

Investment in social enterprise yields double-win

Issued by [Trialogue](#)

24 Apr 2024

Social enterprises are attracting growing recognition for their potential to address some of South Africa's most pressing challenges, combining profit generation with positive social development goals. [Recent research](#) suggests that social enterprises, already a valuable source of job creation across the continent, could be responsible for more than [5.5 million direct jobs by 2030](#). In recognition of this growing value, responsible business advisory company Trialogue has teamed up with Barloworld to guide companies looking to make meaningful contributions to these enterprises.



Barloworld sponsors the social enterprise topic on [Trialogue's Knowledge Hub](#), the leading information portal for social investors in Africa. The resource serves as a hub for valuable insights, case studies, and best practices curated by industry experts, aimed at guiding companies in their engagement with social enterprises.

"The South African government is prioritising social entrepreneurship as a long-term development strategy. Considering how powerful entrepreneurship opportunities can be, particularly for youth and women, we want to demystify the concept of social enterprise and empower companies to harness their potential for transformative change with practical guidance on how businesses can effectively support and collaborate with social enterprises," says Trialogue MD Nick Rockey.

Investments that deliver profit and social value

Unlike regular enterprises that seek to take advantage of gaps in the market, social enterprises are motivated by the desire for social change. They combine the interests of people and the environment with shareholder gain and invest profits in social programmes.

This blending of business principles with a strong focus on social or environmental impact holds real value for social investors. As companies increasingly seek to align their business strategies with principles of sustainability and social responsibility, investing in social enterprises presents a compelling opportunity to achieve both financial returns and meaningful societal impact.

Companies investing in social enterprises can contribute to job creation, sustainability and community development.

Creating employment opportunities, particularly in marginalised communities, is often a priority for social enterprises.

Supporting them consequently enables companies to contribute to building a more equitable society.

Social enterprises often operate in sectors that are critical for sustainable development, such as renewable energy, healthcare, education, and agriculture. Investment in these sectors enables companies to leverage their resources and expertise to drive innovation and scale solutions that have the potential to generate long-term positive change. This fulfills their corporate social responsibility goals while building access to new markets and revenue streams that align with evolving consumer preferences for ethical and sustainable products and services.

Supporting social enterprises allows companies to tap into a pool of passionate and mission-driven entrepreneurs who are dedicated to creating meaningful change in their communities. These partnerships can foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing, enabling companies to learn from the innovative approaches and insights of social entrepreneurs while also providing valuable mentorship and support. In this way, investing in social enterprise development becomes a mutually beneficial endeavor that drives positive social impact while also enhancing corporate reputation and brand value.

Barloworld's support for social enterprises

Barloworld's [Mbewu programme](#) is committed to nurturing social entrepreneurs and facilitating the growth of their enterprises. It supports a diverse range of social enterprises, from nascent startups to established businesses, as well as organisations dedicated to addressing local challenges through sound business practices.

The programme provides essential resources including seed funding, access to finance, and comprehensive business incubation services. This incubation process is designed to equip social entrepreneurs with the necessary training, mentorship, and guidance to navigate the complexities of business growth and scalability.

Central to the programme's mission is the empowerment of entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on advancing the economic sustainability and transformation agenda, especially for women. By championing entrepreneurship, Barloworld Mbewu aims to catalyse tangible social impact while fostering inclusive growth and development.

Barloworld Mbewu beneficiary transforms lives

Prosthetist and orthotist Ncedo Ludada is one of the many beneficiaries of Barloworld's Mbewu programme. His social enterprise, Ludada and Associates Orthopedic Services (LAOS), restores independence to people living with physical impairments. The company, which is headquartered in Mtata in the Eastern Cape and has a new branch in Gqeberha, manufactures assistive devices such as prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs, and other supporting aids. The enterprise is also exploring the provision of affordable orthotic and prosthetic rehabilitation for the physically impaired and helps patients to secure quality rehabilitative devices through a device rental programme.

Access to quality devices and physical rehabilitation gives amputees the opportunity to return to employment so that they can support themselves and their families. [The Mbewu programme helped Ludada to realise his vision](#) of restoring dignity to amputees. "With no business knowledge, you need people who have done it before. Meeting like-minded people who are doing social things while making money became the business model that hit home. At the end of the day, it's a double payment when you're making money and you're making change," Ludada enthuses.

"It is our intention that the Barloworld-sponsored social enterprise topic fosters further collaboration between the corporate and social sectors, supporting companies with the resources to navigate the evolving landscape of social enterprise and contribute to positive change in South Africa," concludes Rockey.

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