

Building better CSI: Trialogue Business in Society Conference promotes collaborative solutions

Issued by [Trialogue](#)

30 Apr 2024

In a year poised to shape the future of democracy around the world, particularly in South Africa where upcoming elections hold the hope of a positive turning point for the country, the act of collaboration takes on special significance.



Working together to achieve positive outcomes will take centre stage at this year's annual Trialogue Business in Society Conference on the 14-15 May. Under the overarching theme "Connect. Collaborate. Change", business and non-profit organisations will come together to explore responsible strategies to navigate and respond to the country's growing social challenges, characterised by soaring unemployment and the widening inequality gap.

"This year's topics will look at what companies can do to help heal some of these rifts in our society through targeted support for education, entrepreneurship, agriculture and skills development," says Trialogue director Cathy Duff.

"Our speakers and panellists will discuss holistic approaches to education and skills development that could contribute to a productive workforce, how supporting entrepreneurship could build long-term legacies, and the importance of a transformed agricultural sector that supports food security and social inclusion."

Keynote presentations to showcase local thought leaders

Bonang Mohale, chancellor of the University of the Free State and former president of Business Unity South Africa, will open the conference with his keynote address. His input will guide the tone of the conference with a focus on why ethical considerations have never been more vital to business leadership. In speaking to how the current state of leadership in South Africa is at the heart of the nation's lawlessness and malaise, he will explore the role of the private sector in revitalising leadership and fostering a culture of integrity and accountability.

The closing address will be given by Gift of the Givers Foundation founder Dr. Imtiaz Sooliman. As leader of one of the world's most renowned humanitarian organisations, he will offer his insight into the country's most critical needs, the evolving role of disaster relief, how companies can effectively contribute to addressing pressing social issues and how we might foster hope and unity in the face of seemingly overwhelming challenges.

Conference topics look to securing the future

The conference is made possible by the support of valued sponsors, says Duff. "Our sponsors are all leaders in CSI, and bring valuable insights and learnings to the table relevant to the sectors in which they invest. Headline sponsors include the Vodacom Foundation, FirstRand, Absa, Telkom, the Rand Water Foundation and Sanlam. Momentum Metropolitan, MTN, Primedia, Standard Bank and Volkswagen for Good also provide support. "Particular sponsors make it possible for a broad range of attendees from the non-profit sector to attend. We encourage other corporates to do the same for the non-profits they fund," adds Duff.

The conference will open with '**ABC to CEO: Supporting the learning journey**', presented in partnership with the Vodacom Foundation. Sessions will provide practical insight into different interventions needed throughout the education ecosystem, preparing learners for the future while addressing current educational challenges and what businesses and non-profits can do support the process.

'**Enabling intergenerational inclusion through entrepreneurship**' will follow, a theme led by Absa which unpacks the key role entrepreneurship plays in addressing socio-economic challenges. The sessions will discuss ways to drive inclusivity in entrepreneurship and how to future-proof small enterprises so that they can grow into legacy businesses.

The second day of the conference will focus on '**Driving transformation in agri-ecosystems**' a session presented in partnership with FirstRand. This session will examine how important agri-ecosystems are to South Africa, the drive towards increased sustainability in the sector and how to support emerging farmers.

The final topic of the conference, presented by Telkom, is '**Future-ready youth: Skills for jobs.**' This session will cover which educational initiatives will provide the right skills and opportunities for young people, how companies can create this enabling environment and what needs to be done to solve South Africa's young unemployment problem.

New Masterclass sessions

This year, three Masterclass sessions will be held the day before the conference on Monday, 13 May 2024.

These include:

- **Strategic CSI**, facilitated by Trialogue managing director Nick Rockey.
- **Introduction to catalytic capital and impact investing for grantmakers**, facilitated by Dr. Frank Aswani, the CEO

of Africa Venture Philanthropy Alliance (AVPA).

- **Fundraising planning and matching budgets for South African non-profits**, facilitated by Feryal Domingo of Inyathelo, a CSI fundraising expert with more than 20 years of experience as a non-profit leader.

An inclusive, hybrid format

The conference will once again be held in hybrid format, allowing virtual attendance of themed plenary sessions to be presented in the mornings. Professionally facilitated breakout sessions will take place in the afternoons for in-person delegates.

In addition to incisive keynote speeches, executive overviews that contextualise the challenges being faced, lively panel discussions and engaging breakout sessions, the conference provides unparalleled networking opportunities for in-person delegates in the corporate social responsibility sector. In-person delegates can also visit a range of exhibition stands showcasing the work of diverse organisations.

Delegates attending the full conference, either in person or virtually, will receive gift bags provided by valued sponsors.

How to register for the conference

For more information and to register for the Trialogue Business in Society Conference 2024 and Masterclasses, please visit: <https://trialogue.co.za/trialogue-business-in-society-conference-2024/>

- **How can companies promote democracy and social justice?** 28 May 2024
- **Triilogue Business in Society Conference challenges stakeholders to collaborate for change** 21 May 2024
- **Bonang Mohale to speak on business supporting democracy at Trialogue Conference** 8 May 2024
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