach can be instrumental in getting the often or sometimes, angry and frustrated youths excited about engaging to causes that matter to them.

#### **4.2 Featured speaker 2: GLOBAL EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING TRENDS IN A CHANGING WORLD**

Lorrie, the Director of Corporate Strategy at the International Association for Volunteer Efforts was the keynote speaker at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Beyond Painting Classrooms Employee Volunteer Awards Programme. She spoke on the “Global employee volunteering trends in a changing world”.

Lorrie introduced IAVE as a global organisation that is almost 50 years old with members in all regions of the world. Its work spans four activities: Advocate for EV; network that facilitates volunteering; disseminate knowledge; and convene.

She said that there is much happening around EV in the world and that today’s EV is very different to the first documented case of EV in 1911 at AT&T, a telephone company. EV today is much more accessible because it can now be implemented in many ways, such as through the company or by individuals; top-down or bottom up; CSR and EV merged or separated; using retirees; and tracking or not tracking volunteer hours, amongst others.

Lorrie shared seven key trends that IAVE is seeing at a global scale.

- Trend 1 - Use of the SDGs to shape an EVP by corporates. IAVE sees more corporates align their EVPs with the 17 SDGs and their respective targets. Companies use a wide range of different approaches to engage with these goals and targets.
- Trend 2 - Responding to humanitarian and natural disasters. Many companies active in this area respond in different ways, like some focus on humanitarian crisis (refugee crisis) and others on natural disasters.
- Trend 3 - Creating sustained change with EV. Many companies are driving transformational EV.
- Trend 4 - Cross-border team volunteering. This trend is mostly used by companies for their high potential and highly skilled individuals. Companies also use it to create a multi-disciplinary team of volunteers.
- Trend 5 - Use of technology. Technology is particularly useful to those who want to volunteer, but who may not want to travel as it allows for virtual volunteering.
- Trend 6 - Focus on measurement. Measurement in EV is generally hard to do and IAVE is seeing many corporates seek out service providers, to help them with M&E.
- Trend 7) - Collaboration. IAVE is seeing more company-to-company collaboration.

Finally, Lorrie shared the following practical tips and tools on EVPs:

- It is important to plan your EV programme.
- Identify the skills and interests of your employees. “You can’t always assume as the organiser that you know what employees want, as often, different employees want to do different things”.
- Talk to your NGO or community and find out their needs and create a common vision.
- Determine how you want to measure success.
- Create opportunities for training.
- Have ongoing and open conversations with your NPO partner.
- It helps to have company ambassadors to interface with other partners you are involved with through EV.
- Include actions after EV activation as having these is good.

- Recognise EVPs, but also note that these are culturally dependent.

She ended off by saying that she is an optimist and that EV has made her even more optimistic.

### 4.3 Featured speaker 3: THE FUTURE(S) OF VOLUNTEERING IN A CHANGING WORLD

Aarathi Krishnan of International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), who was also a speaker at the 2018 IAVE Conference in Augsburg, Germany was briefed to engage delegates on broader macro issues in the world, like social, environmental, political, cultural, and legal and technology, and their impact on volunteerism. At Augsburg, she was able to connect these changes to systems; to their impact on economies and communities and to phenomena like migration, climate change, human rights, the world of work and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

At the BPC Conference, Aarathi shared data and drew attention to its revelations about changes in the world and drivers of that change. She argued that the analysis of this data and rate of change, showed that the world is at “it’s most negative”. In this environment, humans are being driven to evolve “as our current solutions are outdated”. In this context, individuals, organisations and communities are compelled to reflect on questions that will guide them to think quite differently about the future. Some of these are:



Figure 4: Critical questions to be posed about the future

Based on their work at IFRC, the most impactful trends are as follows:

- violence and conflict;
- climate and resources;
- new communities and how people perceive identity;
- inequality;
- power and governance, and the future of civil society;
- new technologies and experimentation;
- civic engagement; and
- youth activism and social media.

Aarathi added more questions that are to be answered as people grapple with the “face and character of the future” so that they can better prepare for the changes in the future. The volunteering community needs to undertake this exercise as these trends, in her view, will likely impact issues like volunteering modalities, the profile of volunteers, causes targeted, amongst others.

- What is your preferred future?
- What is most important to us?
- What capacity do we have?
- Where must we innovate?
- Who must we engage?
- What is the type of culture we are building?
- What should we be considering?
- How do we ensure we are constantly testing our assumptions?
- What is needed from us as a society to flourish?
- How can we come together to drive change that is good for all of us?

In conclusion, Aarathi stressed that the complexity of change that is happening is simultaneously converging with the above-mentioned trends. This makes it pertinent to engage in multiple conversations about these trends and their intersection. The intersectionality is a reminder not to treat these trends as silos. Her view is that “ultimately, we need to re-imagine the status quo and balance today with tomorrow”.

## 5. CONFERENCE CONTENT

### Stream 1 – Making employee volunteering count

The first stream of the conference focused on making employee volunteering count. This stream centred discussions on measurement in employee volunteering. In part, this was as a result of increased interest on the question of impact of social initiatives and employee volunteering projects. Tennille states that measurement is important in volunteering because it can provide a powerful counter voice in response to the sometimes unflattering narrative that describes volunteering as fluffy. His view is that “the work we do isn’t the fluffy stuff. It’s critical to developing the resiliency of communities around the world”<sup>2</sup>. Different stakeholders, such as funders, programme and project partners are all interested in understanding impact for different reasons. So this focus on measurement was also driven by the desire to produce more evidence-based results on change and outcomes on the “value” generated by employee volunteering.

This stream had a plenary discussion and two breakaway sessions on related, but different aspects of this topic. The plenary session was a panel discussion of three speakers with interesting measurement journeys. The sessions’ overarching topic was “Does employee volunteering have value? What can be counted and reported as its impact?”

#### 5.1 Plenary 1: Does employee volunteering have value? What can be counted and reported as its impact?

The three anchor speakers of this strategic conversation were Lesley Ann van Selm from Khulisa Social Solutions, Andronica Mabuya of Discovery and Kuda Mukova of IQ Business. Samm Marshall, who is the Founder and Managing Director of BStyle Media, was the facilitator.

#### Speaker 1: Lesley Ann van Selm, CEO of Khulisa Social Solutions

Lesley Ann addressed the audience on “Our approach to thinking about the impact of employee volunteering”. She framed her presentation around three main points, namely, the value of volunteers, implementing an ecosystem approach and monitoring and evaluation.

On the value of volunteers, Lesley Ann stated boldly that as Khulisa Social Solutions “they could not have achieved what they have, were it not for the volunteers”. To explain this, she took delegates through the organisation’s journey of its work in prisons, where they were the first and only organisation at the time doing rehabilitation work. They ran assessments with youth inmates and identified gaps they could help address or provide support in, but due to limited resources, they realised they needed to recruit volunteers from other professions to provide the necessary support to these youths.

This is how they built Khulisa, on volunteerism. But it was not based on what the volunteers wanted to do, it was based on identifying needs and recruiting the right people with the right skills.

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<sup>2</sup> Tennille, J. (2018). Out With the Old, In With the New. Accessed on 5 April 2019. Available at: <http://medium.com/@JDTennille/out-with-the-old-in-with-the-new-4d2a22e8ebd0>

Lesley Ann said their approach to volunteering has brought them considerable success in their respective programmes; one achievement is seeing some offenders return to the programme as volunteers to offer their time and support.

Lesley Ann stressed the importance of doing meaningful work with and through EV, in the way they try to do at Khulisa. She challenged EV practitioners to shift from implementing once off and reactive volunteering activities. “Mandela Day is an example of where many volunteers come out for one day and then leave us. Khulisa refuses to have these types of engagements unless that one day rah-rah T-shirt stuff builds towards something more long term. When we know what the community’s needs are, it’s easier for staff to get involved in something that’s useful”.

In her second point, she spoke about their ecosystem approach, which ensures that they never work “with or on a problem in isolation”. As an organisation, they take a holistic view which sees them work across an entire geographical ecosystem to address causal factors. In this way, they deliberately anchor their work in collaboration. They view their success as intertwined with their ability to engage effectively with multiple stakeholders to find solutions. To evidence their collaborative scope, Khulisa works with 840 NGOs across South Africa, 14 governmental departments, 18 corporates and eight local and international institutions. They see this as necessary to achieve sustainable change. Lesley Ann then shared a case where this approach is implemented.

Below is a process they have outlined for their programme work in the mines:

- They start off by doing a transit walk where they walk the entire community to gather insights and stories.
- After the walk, they design an ecosystem, inclusive of schools, economic opportunities, agriculture, etc.
- In a dialogue, the community tells them what they need.
- They then provide this feedback from the community to the company, at which point they also guide and advise them on the effective ways of investing in the community for optimum results.
- The design also includes a volunteer programme to afford volunteers with an opportunity to make a difference.
- Through this approach, they are able to leverage very wide scale change.
- For instance, in this they have stimulated 150 jobs.

Their monitoring and measurement journey is based on the philosophy that “instead of measuring Rands, let us measure outcomes”. Their in-depth approach to measurement allows them to track and measure everything they do. Amongst others, they employ different assessment tools to determine project success, test all aspects of the project quarterly so as to keep abreast of all issues by identifying emerging issues quickly. They utilise different measuring processes such as transit walks, dialogue circles and community mapping to collect project information. Lesley Ann said their monitoring journey starts with the question of “how they would know that what they are doing is measurable and creating meaningful opportunities for CSI and EV?”

#### **Key learnings:**

- Sustainable change and outcomes can be achieved through volunteerism.
- It is necessary to invest time to understand the real needs of targeted groups.
- Broaden the response network to address these needs through an integrated multi-stakeholder approach.
- The systems within which NPOs and EVPs work are often complex and, therefore, require different approaches to drive sustainable change.



## **Speaker 2: Andronica Mabuya, Divisional Manager – Corporate Sustainability at Discovery**

Andronica was the second speaker and she spoke on “Why investing in measurement is an investment worth making?” One of most salient points Andronica made was that Discovery’s approach to EV is fundamental to their CSI and is built into and aligned with the business. She unpacked Discovery’s social value model and its logic, which is that business models (through services and products) must help address social issues. In this model, business benefits are shared between shareholders, customers and broader society. For example, through the Discovery Fund, they give access to those without quality health care and thereby leverage their business value for social benefit.

Andronica also shared their efforts to drive employee engagement, through volunteering. At Discovery, EV is entrenched in the business strategy and is aligned to its values and engages staff to develop thriving communities. Their EVP clearly articulates the “Why”, How” and the “What”.

Discovery offers a spectrum of volunteer activities across various platforms and they see 30% (global average) of their staff contribute to these. As a global player, with a huge talent pool, Discovery also connects to the narratives of the different employee generations (like millennials) and their respective needs, drives and purposes.

Andronica concluded by sharing with delegates details of their successful case study being implemented in Orange Farm, one of the most deprived communities, in Gauteng. In terms of communities, Discovery’s approach is to regard such communities not as beneficiaries but as partners. Orange Farm is a case study of their integrated approach to CSI programming. Through it, they have created social value and promoted a community that has the potential to thrive. She spoke on the processes Discovery undertook to gain a deep understanding of the community and the nature of the issues it faces so as to explore ways of partnering appropriately with the community. At Orange Farm, they were able to innovate, leverage off their top 1% talent, commit for the long-term (a period not less than five years), co-design the programme and address broader community challenges and drive sustainable outcomes.

In terms of M&E, Discovery has had a long journey developing a system that is aligned to its social value model. Their M&E system is shaped by four key trends, namely socio-economic trends; disaffected youths; advancing technology and insights and global; and national regulatory and policy environment. This has seen Discovery move from an ad hoc internal measurement system to a framework with a clear theory of change, which enables reporting beyond outputs and outcomes.

### **Key learnings:**

- Companies need to develop a social value model aligned to their business strategy.
- Invest in M&E and build a framework that advances the social value model.
- Companies must be brave and drive their social value model in communities.

## **Speaker 3: Kuda Mukova, Associate Partner at IQ Business**

Kuda Mukova was the third speaker on this panel. He tackled the topic of “How to integrate sustainability and impact thinking into social good initiatives”.

IQ Business is an approved B-Corp company, which is “a business that is being used as a force for good and being a purpose driven organisation. It entails aligning their business to address societal challenges and contributing to build a more inclusive economy”. IQ Business applied to become a B-Corp company because their mission resonated with the aim to create true value in society and to move beyond profit generation. In 2018, IQ Business was a recipient of the most Conscious Company award.

IQ Business has transitioned from the traditional EV measurement to impact quotient methodology (IQM). One of its benefits is that it limits future costs that do not offer a return, saves time and identifies and maximises outputs of projects. The IQM calculation identifies the outcome and its financial proxy and also indicates negative outcomes. “What gets measured gets done. Well-thought-out projects are the ones that are more engaging, give better return on investment”.

Kuda detailed a case where IQ Business applied this IQM measurement tool, with an NPO partner working in the educational space. In this programme, IQ Business employees volunteered their time and skills, and they applied this methodology with key stakeholders, such as learners, NPO staff, IQ Business itself and identified benefits for each stakeholder.

In conclusion, Kuda said that “EV is important to them as a business because they consider their employees as a key stakeholder”. They have learnt that sustainable EV is best if it is skills based. In addition to this and borrowing from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, IQ Business has learnt that programmes which allow employees to self-actualise are more sustainable and have higher impact. They also realised that recognition is important to employees and as a result they implement different forms of recognition.

### **Key learnings:**

- IQM is the methodology they use to drive M&E, including the EV programme.
- There is a need to think about measurement and return on investment of EV.
- Skills-based EV is a type of volunteering that is evidence of sustainable EV.

### **In conversation with the audience:**

Incentives and EV: Speakers addressed the issue of incentives in EV. At Discovery, historically, there were incentives that were linked to certain volunteer targets and which would earn staff double their salary. Eventually, however, this proved to be too expensive and Discovery looked for alternatives. Changing its financial incentive’s model saw a decline in volunteering. The panellists also discussed the issue of giving incentives to volunteers who are paid staff. The main position was that paid staff should not receive financial incentives to volunteer. Kuda argued that although monetary is the most common and well-loved form of incentivising, it is possible to recognise volunteers using other forms of recognition, including through skills based. A delegate said that “incentives are a moral dilemma, given that the meaning of ‘volunteering’ is to offer your time without the expectation of reward”.

NPOs accessing corporates: The view was that relationships between corporates and NPOs should be based on strategic alignment and not on ad hoc soliciting of project funding from corporates. Bongwiwe of FirstRand said that “if the work being done aligns strategically and it plays to the strengths of the corporate, then that will be the basis of the connection. A lot of energy is often spent on trying to get corporates to fund each and every project”. Desiree of the FirstRand Volunteers Programme, concurred and said that connecting to NPOs is mostly “left to the employees to choose the projects they resonate with. But as a brand, FirstRand has always tried to connect with NPOs that have the same objectives, same values and same trajectory”.

System-wide approach: Lesley Ann reiterated that all entities should drive EV through an ‘ecosystem approach’. At Khulisa, a single project manager acts as catalyst between all stakeholders in their strong centralised system. In this system, “if a volunteer has undertaken to do something and it doesn’t happen, the system will throw up a red flag. If you make a commitment we reinforce that. We keep reports so to keep partner organisations interested”. Additionally, in this approach, corporates must engage communities before rolling-out any volunteer programme. Kuda spoke about the importance of ensuring alignment between the individual and corporate purpose to ensure effective EV. Andronica pointed out a challenge

that remains, which is how to ensure NPOs and corporates partner with each other, in a more deliberate way.

## 5.2. Breakaway Sessions:

### Breakaway session 1:

This breakaway dealt with “Impactful storytelling”. The topic encouraged discussions on how ‘results’ from measurement and M&E can be used to craft ‘stories of change’ about social good initiatives, including EV.

Dr Nokuthula Mazibuko Msimang of the Puku Foundation, facilitated this session. The three speakers on this panel were Mamotshidi Mohapi of the CS MOTT Foundation, Anne Talbot of Rhodes University and Sam Marshall of BStyle Media. Mamotshidisi Mohapi’s quote encapsulates the value of storytelling and its sentiment was so strongly echoed by the other speakers on this panel:

Stories help us find our place in the world. They place us and them in the world. They give us an experience of experiencing others and their narratives.

### Speaker 1: Anne Talbot, Head of Innovation Hub at Rhodes University

Anne’s topic was “What is digital story-telling? How can it be used to communicate work of employee volunteer programmes?” She spoke about their work in the global division of storytelling. At Rhodes University, community engagement is an umbrella term used to talk about their engaged research with communities on topics of their interest. At the university, she said they “have moved from the traditional understanding of community engagement ... towards a model of shared goals. It is a bi-directional relationship that is mutually beneficial”.

This approach is premised on the understanding that community engagement is not about things; it is relational and reflective. They seek to be part of community development that moves from the premise that communities have assets and needs. Lastly, they discuss what each can do and contribute to these issues. This approach is strength- based, rather than needs-based.

At the Innovation Hub, four key principles guide their work, namely 1) digital storytelling; 2) digital literacy; 3) social innovation and 4) pop-up labs. The hub drives this agenda through technology that is openly available and accessible. They encourage people to use what is available to them to share their stories. Through digital storytelling, communities can begin to embrace the promises of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and these stories can be told in any language and be shared anywhere.

Anne concluded by sharing the different uses of the digital storytelling platform, such as for healing, sharing and for M&E, amongst others. She stressed that any feedback given via this platform, can be used meaningfully.

### Key learnings:

- Digital storytelling opens up avenues for more storytelling and for communities to connect to the Fourth Industrial Revolution narrative.
- There is technology to increase reach that is easily accessible and available.
- Keep in mind that how people share their story is up to them. People can freely share their issues on an open platform. “People tell their story in the way of their own choosing”.

### Speaker 2: Mamotshidi Mohapi, Programme officer, CS MOTT Foundation

Mamo spoke on “What is your Foundation’s take and approach to story-telling?”. She introduced the CS MOTT Foundation by talking to its origins, ethos and mandate. “At the CS

MOTT Foundation, we are passionate about supporting institutions that know the change they want to create”.

She asked delegates to think about their own experiences with stories and storytelling.

Let us think about the stories we have heard? Stories from community leaders, grandparents, church leaders? Think about how those stories have affected you as a person? How these people have changed the way you look at life? How stories are told, will move you into action.

She said stories are not only told in different ways and shared in communities but that they have a universal ability to “translate human emotions into an accessible format”.

Mamo detailed the use of stories and storytelling in the work of the Foundation, where stories of communities often guide funding decisions and the strategic direction of the Foundation. As the Foundation is geographically dispersed, regional stories give the team a better understanding of the different contexts where project funding is channelled. The foundation uses stories to demonstrate their impact and to continue making the case to work in certain areas. In addition, stories teach about how things could have been done differently and provide valuable lessons from the field.

We are very clear in that we are a grant maker and not an implementer. We find because our interest is about the stories of change on the ground, the real stories of people on the ground get lost and one way we have tried to get around it, is to be part of the work that happens on the ground. We spend a lot of time in the field to try to get to that school, go to that community centre and those who have benefited from the organisations that we fund, the change into our institutional reports.

Mamo drew a distinction between reporting and storytelling by outlining the differences and uses of each format. She described reporting as more of a technical tool mainly used for accounting purposes that will often include data; whereas stories often reflect emotions and tend to differ from person to person. She stressed that although these two formats differ, it is important to link them as they tend to converge. “Stories can give a powerful account, conveying what we hope to achieve through technical reporting and about change and the impact we are trying to achieve”.

Mamo concluded by sharing pertinent lessons they have learnt as a funder about stories. They have learnt that the best stories are told by people on the ground and that impactful stories are often simple. As partners to development, funders and related organisations must be clear about their intentions with stories and must use these to build a narrative on the big picture.

### **Key learnings:**

- Always put people at the heart of the story.
- Listening is an important part of telling a story. Do not impose your approach on communities. “Solutions we try to provide and deliver, communities already know and deliver on”.
- Your story needs to be one that talks about change.

### **Speaker 3: Samm Marshall, Founder and Managing Director of BStyle Media**

Samm engaged delegates on “How to make ‘good news’ mainstream? How to package ‘stories for good’ for mainstream media and public consumption.” He described the journey that led him to establish his own organisation, Social TV, after several years in mainstream media as a journalist. Social TV is made up of journalists and they cover CSR content and it does 300 news stories across every media per month. They cover CSR stories because of the news value in them. Samm attributes their success to the ability to “package CSI content so that it is media content”.

He said “storytelling has earned its place as the most important tradition that we possess as humans”. He said that as embedded in humanity as storytelling is and as easy as it sounds, getting audiences is often hard. In his experience, “this sector struggles to articulate its value. Your work is not seen as news value. You have not found the gist of the story for the media to see it as newsworthy”. He said this was partly the reason that good news from this sector rarely featured in mainstream media.

He then outlined what he called “blind spots” that the sector needs to be aware of and address if they are to create a different and better experience with mainstream media. One of these is the general poor understanding of the media landscape by NPOs. He said the view that only ETV and eNCA make up the media is problematic, as there are many online and community radio stations that make up the landscape. CSR and EV practitioners need to access other media platforms like the SABC Foundation and niche channels like ‘taxi time’, as viable channels. He said that “if we understand the media landscape, then we can engage meaningfully. If you do not know why a platform exists, then you may misalign”. He outlined the following principles that CSR and EV practitioners need to factor in when working with the media.

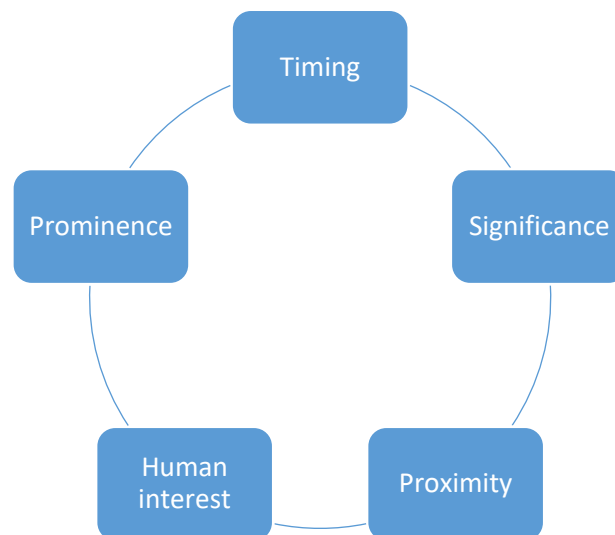


Figure 5: Key principles for working with the media

To mitigate this, he gave delegates practical tips on how to respond, such as through a content plan and understanding the inner workings of the broader local community radio and media channels. He said these tips should enable the social sector to effectively plug into media avenues. “You may not need to use a mainstream media channel and so it’s important to find the right platform for your content”. He also referred to what he termed ‘media darlings’, in reference to organisations and/or individuals who feature regularly in the media. He said those not on that list must know that they will “need to work extra hard to get content into mainstream media”.

He encouraged delegates to educate and empower themselves about media audiences as this will help them differentiate between passive and active listenership and audience rates. He said this will be a useful guide for the sector when it decides on possible partnerships with the media. He encouraged practitioners to develop story boards for events that show the value of their organisational mandate. He challenged delegates to not just think about having a budget for the media, but to have one for content. “Stories can drive loyalty and can bring about change and spark debate. I can guarantee you, whatever you are doing, it is changing someone’s life”. He said an investment in content development increases the chances of penetrating the media.

## Key learnings:

- To successfully navigate the media starts with understanding the media landscape.
- Do not just invest in the media, but also invest in content.
- Invest in understanding the broad media landscape, inclusive of community radio, print and online channels.

### 5.3. Breakaway session 2:

This breakaway was on 'Practical examples and tools for measuring employee volunteering'. The speakers in the session had direct experience of implementing measurement systems and using tools in their respective organisations. This session framed measurement differently from the traditional narrative of M&E as a technical construct, which tends to characterise measurement in negative terms. The view that the speakers concurred with was that this construct has inadvertently led to some in development work sometimes 'shunning' measuring.

Rose Kransdorff, the CEO of E-pap facilitated the session. The speakers were Rufaro Mudimu, the CEO of Enke – Make Your Mark and Bernie Dolley, the Founding Director of Ikhala Trust.

#### Speaker 1: Bernie Dolley, Founding Director of Ikhala Trust

Bernie framed her input on two issues, one on the volunteering culture and practice in South Africa and two on Ikhala Trust's journey in the realm of measurement. Her topic was "Implementing measurement in our organisation and lessons for Employee Volunteer Programmes"

She challenged delegates on their understanding of a culture of volunteering. "Is it only because there is a structured programme that encourages you to volunteer that employees volunteer? How do we create a culture of volunteering that cascades to my children and grandchildren?" In her view, volunteering is "either in your DNA or it isn't". She said although South Africa was not short of volunteering opportunities, she was concerned about volunteering programmes being overly structured and losing the essence of volunteering.

Bernie also pointed out some of the contradictions she has observed in the sector. One of these is the use of paid employees to volunteer in "communities that are often unstructured, seen as illiterate and under-resourced". In this model, these paid employees, once they complete the volunteer activity then leave communities for their comfortable homes. She said volunteering activities in communities instead offer NPOs and volunteers, opportunities to learn things like resilience and not the other way around.

Ikhala Trust's approach is to recognise that all humans have assets that must be unlocked. As a result, they do not see their role as about 'saving' someone or a community and so instead of asking "how do I save you?" they ask "how do I amplify what you are doing?" as they recognise the value of others. "When you look at me as a glass half empty then you look at me as someone who needs to be fixed".

In terms of evaluation, Bernie shared details of her own organisational experience of undergoing an evaluation led by an external party for a funder. In her own words, she said this process "destroyed my soul".

In her view, she felt that the evaluator 'was focusing on finding what was wrong'. Out of principle, she and the Ikhala Trust board pushed back on the M&E and evaluation despite the risk of losing the funder. She did this also on behalf of the communities she serves, acknowledging that she has a job and home etc.

Therefore, the intention of Ikhala Trust is to counter this negative experience of M&E and as a grant maker themselves, they choose to focus on the human and social assets of their partners, including communities. Their practice aligns with their belief that the most critical asset is the human asset, without which all else would be non-existent. They approach measurement by initiating facilitated conversations to establish a baseline. These conversations often unveil people's talents and assets, such as skills, within the teams and organisations.

So in terms of M&E, Ikhala Trust is deliberate about implementing an asset based approach, which intentionally supports the community in deciding for itself the important factors to be measured and their rating and prioritisation. Following this step, they then return to the community after three months to re-engage, even though they too recognise that this period is not adequate to see real transformation; but in this period, they often observe people's increased awareness of their abilities.

### **Key learnings:**

- "Big jargon (such as that of monitoring and evaluation) can sometimes keep people out of the conversation, because on the ground, jargon doesn't make a difference".
- Ikhala Trust has successfully applied the ABCD approach that sees all humans as having gifts and assets to develop an alternative, but equally meaningful M&E.
- It is acceptable sometimes to say 'no', as an NPO.

### **Speaker 2: Rufaro Mudimu, CEO of Enke – Make Your Mark**

Rufaro Mudimu, CEO of Enke- Make Your Mark presented on "Implementing measurement in our organisation and lessons for Employee Volunteer Programmes". She took attendees through Enke's approach to project model management and measurement. Rufaro shared details of their robust approach to measurement, focusing on the design process and output of impact measurement. Their approach is based on their understanding of their core functional area, Youth Leadership Development, which is complex.

Traditionally when discussing measurement, the focus has often been on activities and outputs such as the number of workshops and attendees of these. She admitted that sometimes "as NPOs, we think we need short term interventions, whereas the requirement is for multiple interventions, over time. The latter takes money and time". For Enke, they focus on three identified outcomes as they believe that output metrics are not sufficient. As a result, they have articulated a Theory of Change and a framework for each programme which unpacks activities and outputs but also identifies the key actions needed to achieve the specified outcomes.

Their approach when entering a new space, is to engage relevant and affected parties on the question of "what do you like about the programme? What are you tired of?". Enke does this as it "considers itself a learning organisation and acknowledges the difficulty of repeatedly seeing what you're not doing well". Rufaro then took delegates through her organisation's detailed measurement process, which includes both internal and external processes.

Some of their key measurement processes are as follows:

- For each programme, they map out the youth pathway based on the youth issue and reflect on their knowledge about being in this pathway.
- They create a framework of where they want to go and the pathways to get there.
- They do not do everything; instead they collaborate with others to make it happen.
- They use focus groups and other participatory methods based on the ABCD approach.
- They use a reflective process.
- Every three years, they review their measurement intentions, their progress towards their goals and whether (or not) they are 'twisting' their impact to 'fit' their desired impact.

- They deliberately measure shifts in the mindsets of attendees of their programmes to look into how non-cognitive skills ensure people’s success in the long term.

On this journey, Enke has learnt powerful lessons about M&E which they have applied to their own practice. One of these was on the amount of time it takes to do this and the lesson of “the importance of funding organisations and people to think”. This is something that Enke was able to secure for itself through a grant they received to conduct a design thinking process for programmes. Quantitative data is important, but she “encouraged delegates to remember that the stats are people. It’s people who are on the ground who are having that experience”. She challenged funders to think beyond just being financial partners. “Sometimes NPOs need your time, more than your money”. In terms of EV and measurement, “volunteers can’t be volunteering for volunteering sake. They’re looking for outcomes for their programmes”.

#### **Key learnings:**

- Sometimes in M&E, “we can get lost in jargon but it’s really about what we want to achieve”. M&E jargon can itself be problematic. It is important to ‘strip’ off the jargon.
- M&E is a process and not an event.
- M&E is much more than just quantitative data and sourcing stats; it is about people.
- It is important for funders to factor in ‘time to think’ for important processes.
- Rufaro agreed with Bernie that “NPOs can and should say no” to funding, if it does not resonate.

#### **5.4. Stream 2: Collaborating for Change**

The second plenary session was on “Collaborating for Change”. This topic has been a recurring one at the BPC platform. The BPC Community has continuously decried both the need for and challenges related to collaborations. Therefore collaboration has increasingly become a strategic theme of BPC, hence this panel.

This stream had two plenary panel discussions and no breakaways. The three speakers for the first plenary, in order of appearance were Keri-Leigh Paschal, Founder and Executive Director of Nation Builder, Dr Andrew Venter, CEO of the Wildlands Conservation and a senior associate with Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) and Ziaad Suleman, Director and COO at IBM South Africa. The topic they tackled was “Effective collaborations is about much more than having an MOU. How should collaboration be embedded for (social) change-making? How does one navigate it?” Yvette Nowell of FNB facilitated both panel discussions.

#### **Speaker 1: Keri-Leigh Paschal, Founder and Executive Director of Nation Builder**

Keri-Leigh presented on “Why our brand is invested in building collaborative practices. What we have actioned and what is its value?” She outlined the relationship between Nation Builder and Mergon, their parent company, and explained it was through this relationship that Nation Builder found itself active in the arenas of business and the social sector and in the process, developing a deep understanding of these sectors. In this context, they observed that each sector has “different dichotomies” with particular challenges and opportunities. Following this realisation, Nation Builder now works to create real change through collaborating, including cross-sectorally.

Keri-Leigh shared a few reasons that underpin their pursuit of collaboration. These are as follows:

- Collaborations create multiplied impact and serve to achieve each partners’ goals, even among direct competitors.
- Collaborations lead to multiplied impact across and within sectors.



- Collaborations enable organisations to solve complex problems which entities would not be able to solve on their own.
- Collaborations reduce chances of duplication and long-term costs. If companies and organisations work in silos, they risk incurring costly overheads, whereas through collaborations, these costs can be shared.

Nation Builder's approach is to produce and use knowledge material on collaborations, to inspire and equip, co-created with or produced by partners from different sectors. Keri-Leigh also touched on challenges that can derail collaborative efforts, such as discord in terms of visions; mistrust between NPOs; conflicts over marketing and branding issues; and CSI managers wanting sole credit for their brands.

Nation Builder, through this work, has identified three success factors for collaborations, namely:

- Selfless pursuit of a common goal. It is important to work with people who have similar goals. "We want to change our nation, that's the aim; it's not about brand recognition".
- Value each other's unique role and contribution. Nation Builder found that sometimes partners from different sectors can feel that their ideas and contributions are not valued equally, for example, corporates think they have to tell NPOs what to do and vice versa. In such cases, open and transparent dialogues between partners on needs and contributions are key.
- Go beyond conversations and use collaborations to co-create, make and develop together.

Keri-Leigh closed off by stressing that collaborations take time and in the short term, building them takes capacity and later on, it often may take less capacity. For instance, for collaborations to succeed, "someone must take responsibility for collating the discussions, extract what happened, distil it and articulate action points. Then those involved need to action things together and create new and beautiful things". A practice that has worked well is to have separate CEO and CSI manager meetings, as these groups have different priorities. Finally, Nation Builder's model involves allocating a portion of funding, to facilitate collaborations.

During the Q&A, Kerry-Leigh informed delegates about their latest effort, supported by their networks, to co-create products on collaborations which will be freely available to interested parties. She also spoke about their online self-assessment for the private sector, the results of which can be a revelation to those who undertake the assessment in terms of areas of excellence and those needing improvement. They have an online community that gives organisations access to all knowledge, tools and resources generated from collaborations. Finally, she said Nation Builder is currently working on an M&E framework.

#### **Key learnings:**

- There are many worthy reasons that make collaborations worth pursuing.
- Developing knowledge material on collaborations can strengthen the practice.
- Collaborations can also experience challenges, but these can be overcome with openness.
- Collaborations must involve conversations and actions.

#### **Speaker 2: Dr Andrew Venter, CEO of the Wildlands Conservation and a senior associate with CISL**

Dr Venter addressed delegates on "Why intra- and inter-collaborations are key for all sectors seeking to be impactful". He traced his organisation's collaboration journey to their relationship with Unilever, which involved EV and talent recruitment programmes. In these programmes, Wildlands would take these groups into the field several times per year, spending two days,

at a time. The focus was to work on Unilever funded projects and to use day two to take volunteers on a wilderness walk or other fun activities.

In 2004, the Wildlands' team spent time trying to come up with new ideas for the employee volunteers. One idea was to do a seed propagation workshop with a school, which they subsequently did.

They drove out to a school in the middle of nowhere at 09:00 on Saturday and found 300 kids there. Andrew and his team were surprised that the kids showed up on a Saturday. They were obviously poor and yet showed up at school on a Saturday. He wondered what the schools in the cities were doing wrong, where that was unlikely to happen.

They did the exercise, planted seeds, it was great and they went home, unsure about what the kids did for the rest of the day.

They followed up three weeks later and were shocked to find that most of the seeds had sprouted. Normally they didn't check up on these sorts of initiatives. They started to imagine if the poorest of the poor could feed and house themselves by growing indigenous trees, what else was possible. They then started Trees for Life, which was catalysed by EV.

Dr Venter pointed out that the "power to catalyse is there" but it is important for all partners to understand that, sadly in their case, not all their corporate partners did. Over time and since those days, they have joined hands with not only corporates but also with communities and government. From these collaborations, other projects have emerged, such as wastepreneurs and Wild Oceans; both projects are an opportunity to work on waste issues albeit in different ways.

As an organisation, they manage massive projects throughout the year focused on sustainable ways to deal with waste addictions while creating livelihoods for locals. This is in stark contrast to the approach of some corporates that still want to connect to causes only during disasters, such as floods. For the latter, disasters are often followed by calls from companies in search of opportunities to volunteer and respond in some way - a reaction that Dr Venter labels a "hero spend". He shared an account of a corporate that bought its employee volunteers branded buckets to collect trash, which they subsequently left on the beach once done and he pointed out the irony of this. He closed off by saying that despite the problems of this reactive approach, these once off responses continue "because the awareness pieces they generate are deemed useful".

#### **Key learnings:**

- The power to catalyse is there but all partners need to understand that.
- Corporates should try to avoid the hero spend where their CSI involvement is solely reactive to occurrences like natural disasters.
- Successful collaborations with communities and government are possible.

#### **Speaker 3: Ziaad Suleman, Director and COO at IBM South Africa**

Ziaad Suleman, the third speaker on this panel, shared insights of how corporates, like IBM, view collaborations. His topic was "Collaborating for value. How our brand has collaborated in line with our core business to create business and social value".

The key focus of Ziaad's presentation was on the need and significance to link collaboration efforts to the business imperative. He said each partner needs to ask critical questions, like:

- What is your value proposition, even as an NGO?

- There is also an internal value proposition: “Does your organisation respond to what clients are looking for?”
- Is my value proposition in terms of what I serve my customers every day serve them and the market and the country in general?

He challenged delegates to “see return on investment as a holistic phenomenon in terms of shareholder value, impact in society, maintaining staff, etc. It comes down to one thing that brings them all together. It doesn’t come down to just one of any of these, rather it’s cumulative”.

In his view, collaboration is necessitated by the recognition that “you can’t do everything yourself”, a realisation which then underpins the pursuit of collaborations as entities seek to create and do more. Ziaad gave two examples of effective collaborations, both of which involve CAF Southern Africa, where he serves as a board member. Firstly, he highlighted the collaboration between CAF Southern Africa and FirstRand on the BPC platform; a platform which exists to create opportunities to talk, engage and create meaningful discussions that will ultimately lead to meaningful contributions for the country. Secondly, the relationship between CAF Southern Africa and Sasol, where CAF manages the company’s payroll giving programme and matched giving. In the latter, CAF conducts the due-diligence of NPOs and identifies the impact achieved through the financial support of employees and the company. It also looks at how Sasol’s funds can be stretched for the best and biggest impact.

Ziaad detailed IBM’s approach to collaboration and said the company collaborates with NPOs to “solve real world problems”. Through these, IBM provides the value of their business to society. He also touched on the larger context of South Africa and the challenges it faces, such as the bleak economic outlook, the poor GDP, unemployment levels and he challenged delegates to ask themselves both as individuals and organisations, about their own contributions to address some of these social and economic challenges. Finally, he stressed the need to “collaborate with value. Collaborate for change and start doing that now”.

#### **Key learnings:**

- Collaboration efforts must be linked to the business imperative.
- Return on investment of collaborations must be seen as a holistic phenomenon in terms of shareholder value, impact in society and maintaining staff.
- Collaboration is necessitated by the recognition that “you can’t do everything yourself”. Collaborations allow us to create and generate more.

#### **5.5. Plenary 3: Showcasing existing innovative collaborative models in the sector. Creative solutions emerging from collaborations**

The second panel discussion moved from discussing the ‘logic and case’ of collaborating to the value created through collaborations. It also showcased some successful collaborations. The speakers on this panel were Kiera Emmons, Cultural Affairs Officer at the US Embassy; Luvuyo Madasa, Executive Director at Reimagine SA; Brenda Nkosi-Bakare, Head of Social Investing and Current Affairs at Sasol; and Jacendra Naidoo, Founder and Managing Director of Cash to Clothes Exchange.

#### **Speaker 1: Kiera Emmons, Cultural Affairs Officer, US Embassy**

Kiera engaged delegates on “What is the US Embassy’s (Public Affairs division) approach to collaborations? How have you, through collaborations been able to advance and expand your work?” Kiera talked about the work of the Embassy in the context of collaborations. The Embassy is a process-driven and goal-focused institution and its approach to collaboration is to look for organisations that align with them. She said people often think of the US Embassy

as a big monolith and admitted that as an institution, they can be hard to work with. She explained it as follows:

In particular small organisations can be scared of working with us. We have a lot of rules. But we focus on process. We can seem obsessed with results which might seem superficial and we acknowledge we're imperfect. Our goals, forms, etc. actually really set us up for success. We don't just do what we need to do but also build other organisations at the same time.

She said that in their environment, people are key to getting things to work because they tend to take on a relational approach to collaboration instead of a transactional one. "We take risks, we don't take guesses and we can go around the rules in ways that makes things work".

In their collaboration approach, a key and non-negotiable consideration is whether or not there is goal alignment. "We have to be paddling in the right directions, even if our paddles are different". As the US Embassy, when they partner on or fund projects, they want success not just for themselves, but for also for their partner organisation. Their rationale for collaborating on programmes comes from recognising that they cannot do everything, themselves. Kiera stressed this point by sharing an example from her previous posting in Guatemala, which shows the consequences of trying to do things alone.

There, the Embassy started by looking at the ecosystem and tried several things, one after the other, and failed over and over. They then finally found an organisation they aligned with in terms of their goals and now that organisation is doing incredible things and flourishing because of the partnership.

One of the lessons learnt is that "sometimes in collaboration, the main thing to be accomplished is to understand the ecosystem".

#### **Key learnings:**

- Goal alignment is key when making decisions about collaborations.
- A relational approach as opposed to a transactional one yields the best results for collaborations
- Organisations and their structures or ways of working must not be barriers to collaborations.
- As a partner in a collaboration, want success not just for yourself, but for your partner too.

#### **Speaker 2: Luvuyo Madasa, Executive Director, Reimagine SA**

Reimagine SA is guided by the concept of Ubuntu in its work, including on deciding when, how and why they collaborate. Luvuyo spoke on "What is Reimagine SA's approach to collaborations? How have you, through collaborations, been able to advance and expand your work?" He began his address by inviting delegates to close their eyes and to (re)imagine the South Africa of their dreams and he then introduced "Reimagine SA", the organisation he leads as Executive Director to the delegates.

He said the organisation was borne out of deep introspection about the country's journey since 1994. During this introspection, they recognised that a lot still needs to be done and that "we haven't dealt with the emotional trauma of our country's past". At Reimagine SA they try to focus on this by making it "front and centre" and convening courageous conversations around it. Their base question is what would be possible if Ubuntu was placed at the centre of our being and was used to find African solutions to African problems while remaining relevant globally?

He showed delegates a visual depiction of the jarring state of inequality in South Africa, in its depiction of the way South Africans have lived and many still continue to live. "Some of us

think we'll find answers whilst sitting in this room in Wanderers". Reimagine SA's interest is in the insights the image awakens. He told delegates that to see a true representation of South Africa, then they must "look out over their high walls at 04:00 and see the domestic workers who travel to our homes in the suburbs, so that we can attend such conferences". On collaboration, he encouraged delegates to critique the dominant thinking about collaborations.

What does it look like to stop perpetuating being isolated? We talk collaboration but we will be scrambling to FirstRand and forget many people in the process.

What does it take to be intentional, to hold onto a vision of a reimagined SA and have the conversation? What would it take to be intentional in your organisation to commit to achieving that vision? How can we have conversations that put people and communities at epicentre?

He called on delegates to convene around tables as partners to discuss the work required to achieve this reimagined country and bring to life the dream of many on the ground. He also asked that at these gatherings, people must reflect on whether there is capacity "... to have space for the needs of the people on the right hand side of the image", in other words those who bear the brunt of inequality. The reality is that those "on the left are intimidated about the challenges they see on the 'right-hand side' and do not even know where to begin to address these issues".

Going forward, Luvuyo challenged corporates to rethink the channelling of funding to PR and branding functions, and asked that they, instead, fund actual projects. He said more could be achieved if different organisations submitted joint funding pitches instead of doing it separately.

Key learnings:

- Individuals/organisations must reimagine South Africa and use this to drive the work.
- All must engage with the realities of the past, like inequality. Organisations must not avoid these.
- To collaborate meaningfully requires us to challenge the dominant thinking.

### **Speaker 3: Jacendra (Jesse) Naidoo, Founder and Managing Director of Cash to Clothes Exchanges.**

The journey of Cash to Clothes Exchange shows the true possibilities when collaborations are effective and done with the right people and the right causes. Jesse took delegates on their collaboration journey as Cash to Clothes Exchanges and shared lessons from that experience. His topic was "Creative solutions that have emerged from forging strategic collaborations".

Jesse declared that "it was only through collaborating with foundation schools that they were able to become the organisation they are now". He outlined their working model and the processes by which they successfully turned clothing into creative toys and created an income stream for several stakeholders in its chain.

He gave examples of current collaborations and the value these have generated, mentioning specifically Afrika Tikken and Rise Against Hunger and other corporates. He said through these collaborations, both Cash to Clothes and partners, have achieved much success spanning many areas and with multiple beneficiaries along the way.

Jesse then shared some key lessons garnered from collaborations:

- Partners need to be honest about their intentions. "Let's save ourselves time and effort and be honest about if we're on the same page".

- As an organisation, they quickly realised that collaborations came with lower risks and more impact. “Through this we can get a lot more information and reduce speed and time.”
- Leaders of organisations must know collaborations come with responsibility. In their case, he acknowledged that he was the barrier. “It’s important to be able to put our ego down, even if you’re the CEO”.

**Speaker 4: Brenda Nkosi-Bakare, Head of Social Investing and Current Affairs, Sasol**

Employee volunteering involves corporates and their employees as key partners. The fact that this biennial BPC Employee Volunteering Conference brings together practitioners from the NPO and business sectors highlights the role of collaborations in driving EV. Brenda provided delegates with insights on collaboration from Sasol. Her topic was “Sasol’s philosophy to collaborating for the present and the future!”

Brenda stated that “EV is central to the way in which Sasol delivers its social value to communities”. Sasol enables employees to catalyse change within communities where they operate. Their approach to delivering social value is collaborative and Brenda gave their relationship with CAF Southern Africa as an example. For instance, during Cyclone Idai, CAF enabled Sasol and their employees to donate R112 000 to the rescue services during the disaster.

Sasol drives skills-based volunteering through its Sasol Forgood platform. Brenda shared details of their EV Framework and the principles that apply to match funding, volunteer hours per employee, amongst others. At a high level, Sasol spent R7.5 million just on EV, in the last year.

Brenda also detailed Sasol’s approach to working with communities where they have operations. As a company, they ensure that they also partner with civil society groups and government. She also stressed that in as much as they focus on the community, the company also clearly articulates its own needs about projects. “We mustn’t fool each other. We are a corporate and we need to make money to contribute to government taxes, etc.”

As a case of collaboration, Sasol recently made an agreement (which was at the time of the conference, in the process of being signed) with a community in Mozambique. The agreement came from community engagement, not with community leaders but with community members themselves where Sasol shared their budget and invited the community to advise on how it could be used. They also engaged with local government. In that community, there is no other corporate other than Sasol. Sasol has now confirmed an agreement for a five- to ten-year period based on what Sasol, the community and the government believe can be done jointly.

**Key learnings:**

- EV enables employees to be catalysts in the communities where they operate.
- Corporates and brands must be very intentional about collaborating with communities.
- Corporates must be transparent about their own expectations of collaborations.

**5.6. Stream 3: The future of volunteering**

The final stream of the 2019 BPC Employee Volunteering Conference was themed “The future of volunteering”. The stream focused on the changes in the world and on the likely implications for volunteering. Some of these are already manifesting such as in the changes in the profile of volunteers, on the emerging new channels for volunteering and in the evolution of volunteer causes.

The plenary theme was: “What does the future and its character look like? What is the place of EV in that future? How will EV need to evolve?” The speakers were Chris Venter, CEO of

Benevity; Dr Ahmed Bahm, International Disaster Coordinator and Mission Team Leader of Gift of the Givers; and Agnetta Nyalita, Regional Representative of IAVE Africa. The session facilitator was Yvette Nowell.

### **Speaker 1: Chris Venter, CEO of Benevity**

Chris spoke on “What are the emerging broader trends in corporate ‘goodness’ and employee volunteering?”. After introducing Benevity and its work, he painted a picture for delegates about the changes in the world and how these are influencing the volunteering landscape across the globe.

He remarked that “we live in a for-purpose economy and in this economy, consumers are starting to choose with their wallets”. In this type of economy, employees and top talents are choosing who they want to work with and for. In terms of how these changes impact corporates, he said increasingly employees and clients expect that the “corporate purpose be a thread that runs through the entire business and not just to be led by the CEO”. The significance of this is evidenced by the elevation and increase in the number of Fortune500 companies that are changing their mission statement as they make it more inclusive and talk about being more ethical.

In this kind of economy, the future will be technology-driven and will lead to products and services going online and being done wherever, whenever and by anyone. Therefore, for corporates to meet the expectations of tech-literate and savvy employees, they will need to invest in EV programmes and re-engineer them in line with these technological developments. For companies, technology will, amongst others, make it much easier to pull and analyse data on employees’ preferences and desires, and this level of understanding will be critical in structuring EVPs going forward. In this environment, corporates will need to know that in that future “it should be as easy for an employee to find a volunteer opportunity as it is for them to find a car”. He also shared that the current data already shows that EVPs will remain important in this economy as employees that participate in EV and giving programmes are also the ones most likely to stay longer in companies.

Finally, Chris reminded delegates that “the importance of the corporate in the community is growing. The power of the corporate is growing and it’s delivering a return on investment for businesses. Make your leaders understand that these programmes are about much more than your annual report and bottom line”.

#### **Key learnings:**

- The world economy has changed the way consumers and employees think of themselves and their engagement with businesses.
- A corporate’s core purpose must be integrated in the entire business, beyond the CEO. Accordingly, corporate mission statements are becoming more inclusive and ethics-oriented.
- Technology will drive the future and the design of EVPs must reflect this.
- The design of EVPs must speak to all generations and be relevant to all types of employees and the same for the technology in use. “If as a corporate or NPO, you are not able to provide an inclusive programme, then you will lose some of the volunteers”.

### **Speaker 2: Dr Ahmed Bahm, International Disaster Coordinator and Mission Team Leader with Gift of the Givers**

Dr Bahm presented on their work conducted all over the world and their approach to working with volunteers, who are the backbone of the organisational work in the field. Dr Bahm’s topic was “National disasters and volunteering: What Gift of the Givers is seeing on the ground in respect of volunteer efforts and the involvement of corporates”.

He gave the audience a historical background on the Gift of the Givers Foundation and its work. It has been in existence for 27 years and at inception, it focused mainly on disaster

relief and management and short-term relief. It then moved on to do more sustainable relief and presently also conducts sustainability projects. The South African-based organisation, also has a regional presence, including an international presence. Gift of the Givers also works with government. Their values are responsiveness, respect, transparency, dependability and fairness.

Since its establishment, Gift of the Givers has worked with different stakeholders, including beneficiaries, donors, partners, media, volunteers and general public. In terms of volunteers, their approach is that it is “important for Africa to develop its own solutions to humanitarian and natural disasters”. The main thing they look for when recruiting and receiving volunteers, is passion for the work that they do as an organisation.

### **Key learnings:**

- EV is the backbone of the work of the Gift of the Givers.
- Passion is a key criterion for recruitment of volunteers.
- Working collaboratively is necessary in this area of work.

### **Speaker 3: Agnetta Nyalita, Regional Representative, IAVE Africa**

The International Association of Volunteer Efforts (IAVE) is a global organisation that works to drive corporate volunteering. On their website, they articulate their mission as follows:

IAVE exists to promote, strengthen and celebrate volunteering in all of the myriad ways it happens throughout the world. With members in 70+ countries, we are the connective tissue of a global network of leaders of volunteering, NGOs, businesses and volunteer centres that share a belief in the power of volunteers to make a significant strategic contribution to resolving the world’s most pressing problems<sup>3</sup>

Agnetta topic was “Volunteering (including employee volunteering) trends and developments in Africa. Important take outs for employee volunteering.”

Agnetta located her topic on the African perspective on volunteerism. She said that generally in Africa, volunteering has mostly been traditional and that EV is relatively new. “One of the things we must recognise is that we have had volunteering for a long time, but have not been able to recognise its role in society and we have not been able to quantify it in terms of GDP or its economic value in the economy”. This is the reason that Kenya chose to invest and to research the economic value of volunteering in GDP. She said that Africa has seen an increase of CSR and CSI alongside traditional volunteering.

In terms of the emergence of volunteering, Agnetta noted that it was necessary to understand the applicable cultures of the different geographical regions and communities where volunteerism occurs. She argued that the framing of the different geographical and cultural contexts was important and necessary as each region has its own context, with direct implications for the practice of volunteering. She characterised each region as follows: Northern: religious; eastern: people-led (CSOs); southern: donor-led/external; central: traditional; and western: government-led. She said for one to understand volunteering in Africa, one “will need to understand the origins of volunteering in that particular culture. If you do not respect culture and religion in a certain region of the world, then your programmes will fail”.

Agnetta also briefly touched on the participation of government in the volunteering movement. In Kenya, her home country, stakeholders in the volunteering movement include government, corporates and NPOs. Currently, the Kenyan government is in the process of developing a National Volunteerism Policy and National Volunteerism Act. It is doing this in

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<sup>3</sup> IAVE. [www.iave.org/about-iave/](http://www.iave.org/about-iave/) Accessed on 31 October 2019. Our Mission



partnership with civil society, international organisations, embassies and corporates in the voluntary sector.

She cautioned though, that as welcomed as government's involvement and participation is, this may bring possible red flags. The three she mentioned were of government possibly interfering or developing laws that may possibly hinder volunteering in the long term, and the possibility of unhealthy competition developing between sectors.

In conclusion, she gave a few, but pertinent takeaways. She encouraged EV practitioners to think about the generation of employees (generation X, Y, Z) they engage and also that of the beneficiaries. She introduced delegates to reverse mentoring which refers to a process whereby those referred to as beneficiaries help to mentor employee volunteers. In reverse mentoring, "you are inspired by those you think of as beneficiaries. This may help corporates to change their programmes". She also encouraged EV practitioners to think about the sustainability of EV projects and for corporates to use EV to motivate employees. Finally, she encouraged delegates to access IAVE's extensive research on corporate volunteering. She stressed the importance of collaboration and called on corporates to do more of it. Her parting shot was that "our shortcoming is that we want to own our space; let us open up and through that we can achieve a lot and have an impact".

### **Key learnings:**

- Volunteering has been integral to life in Africa, but it is seldom counted and, therefore, has not been factored into GDP calculations.
- Government can be an active stakeholder in the EV movement, just like they are in Kenya.
- Implementers of EV in Africa must understand the dominant cultural context in each region.

### **5.7. Breakaway 1: Disruption and innovative developments in employee volunteering and beyond**

This breakaway analysed the likely impact of technology on (employee) volunteering. The topic of this breakaway was "Disruption and innovative developments in employee volunteering and beyond". The intention was to get delegates to think of ways to apply innovation, disruption and technology in social initiatives, including in employee volunteering. Technology is a trend that has been identified by IAVE as key in corporate volunteering.

Three exciting speakers spoke about their direct experiences of driving social innovation and disruption in their work, including in EV. The speakers were Charlene Lackay of MomentumMetropolitan; Reginald Botha of MashUp; and Claire Reed of Reel Gardening. Jasmine Adams facilitated this session.

#### **Speaker 1: Charlene Lackay, CSI Manager, MomentumMetropolitan**

Charlene addressed delegates on "How are MM thinking and integrating technology in their employee volunteering programme?" She reflected on the kind of EV they implemented, initially and said their EV was "largely a manual event, with sign-ups. It was a very manual, labour intensive and time consuming process". Their first foray into technology as a brand, started when they signed up with forgood. This led to them changing their method of interacting with employees and ultimately, improved their EV. The platform made them "more client-centric and enhanced the client experience and allowed employees to choose their own organisations". In addition, the company improved its accountability and became more transparent in its management of EV.

Through their forgood platform, the company has successfully automated their EV awards process. By using a technology platform, they challenged the perception that everything in volunteering should be face-to-face and personal. They have also learnt that EV can be managed remotely.

Charlene explained their journey in this way

With our service providers, we tried out new things and created an opportunity to put our employees in the shoes of the NPOs. It was the most incredible experience and the feedback from the employees was amazing. I received feedback from one employee who said the experience made them reconnect to the company (NPO Business Challenge).

Charlene told delegates that “it is important not to see innovation as just technology”, but to see it as an enabler. “Technology has allowed us to be more than just about EV; we can use it to procure services, we can use it to tell stories, identify and source these. It has helped them as a company to have more data and to spark new and different and targeted conversations about that data”. In this process, they have learnt that innovation must be integrated into their work; it is about engaging in different ways and using different tools. Although she acknowledged the importance of technology, she also cautioned about reducing technology, in other words to see it as “just an app”.

In conversation with the audience, Charlene confirmed that through technology, remote volunteering became possible. She gave examples of skilled staff who, through technology, have been enabled to make an immense contribution by volunteering remotely. She challenged EV practitioners to think about the dominant attitudes that frame their EV programmes and about their views of the different types of volunteering. She called on CSI and EVP managers to think about whether as leaders in this realm do not, inadvertently or implicitly “look down on those who choose not to go out? Do we then through these attitudes, inadvertently discourage the uptake of remote volunteering?” This discussion moved to the experience of different generations of technology, especially as the common view is of an older generation that is resistant to technology. She responded by saying that employees’ response to technology cannot be separated from the company culture that introduces the use of technology. In her view, it is not just an issue of unwillingness. “There isn’t an unwillingness to change behaviour. It is important to show people what can be done and in that way we can change behaviour. When you show people the impact, then you can entice people to this thing differently”.

#### **Key learnings:**

- Innovation is about much more than just technology and/or a technology app.
- Technology has impacted the implementation of EV by broadening the possibilities.
- The use of technology offers certain benefits to the implementation of EVs.

#### **Speaker 2: Regi Botha, Founder of MashUp**

Regi unpacked his own journey into social innovation and used it to challenge practitioners about their thinking and implementation of employee volunteering.

Regi introduced Westbury as being like the Cape Flats of Cape Town. He titled his address “When the buses left” and traced his title to a time when the Westbury community used to witness busloads of corporate volunteers driving into the community, with donations. He said when those buses left (that is, stopped coming to the community) they left a void in the community. In his words, “when the buses leave, they leave behind dreams and people’s hopes”. So when the buses left, the community needed to find a way to fill the void.

In his experience, innovation has nothing to do with technology. His view is that “technology is the one word that alienates us because as soon as you use it, people in the NPO space are scared and they run off”. He explained innovation as being about disruption of “the simple things that we are used to doing.” This thinking led him to establish the Westbury Youth Centre, which he said he initially formed to “keep my kids alive”. Ultimately, the centre changed and it became an economic inclusion hub through an organic process which began when local youths who had trained at the centre, would not leave “and so we kept them and

helped them start their businesses. The Westbury Youth Centre was then recognised by a regional organisation that saw our work as innovation". As a result of this, today the centre's trajectory has changed primarily because of how they have reframed their work.

In terms of EV, Regi stated that "people connect to people, not to walls or paint". He said that contrary to the common narrative, "communities do not need saviours, they need partners". He said that perhaps one of the reasons that leads to buses leaving is that "poverty is sickening and that sometimes, even I stay away for days and so no one expects corporates to send the buses in to either give or get healing".

Corporations must heal their people. They must send people who are complete and healed. We, as communities, cannot heal broken people. The problem is so big and you need to innovate so that we can do this thing together.

If we do not get volunteers, we will volunteer. We don't wait for corporates to volunteer and to fix our community. We do it ourselves. We fix our community ourselves.

Regi called on EV practitioners to introspect about their own misconceptions, such as the one about communities needing money from corporates to transform their lives. In reality, he said communities want to be taught how to make their own money, instead of just being given money as the latter sees corporates throw money at the problem, a response which is not a solution. He added that even when corporates decide to throw people at the problem, in the form of employee volunteers that, too, fails as a solution. He reiterated that in today's world, employee volunteers need not be seen as they can still be impactful while working behind the scenes.

#### **Key learnings:**

- Corporates and NPOs have a responsibility to introspect about the kind of EV they run.
- Innovation has got nothing to do with technology.
- Communities are not powerless; corporates and volunteers are also not community saviours.

#### **Speaker 3: Claire Reid, Founder and CEO of Reel Gardening**

Claire kicked off her presentation by tracing her own journey into social entrepreneurship and disruption, which culminated in the formation Reel Gardening as a social enterprise in 2009. She shared lessons they learnt which ultimately led them to develop a more innovative operating model.

Early on, Reel Gardening created a train the trainer programme to train community members to drive the garden revolution. This was to feed into the company's vision of rolling out large gardens at schools in communities. Their decision was based on the logic that training a local person will help alleviate capacity constraints at the schools. Despite this approach and partnering with the community worker's programme to pursue this vision, the efforts failed and the identified problem remained unsolved.

This compelled them to return to explore other innovative ways of solving this problem. During this period, they explored how, through their model, they could capacitate more people to implement their plan without formally employing them. They also tapped into the locals, including youths and in this process received useful feedback, about perceptions of food gardens.

It was after this extensive review that Reel Gardening digitised their train the trainer model and presented it, for a fee. This was after initially offering it for free and finding that people were not completing the course. Their vision was to create gardens anywhere and this led to the idea of a portable garden emerging. They supplemented the online course with

workbooks for teachers and learners and also created a planting revolution app to provide practical tips on the management of the garden. Reel Gardening would on a weekly basis, upload a training video. “Through working digitally, and through the digital train the trainer programme and people, we have started to see the problem being solved”. Since activating this model, the schools and teachers are happy and some schools have even initiated competitions based on this.

#### **Key learnings:**

- Community has social wealth.
- Be open to rethink your model, based on feedback from the environment and community.
- Technology allowed the company to digitise its processes.

#### **5.8. Breakaway 2: Broadening and growing EV for the future**

This final breakaway focused on what is the tactical and operational issues of running and managing an EVP, with a focus on recruiting, retaining and motivating volunteers. The speakers were from organisations that either run volunteer programmes or use international volunteers in their delivery model. The panellists were from JAM International, Brownie Points and from Australian Volunteers for International Development. Marlene Ogawa, facilitated this discussion.

#### **Speaker 1: Kelvin Glen, Vice President of Programmes, Joint Aid Management (JAM)**

Kelvin spoke from the perspective of JAM being a repeat recipient of both local and international volunteer individuals and groups. His topic was “How should international NGOs that use volunteers, approach and grow their pipeline of volunteers? What are the key lessons for Employee Volunteer Programmes?”

Kelvin began his input by sharing two case studies from JAM that demonstrate the power of EV. These cases offer useful insights about issues to be considered when managing EVPs. He acknowledged that “JAM could not achieve what they do, which is feeding 1.4 million children daily, without donors and volunteers”. This signifies the contribution that volunteers have had on their organisation and others that deal with different causes and which are differently resourced.

The first case he shared is linked to Cyclone Idai that hit Mozambique in March 2019. As part of its disaster response, JAM in Mozambique was able to call on international volunteers for support. Kelvin explained that the volunteers that came out, came into a challenging working environment in a disaster hit area. He said these international volunteers were key to JAM’s ability to successfully distribute much-needed food following this disaster.

In this case, the volunteers were seven young males from Australia who didn’t know each other. They came from halfway across the world to support. It’s hard work, but can be fun as well. They were working in deep rural areas. There weren’t facilities so they had to camp in these areas. They had a huge responsibility of feeding 180 000 people in 20 hour shifts. JAM needed to keep them motivated and inspired. They conducted regular debriefing sessions to assist the volunteers to integrate their experience.

Kelvin highlighted some key elements that must be integrated into EV programmes. The first is that the organisation receiving volunteers must be ready and prepared. He then highlighted other elements, such as 1) articulating clear roles for volunteers on site; 2) developing policies and procedures for volunteers; 3) having guidelines on volunteers’ conduct while on site, including conduct towards locals and beneficiaries and 4) enabling and supporting volunteers to get the most out of the experience. He said the elements are important in cases where the volunteers come from first world countries where, in all likelihood, there personal and cultural dynamics.

Kelvin shared a second case study of another volunteer approach. In this case, international volunteers fundraised for a year for the building of an ECD centre. JAM then invited these volunteers to South Africa for a two-week period and placed them in the community where the ECD centre was situated and allowed them to participate in finalising the building, and on completion, to celebrate the achievement. In this project, the volunteers worked with the principal ('often mama') in the community who runs the ECD facility.

One of the lessons JAM observed is that "volunteers go through major mindset shifts when coming out for the two weeks". Even though some volunteers may want to stay in a five star hotel, JAM makes it clear that their aim is to "work with volunteers, rather than to serve their needs". This approach has seen JAM "move from being volunteer-focused (doing what the volunteers want) to being beneficiary-focused". Kelvin admitted that "it's been a big journey for the organisation to make this shift, but its working as volunteers go away being engaged and inspired".

In this second case, JAM sees its responsibility as making the volunteers' time in SA special and being respectful of their contribution to the fundraising and building of the ECD facility. After completing the volunteer experience and returning home, JAM stays engaged with the volunteers so that they can become ambassadors for JAM.

In closing, Kelvin noted that "volunteering is an untouched commodity and that it's our responsibility in the sector, both corporates and NPOs to unlock the value". He suggested that organisations avoid giving their volunteers a t-shirt and throwing them in the deep end. "The volunteers need to know why they are there, and their rights and responsibilities to themselves and the beneficiary (whether the beneficiary is a tree, a dog or a human). Volunteers can become your best ambassadors". He encouraged the audience to "look deep inside and reflect on whether we are doing the right thing. He suggested that different sectors look at doing joint programmes as it is very seldom to find two corporates collaborating on a project. Two NPOs could test working together in a specific community with a particular corporate". Finally, he said "the important thing is that they leave a legacy" and the role of practitioners is to support and enable that.

### **Key learnings:**

- Organisations must have a clear strategy to manage EVPs and volunteering activations.
- Prioritise beneficiaries during volunteer projects and make volunteers aware of this position.
- Organisations should stay engaged and connected to volunteers, during and after EV events.

### **Speaker 2: Pascale Marshall, CEO and Co-founder of Brownie Points**

Pascale focused on online platforms and talked about how these can move volunteering to the next level. She said that Brownie Points is finding ways to utilise technology in EV, but their intention is to broaden EV with people and not technology. She reinforced that EV is primarily about people and not about technology.

Historically, she said that volunteering began in a military context, with an individual who had passion and who successfully involved others, to build a community. The only difference between the volunteering then and now, is that in the latter "we want to formalise and measure it to justify it to business and share with the world and determine its compliance". Today, online platforms have grown because emails and spreadsheets are no longer enough.

She acknowledged that technology offers immense benefits. In her words, "technology has potential for 'insane goodness', as it can reach thousands, if not millions of people in an instant. Technology is expanding what we can and already do". She shared global examples where technology is being used to solve global challenges. In terms of apps that EVPs can

plug into, these are Facebook, Google and locally, Brownie Points, forgood, Social Collective, Shoprite Flagship, to name a few. But as useful as technology is, Pascale reminded delegates that “technology is only as good as the people”.

The future of volunteering is in understanding the ‘why’ people choose to volunteer, whether in the present or in the future. She said the ‘why’ will also drive volunteering in the workplace. She argued that to increase volunteering, we must increase hope. “Hope is an emotion that makes people feel in control and that affects their fate and increases their autonomy. It gives the impression that as people, we are working towards something that is valuable and with people who have a similar intention”.

We’re asking people to voluntarily go out of their way, take time off from work and family, and put themselves in dangerous situations. Why would people do that? Why do people go out of their way? Volunteering is based on hope. Anxiety and depression are at an all-time high and are symptoms of a lack of hope.

In addition to the ‘why’ of volunteering, they also think about the ‘how’ of it. In terms of technology and volunteering, it is necessary to find the balance between engagement and compliance. “What’s valuable is that an online system can be automated and produce data that helps to market the value of volunteering and also share it with the world”. Technology also offers employers and employees a platform to share stories of EV success and give feedback.

Pascale also spoke on challenges that come with technology, like losing the emotional side. “Technology can lose the magic. That’s the biggest challenge of an online platform.” She flagged access to technology and the reality that in South Africa access to the internet remains limited. She said EV practitioners must remember this and always strive to use open and accessible channels.

Ultimately, she said, as an organisation, they learnt the importance of trusting and letting go of control. She called on the EV community to “focus on increasing hope, technology will slot in. Focus on the why and then measure what happens. Maybe one day we’ll have a social economy not so focused on GDP”.

It’s okay to paint a classroom. Give NGOs money. Some people are more shy about skills-based volunteering. It needs to be up to the volunteers and needs to be safe.

### **Key learnings:**

- Meaningful EV is not all about technology.
- It is important and necessary to understand the ‘why’ of the volunteering decision.
- Technology offers benefits, but also comes with costs.

### **Speaker 3: Wendell Westley, Programme Manager, SA Australian Volunteers for International Development**

Wendell introduced SA Australian Volunteers for International Development to the audience. It is a partner-led organisation that matches the skills of Australian volunteers with NPO needs. “One of their missions is to promote volunteering by keeping it in the front of people’s minds”. As an organisation, they do everything necessary to meet the needs of their partner organisations.

They aim to be responsive to the needs of their volunteers, partners and mandate. As a responsive organisation, they have a flexible approach that allows volunteers to volunteer for periods of between five and 12 months as they find that most people find it hard to commit to long-term volunteering and having flexible timelines, assists. Shorter periods allow the organisation to maintain a pipeline that allows more people to come through the system.

Furthermore, they constantly refine their approach and explore different models so as to avoid being too comfortable with a specific way of doing things, with Wendell saying that “just because one way has worked doesn’t mean other ways aren’t better”.

Since volunteering is their core mandate, Wendell outlined some of their actions of their programme, based on lessons learnt.

- **Communication:** It is important to keep communication relevant and up-to-date. People have different preferences in what they want to read and how they want to receive it.
- **Diversity:** The more people you appeal to, the broader the pool of volunteers available to you. Look at different options of how skills could apply. Be creative and diversify your offerings and make sure it’s something people are interested in doing.
- **Incorporate feedback:** It is important to listen to what organisations are saying, and to reflect and incorporate their feedback adequately.
- **Commitment:** As an organisation, they know the time it takes for volunteers to commit for long-term volunteering. They respect this and give them the necessary recognition.

### **Key learnings:**

- Be responsive to the needs of the volunteers.
- Make time to review the model and/or processes relating to managing volunteers and adjust accordingly.
- Implement the lessons you learn as you manage EVs.

### **In conversation with the audience:**

Attendees wanted more discussion on platforms that can be used to market volunteering offers or needs and activate volunteer campaigns. Panellists encouraged practitioners to use platforms that have already been built as opposed to initiating new ones.

The discussion also touched on targeting volunteers correctly. Part of the response was to encourage delegates to identify and use communication channels that are commonly used by the target audience, for example, one generation will prefer WhatsApp instead of email. Another panellist suggested that EV practitioners use campaign seasons as an opportunity to open communication with their communications department and thus build more meaningful engagements internally. In this way, EV managers would be challenging their communications department to think differently about communicating volunteering campaigns.

The communications department must volunteer to see the challenges and get involved in helping you draft your communication for different groups in the company. Your responsibility is to educate them (the communications department). Get them educated and passionate. If they’re not, they’re not going to send it out. But then you’re doing a disservice to your campaign, the end beneficiaries and your team.

Other practical advice given to delegates was that they do three good campaigns rather than 12 half-hearted ones, to share evidence of volunteer facts, localise volunteer activations, for example, by doing it in the canteen or get champions and heads of departments to help sign people up and do storytelling. A conference delegate concurred with this and said “in our organisation we use champions (people passionate about CSI in each of our business units) to drive volunteering. It helps if you have champions when you have 5 000 people in your company”.

## 6. KEY AND RECURRING THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE

### **Theme 1: Corporate volunteering is much more than its name (volunteering) suggests**

Different speakers in different ways stressed that EV should not only be just a feel good activity and instead should be seen as contributing something real and substantial to the broader transformational imperative of South Africa. This was the central idea of Prof William Gumede's opening address at this fourth Beyond Painting Classrooms Employee Volunteering Conference.

This underlying message of 'volunteering as being much more' was then carried through the rest of the conference, by other speakers like Michael Mapstone, Dr Bheki Moyo and Aarathi Krishnah talking about volunteering 1) being part of a much broader giving culture that is cultivated globally and that is on the rise, 2) contributing to the transformation of individuals, communities and societies and 3) having the capacity to address some pressing socio-economic challenges such as poverty, inequality, weak social cohesion, vulnerability, amongst others.

### **Theme 2: Our approach to thinking and engaging with the media**

The entire breakaway on Impactful Storytelling and the address by John Perlman from Kaya FM, tackled misconceptions about the social sector's interaction with mainstream media. Speakers who addressed this topic, agreed that before NPOs and corporates pursue the front page for their stories, they should spend time doing a few critical things, namely:

- get to understand the media landscape and articulate their media need;
- ask themselves why their stories deserve a front cover or a slot on mainstream media;
- rethink their strategy and engage the media by creating content that is news worthy; and
- link their work and news content to current socio-economic challenges facing the country, so that social initiatives are reflective of the current national reality.

John's presentation offered one of the most substantial insights in respect of the media as he addressed the audience on "How can we get the media to cover more often and more fully the excellent and important work we are doing? He began by asking delegates a question of his own, which was "Why do you want media coverage in the first place?" He proceeded to provide two possible responses to this question.

First, do you just want to be acknowledged in the public eye? Do you need to justify the expenditure of time and money to those who hold the purse in your corporation? Or in the case of NGOs, are you under pressure to give your contributors something in return for their generous support? Maybe you want to make yourselves feel good about what you have done because the media moment acts as a round of applause for your work, proof that there is value in what you did. There is nothing wrong with that.

And then there is another possible answer. Yes, you do want the publicity. But there is something else, something bigger worth considering. To what extent do you consider yourselves to be social activists?

He said that practitioners need to remember that CSI ultimately is rooted in the challenges and policy choices that the country faces. These challenges ultimately determine the decision that gets made about the type of cause to engage, whether its early childhood development or waste recycling. He said these decisions are not neutral choices, but represent opinions about what is wrong and what needs fixing.



Based on this logic, he advised practitioners to engage the media from the perspective that their “opinion (on their chosen cause) matters just as much as any picture you might get published of your CEO plus celebrity guest surrounded by smiling children”.

The why and the how of your social investment is just as important as the what. And you can use the platform your philanthropy creates to raise issues and share ideas about the big burning issues we face. And align yourself, in a meaningful way, with the push for social and economic justice in South Africa.

John stated that “corporate philanthropy is not viewed the way it was 15 years ago – where contributions were considered separately from the way in which a company’s core business (business activities, employment security, wage gaps) were evaluated”. Due to the fierce debates about the fundamentals of the economy, society have raised the bar against which good corporate citizenship is measured. In this environment, “companies are not just being assessed on their products and services, with good social deeds acting as sweet icing on a well-baked cake. Increasingly people want to know what your basic business practice says about where you stand on the profound issues of inequality South Africa”. In a nutshell, it means that the levels of scrutiny have increased significantly to the point where “your CSI, as wonderful as it is, will not necessarily allow you to escape that scrutiny”.

In terms of the media, he challenged delegates to ponder on a few key issues:

- What do you think of as the media? Which channels and avenues count or do not count? Why and/or why not?
- The media is not one thing and each media and channel (newspaper and radio) has different imperatives and goals which tend to change.
- What are you really after as an NPO? Recognition or do you also want to say something about the issue? “And believe that you have a right to say something, delivered from the platform of your CSI work and with the credibility you have earned by acting and not just talking?”
- In this way, as NPOs “you will not be competing for the good news slice – which tends to be small. But you are accepting that coverage is dominated by the issues facing the country and you are looking to find your place in that world”.
- How possible is it to use mainstream media to “tell slightly more complex stories that deal with complicated issues that have deep and tangled roots?”

Furthermore, he said delegates must recognise a few things about mainstream media (although he acknowledged that he may be generalising to some extent), such as:

- immediacy demands that media focus on events rather than trends;
- there are always extreme constraints on space on the page and broadcast minutes;
- newsrooms have shrunk in size and there are fewer specialists than before;
- there is a heavy weight placed on negativity, conflict and drama; and
- there is a demand for simple conclusions and clear lines between good and bad. Media doesn’t do that well with ambiguity and complexity.

John ended off his presentation by sharing some tips to get the media interested in the work of the social sector.

- Search and wait for the more interesting and richer stories to tell, beyond the launch events.
- Rethink your framing and your use of celebrities in the traditional sense. Instead, make celebrities out of people in the community.
- Be proactive and do not wait for an event or a launch to seek media coverage. If you have something to say based on a careful and close look of a particular issue or based on your work, reach out to the media with that story and your response.

His final thought on how the media can be used to encourage employee volunteering was the following:

What I would stress here is this: Don't be afraid to say we are doing this for ourselves. You know yourselves that people want to work for companies that care especially in turbulent times. People want to know that there are ways to make a difference in this society.

Hands up who felt powerless during the past ten days? Don't underestimate the value of helping to fight that feeling. I think it is a story worth telling.

### **Theme 3: Changing world and EV**

A whole segment focused on the global changes and its sizeable impact on local communities. In several presentations, technology as a key development and trend featured quite prominently. These speakers agreed that this is guaranteed to impact on how volunteering gets done, what gets done, where it gets done and who does it.

The speakers argued that if EVPs want to thrive and not just survive, EV practitioners must adjust and adapt accordingly, partly because clients and consumers, including employees are increasingly tech-savvy and already seamlessly integrate technology into their personal lives. By extension, these groups expect all brands they interact with, including employers, to plug into the digital revolution.

### **Theme 4: EV and ABCD**

One of the sub-themes that was woven into many of the speaker's presentations was that of a strength-based approach being used in social initiatives. This approach is also known as asset based community-led development (ABCD).

For example, a delegate (Janine Ward of Space for Impact) shared her observation during a plenary session of the continued dominance of the needs-based approach in many of the approaches shared through presentations. She said "I'm glad to hear how everyone is working with the community. What worries me is there is still a large emphasis on what companies can do to and for, communities. Communities have their own answers and strengths and companies need to tap into that. If we keep giving money we are going to perpetuate issues. Those supposedly poor people... we need to hear from them...".

Fortunately, different speakers also spoke about social interventions that are driven and which move from the premise that power lies with those that are often called targeted beneficiaries. These speakers, many of who spoke under the first stream of Making employee volunteer count! weaved into their presentations the necessity to use the intelligence and knowledge, assets and talents already in communities. They stressed the importance of actively engaging communities before, during and after implementing EVPs. Bernie of Ikhala Trust went further and showed how they have successfully integrated ABCD into their M&E approach, which is non-traditional, in this field. This asset-based theme also featured in the future of volunteering stream, for instance through submissions by Charlene Lackay and Regi Bothaas they tackled the assumptions corporates and volunteers make about communities.

### **Theme 5: Democratisation of EV**

Although this was not formally referred to as the 'democratisation' of EVPs, this was a topic that also featured prominently in some presentations that detailed the modus operandi of EVPs.

Democratisation puts decision-making power in terms of EV decisions on activations and interventions into the hands of the employees who do the volunteering. For instance, several corporates spoke about intentionally letting employees recommend and/r decide about the

EV initiatives to pursue, which communities to target and which NPOs to partner with, amongst others.

This democratisation is likely to increase with the rise in the use of technology in the management of EVPs. Chris of Benevity talked about employees and by extension, volunteers, who are connected to technological advancements and who have integrated these developments in both their personal and professional lives. Through technology, users are enabled to decide, to act and even to volunteer remotely from anywhere in the country and the world. For companies, technology enhances accountability and transparency, which feeds into the democratisation promise.

### **Theme 6: Reflect and reflect**

Speaker after speaker, urged delegates in their EV work, whether in corporates or NPOs, to constantly, consistently and continuously reflect on the work they do in communities and in particular, on how that work gets done. Different speakers raised significant questions that the sector and practitioners need to engage with in order to remain responsive, relevant and impactful.

## **7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

From the conference app, the conference organisers were able to get the delegates experience and feedback on speakers, facilitators and all the conference sessions, plenaries and breakaways. The app enabled delegates to provide feedback in real time, on these.

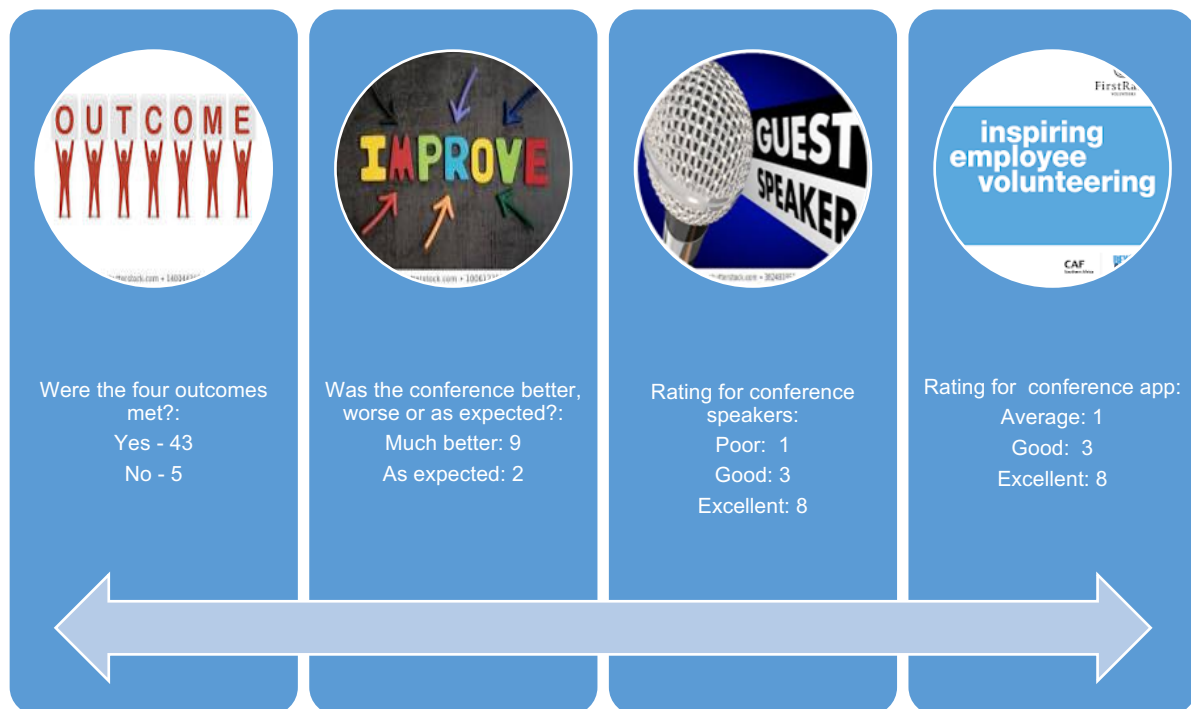
Based on the rating information from the app, the conference overall rating for the various conference segments was as follows:

- Speaker views: Prof Gumede led with 66.
- Session views – the top five:
  - stream: Making EV Count – 190;
  - stream: Collaborating for change - 175;
  - featured speaker segment – 175;
  - breakaway 1: Impactful storytelling – 168; and
  - breakaway 2: Broadening and growing the EV sector – 161.
- Awards: 97% responded 'yes' via the app to the following question: "Do you still think an annual platform to recognise EV programmes in both the corporate and NGO sectors is a beneficial initiative?"

In addition to the above-mentioned information from the conference app, following the conference, a post conference survey went out to all delegates from the conference. This survey asked attendees to provide feedback broadly on the following categories: meeting of conference outcomes, general feedback on the overall conference, areas of success, and areas of development, amongst others.

In total, 12 people responded to the survey and below is a summary of their responses. Of these, eight respondents were from the corporate sector and four were from the NPO sector.

From these survey results, the following came up:



Some additional feedback that conference organisers gleaned from the surveys was:

- MC for the 2019 Conference was highly rated;
- request for contact details for speakers and participants;
- there were issues with the 'pace' of the conference – too fast, duration of sessions and not enough time for Q&A, to mingle or for body breaks; and
- set up of the conference venue and the food area.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This 2019 Beyond Painting Classroom Employee Volunteering Conference was deeply enriched by the quality of the inputs so generously offered by speakers and delegates. The thought-leadership that emerged from the conference will shape and frame the (employee) volunteer sector in South Africa.

The success of this conference will continue to be measured, long after its final session. The BPC community will stay immersed in some of these discussions, and will continue to unpack their meaning and implication for the volunteering work that regularly takes place in the workplace and communities with employers and through employees who are united in their commitment to be citizens who actively make a difference. As Jo Pohl reminded us at the opening of the conference, "Volunteering is in our DNA and every act, no matter how small, counts".

As for the organisers, they will digest and synthesise this content and feedback from the conference, and use it to chart a way forward for the BPC community that advances the strategic vision of BPC specifically and of the sector broadly.

The call to action from one of the speakers, Kelvin Glen, should propel us forward and keep the momentum of this gathering, alive.

Please don't be selfish. You've invested two days to be here. Go back and share and challenge. Let's not wait for the next conference. We want to come back to the next conference and show case studies of what we've done. Show your successes on the platforms. There can't be a competition where it comes to EV. We need to become disruptors in our sector and try new stuff and if it doesn't work, share why so we don't repeat it. Share your successes and impact. For example, the SPCA asked for toys for the animals in cages. This is because research shows that dogs become aggressive if caged. It scientifically proved that dogs' aggression decreases. And the adoption rate went up at the SPCA when they implemented this. But no one is sharing the story.

## 9. NEXT STEPS

At the end of the conference, Desiree Storey of FirstRand, briefly shared with delegates some of the future plans for the platform.

The exciting news is that the current BPC internet site is being upgraded and will be launched mid-2020 with a new look and feel and functionality. The BPC community will be invited to the formal launch of the site for a quick tour of the new site.

The BPC 2019 conference app will continue to be a living platform available to all in the BPC community. To download any of the conference presentations, delegates can click on "Documents" on the app to source.

The BPC team is grateful for the feedback, opinions and questions that delegates shared via the app throughout the two-day conference. These questions and comments will be included in the themed workshops in 2020.

Following the successful conclusion of the conference, the following are the next steps:

- complete and launch the conference report in March 2020;
- use the conference and subsequent conference report to inform and develop a programme of action for BPC 2020;
- launch the new BPC internet site in 2020; and
- host themed workshops in Cape Town, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KZN in 2020/21.

## 10. ANNEXURES

### Annex 1: Conference app

For this conference, an app was created to connect the BPC platform to the technology revolution and to give delegates an interactive conference experience. The app also served as a resource repository for all conference material and documentation. At the end of the conference, all the speaker presentations and photographs were uploaded onto the app and these are now useful resources for the delegates, post the conference.

Throughout the conference, delegates used the app to access the conference programme, to engage with speakers during session and to upload questions. The conference app was well received and used. Over the two conference days, app usage was as follows:

Interaction report – day 1 and 2	
Active users	340
Engagement score	446
Questions posed	55
Likes	203
Dislikes	0
Poll votes	2580

Table 1: Interaction report – conference app

For the conference organisers, the app also served, arguably another important function of monitoring and assessing the conference experience in real time, as the app enabled delegates to provide an immediate assessment (evaluative rating) of speakers, facilitators and sessions using a range of pre-determined factors deemed key to shed light on the quality of the conference. The assessment factors were as follows:

In terms of speakers, the assessment factors and questions were:

- relevance;
- inspiring; and
- most valuable points/comments made.

Overall rating of the session

These ratings were subsequently integrated to the overall assessment of the conference for a more in-depth post-conference analysis.

### Annex 2: Conference workshop: “Time to think”

The 2019 BPC Employee Volunteer Conference, as in 2017, included a workshop that was facilitated by Symphonia, Partners for Possibility (PfP). The workshop was included to serve as a creative and reflective slot. This workshop theme and provider were selected after an open bidding process. The theme resonated with BPC because often volunteering can be overly consumed with planning, doing and implementing activities, often with too little time spent on reflection.

Dina and her team, took delegates through the basic ten components offered by “Time to think” philosophy espoused by Nancy Kline. In this session, delegates had an uninterrupted opportunity to speak and share their thoughts, to be listened to and to listen to and hear others in their groups. The workshop gave delegates a powerful practical tool to reflect on their practice.

### Annex 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> Beyond Painting Classrooms Employee Volunteer Programme Awards Ceremony

On 11 September, the second national Beyond Painting Classrooms Employee Volunteer Programme Awards were held. These awards, initiated in 2017, celebrate the achievements in the EV sector by corporates and NPOs as these recognise the many varied efforts in EV that yield meaningful results in the broader delivery chain of employee volunteering.

This year's awards focused on identifying EV initiatives in three categories, which were as follows: 1) inspiring leadership; 2) partnering for change and 3) creating real value.

For this year's awards, a total of 29 applications were received. A team of six judges adjudicated these using criteria to decide on the corporate and NPO winner of each category. For the category of Creating real value, only one award was awarded to a corporate, Volkswagen South Africa (Pty) Limited based on the strength and completeness of their submission.

The CEO of FirstRand, Allan Pullinger made the opening remarks at the ceremony. In these, he thanked delegates for their attendance and support of the BPC conference. He also recognised the international guests, present at the conference, including those who joined via skype.

He touched on the significance of the conference and its offering to the sector. In EV, he said corporates have an opportunity to help NPOs scale up and create a real experience of shared value, which is not an easy journey. "This conference is quite unique and it gives us an opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other". He said the awards sought to celebrate entities that run sustainable EVPs in corporates and NPOs. He said "these kinds of programmes are good for the country, especially during these difficult times".

Each recipient received a certificate and a gift. The prize package also included media airtime with Kaya FM, the conference media partner. The winners were interviewed live by John Perlman, the host of "Today with John Perlman" during his prime time slot from the conference venue.

The following were announced as winners during the awards ceremony in the respective categories.

Employee volunteer award winners	
	Category 1: Inspiring leadership Corporate: Momentum Metropolitan NPO : U-Turn
	Category 2: Partnering for change Corporate: forgood NPO: The Do More Foundation
	Category 3: Creating real value Corporate: Volkswagen South Africa (Pty) Limited NPO: No award

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