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HANDS-ON

Experience Learning



June - September 2019

On the cover:

Two of the learning briefs in this issue report on projects that are collaborating with Nal'ibali, a multi-award winning reading-for-enjoyment campaign mobilising adults to help children to love reading. Such partnerships have enabled Nal'ibali to support more than 3 600 children's reading clubs in 2019, with approximately 140 995 children participating regularly. There was much excitement on World Read Aloud Day 2018 when Nal'ibali managed to mobilise adults to read to over a million children on the day, especially considering that on the first World Read Aloud Day that Nal'ibali supported in 2013, adults read to only about 13 000 children on the day. The 2018 record was, however, properly shattered in 2019 when adults took on the challenge and read to more than 1.5 million children. These achievements are early indications that Nal'ibali has the potential to generate momentum that could eventually lead to a tipping point in adult reading behaviour that impacts children. Learn more about Nal'ibali at dgmt.co.za/nalibali/ and at nalibali.org.

"We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom" reads a quote by E.O. Wilson, who wrote the book, 'Consilience: The unity of knowledge'. With our Hands-on Learning publication, we hope to play a helpful role in synthesising information from innovators and implementers in civil society, supporting them to share what they have learned so that others are able to draw from and build on their experiences.

IN THIS ISSUE WE FEATURE THREE BRIEFS:

Billions of Rands are invested in social development in South Africa and tens of thousands of people in government and civil society pour their lives into trying to improve society. But it seems like a Sisyphean task – pushing boulders up a hill only to see them roll back down again and again. One of the biggest retardants of progress is the widespread abuse of alcohol. The University of Cape Town joins DGMT in exploring what we can do about it.

In addition to its core business, the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) programme aims to drive positive social change and requires approved energy projects to share ownership with local communities. How can the community development projects be implemented most effectively? The Lesedi Solar Park Trust, Letsatsi Solar Park Trust and Peace Humansrus Trust (PHT) share their lessons learnt.

There is no doubt that faith has great transformative power, yet it is not always easy to see how this can be harnessed to help change society. A collection of diverse faith-based organisations share how they are mobilising their members to bring about broader social change.

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OPPORTUNITY

1

Drive public innovation by reigniting civil society

One step forward, two steps back: How alcohol abuse diminishes the work of civil society and what we can do about it

Billions of Rands are invested in social development in South Africa. Tens of thousands of people in government and civil society pour their lives into trying to improve society. But it seems like a Sisyphean task – pushing boulders up a hill only to see them roll back down again and again. One of the biggest retardants of progress is the widespread abuse of alcohol. The problem is so big that the taxes paid by the liquor industry are far lower than the impact on families and the cost of health and social services. It’s a reality we are reluctant to confront, either because we think there’s little that can be done about it, or because we don’t know how to reconcile the fact that at least half of us are social drinkers and occasionally cross the line ourselves. It is time we all fully understood the impact of alcohol abuse and take radical steps to reduce it.

We, in civil society, like to say that we look to tackle the root causes of societal problems, but too often have a blind spot when it comes to alcohol abuse. For example, alcohol is a significant lubricant of the HIV epidemic, yet is hidden in most causal constructs of HIV infection and very rarely confronted head-on. To be fair, it is often included as an issue in behaviour change communication for young people, yet there are very few programmes that specifically aim to reduce binge drinking as a primary strategy for HIV prevention. To make things worse, alcohol misuse increases HIV-associated morbidity and reduces treatment compliance.

It is estimated that the economic, social and health costs associated with alcohol-related harms comprise about 12% of South Africa’s GDP¹.

The South African Demographic and Health Survey 2016 found that 22.8% of men and 9% of women drank more than five drinks or more on at least one occasion in the past 30 days (to the definition of ‘binge drinking’²). Among 20-30 year-olds, that percentage increased to one-third of men³.

The World Health Organization categorises South Africa as among countries with the highest per capita alcohol consumption in the world⁴. Alcohol harm (7%) is third only to unsafe sex (32%) and interpersonal violence (8%) in contributing to the national risk profile (expressed as disability-adjusted life years or DALYs). It is an underlying cause of both

unsafe sex and interpersonal violence. In fact, over half of injury-related deaths in South Africa (5 701 out of 10 613) involved persons with positive blood alcohol concentrations (BAC)⁵, and in the Western Cape, nearly half of patients with injuries from interpersonal violence show probable alcohol use⁶.

A further consequence of alcohol misuse in South Africa is the extremely high prevalence of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). In the Western Cape, the prevalence among Grade 1 learners in high-risk, rural communities is as high as 18-26%⁷. Even when it does not lead to FASD, alcohol abuse often contributes to situations where parents are not there for their children, and in extreme cases, it is linked to child abuse and neglect. Children whose parents abuse alcohol (or other substances) are significantly more likely to have medical and behavioural problems, including substance abuse.

Reducing binge drinking and alcohol use would have a significant knock-on effect in improving health and reducing the costs of healthcare in South Africa⁸. At DGMT we also know that alcohol misuse has a direct impact on our efforts to improve child and adolescent outcomes – and this is true for much of the work being done in civil society. Tackling binge drinking is not easy, but systematic reviews demonstrate that binge drinking can be reduced through policy and community-level interventions. It is necessary that we start noting the impact of alcohol misuse on our work and advocate collectively for the reduction in alcohol misuse and binge drinking as a primary strategy to strengthen social and human capital development in South Africa.

FACTS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

South African youth tend to binge drink¹ and start to experiment with alcohol at a very young age: ± 15% of boys and 8% of girls have their first drink before they are 13 years old².



WHAT PUTS THEM AT RISK?



Behaviour of friends and family is the most powerful influencer of young people's alcohol use³.



Boys are twice as likely to binge drink as girls⁴. If they stay over at friends two or more nights a week, their chances of binge drinking increase significantly^{5,6}.



Those not attending school/post-school study are 1.5 times more likely to binge drink⁷.



Easy access to alcohol is facilitating alcohol use among adolescents^{8,9}.



Binge drinkers have significantly less emotional/information support, affection and tangible social support and self-esteem¹⁰.



Poor parental practices are strongly associated with disruptive behaviour, vulnerability and succumbing to peer pressure and substance use by their adolescent children^{11,12}.



A teenager is twice as likely to get drunk repeatedly if they have seen their parents under the influence, even if only a few times¹³.

WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE BINGE DRINK:

More risky sexual behaviour and rape¹⁴ associated with:

- HIV & sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Unwanted pregnancy

More physical fighting and injury^{15*}.

More school dropout and/or expulsions*.

Poor grades and grade repetition*.

Selling or using of drugs^{*= 16,17,18,19}.

Disrupted growth and puberty or adolescent girls²⁰.

More depression and suicidal ideation. Girls who binge drink are twice as likely to commit suicide than those who don't²¹.

WHAT PROTECTS THEM?

Constructive communication and monitoring by parents^{23,24}.



Adolescents with positive family communication and support, good health practices and future aspirations are 1.5 to 2.5 times less likely to use alcohol than those who don't²⁴.



Positive adult and peer role models in their lives²⁵.



Religion or feeling connected to a sense of meaning in life²⁶.



Leisure activities that reduce boredom, motivate and help develop autonomy, self-identity and self-regulating behaviour²⁷.



The concept for this infographic is based on a poster by Alcoholics Anonymous, New Zealand: www.aa.org.nz

[Sources on endnotes page]

BOX 1: HOW ALCOHOL ABUSE ‘LUBRICATES’ THE HIV EPIDEMIC

Alcohol use and misuse doubles the risk of HIV transmission

Alcohol consumption prior to sexual intercourse is associated with an 87% higher risk of incident HIV infection. For binge drinkers, the risk of HIV transmission is twice that of non-binge drinkers¹.

Alcohol misuse is associated with gender-based violence

Higher rates of HIV infection are associated with gender-based violence². A Statistics South Africa study found that both victim and perpetrator were under the influence of alcohol in 72% of sexual violence incidence occurring outdoors and 23% of incidents taking place at home³.

HIV further harms the immune system and causes co-morbidities

Alcohol may increase inflammation and the immune response, increasing the pool of HIV target cells at key transmission sites throughout the body. It may raise the viral concentration in semen and in the vagina thus increasing the probability of transmission. Over time, consistent alcohol use may weaken the immune system, increasing the pathogenicity of HIV and the likelihood of opportunistic infections⁴.

Alcohol use is associated with ARV non-adherence

Alcohol drinkers are up to 50% less likely to adhere to HIV medications, compared with abstainers⁵. Binge drinking is especially associated with ARV non-adherence (> 3-fold increase)⁶.

ADVOCATING FOR SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS

By **Corné van Walbeek and Grieve Chelwa** from the University of Cape Town

PROPER TAXATION OF ALCOHOL

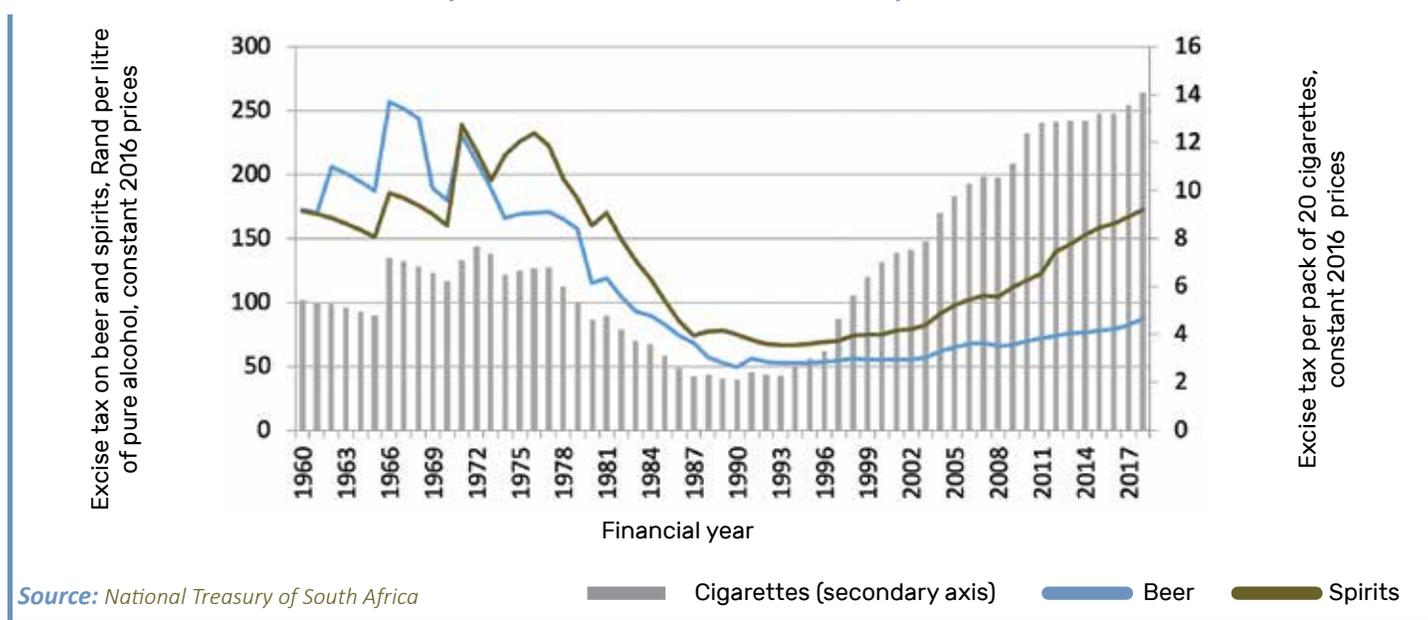
Ordinarily, the consumption of any legal substance that causes as much harm as alcohol would be appropriately regulated and taxed to reduce the costs imposed on society. This has not been the case in South Africa. While there has been greater effort since 1994 to recover the social costs of alcohol through taxation, government and broader society still effectively subsidise the alcohol industry. As a 2014 review by the National Treasury on the taxation of alcohol noted, alcohol excise tax revenues do not cover

the alcohol-attributable costs incurred by government i.e. even after the revenue gained through excise duties on alcoholic beverages, and the VAT collected on alcohol sales and provincial liquor licenses, this was still not enough to deal with direct consequences of alcohol abuse, to reduce the extent of alcohol abuse, and address its negative social impact⁹.

In South Africa, alcohol has long been subject to excise taxes. Historical data from the National Treasury shows, however, that the tax per litre of pure alcohol for beer and spirits in real (inflation-adjusted) terms was substantially lower in 2018 than it was in 1960. This differs substantially to the tax treatment of cigarettes.

Increases in cigarette taxes have delivered significant additional revenue to government. Despite the recent increase in the illicit trade in cigarettes (which is due more to poor law enforcement than the high level of the tax), real excise tax revenue on

REAL EXCISE TAX ON BEER, SPIRITS AND CIGARETTES, 1960-2018



Source: National Treasury of South Africa

cigarettes was nearly 150% higher in 2018 than in 1994. And public health has benefited greatly as a result. One in three people smoked in the early 1990s; now it is less than one in five.

Given its societal harm, the taxation of alcohol products must be urgently revisited. This process should rationalise the tax treatment of all alcohol products so that they are taxed equally in terms of their alcohol content. Currently, wine and beer are taxed at a much lower rate than spirits, for example.

The alcohol industry will point to the unintended consequences of higher taxation, including the risk of bootlegging (i.e. illegal manufacture and sale). The experience from other countries is that, all things considered, taxing alcohol at a rate closer to its total cost to society makes for a safer, healthier and more prosperous nation.

BOX 2: WHAT ARE EXCISE TAXES?

Excise taxes are imposed mostly on high-volume daily consumable products primarily as a means to generate revenue for the State, but also as a way to discourage the consumption of these products that may be harmful to human health or to the environment. Excise taxes, also known as 'sin taxes', generally result in higher prices for consumers, reducing demand for the taxed products¹.

A MINIMUM UNIT PRICE ON ALCOHOL

In May 2018 Scotland introduced a minimum unit price of 50 pence per unit (8 grams) of alcohol, with the aim of reducing abusive drinking²⁰. Research had shown that a large proportion of very cheap alcohol consumed in Scotland took the form of heavy drinking, resulting in drunkenness and other socially unacceptable behaviour²¹.

In a recent study done for the Western Cape Government on price-based interventions to reduce abusive drinking, we categorised drinkers into three groups, namely i) moderate drinkers; ii) binge drinkers, and iii) other heavy drinkers, based on their drinking patterns. Our study was based on data from the National Income Dynamics Study, a nationally representative survey of about 8 000 households²². Respondents were asked how regularly they consumed alcohol, how much alcohol they consumed on a typical drinking day, and how much money they spent on alcohol each month. From this information, we could work out how much each drinker spent per unit of alcohol consumed. One can think of this as the price paid for a standard drink. What we found was startling. In 2014, moderate drinkers spent an average of R8.79 per standard drink. Adjusted for inflation, this is approximately R10.90. Expressed in 2019 prices, the median price paid by binge drinkers was R7.62 and by heavy drinkers a nearly unbelievable R1.48 per standard drink. *In other words, binge drinkers and especially other heavy drinkers consume large quantities of cheap liquor when compared to moderate drinkers.*

So, the question is whether we can reduce the prevalence of heavy drinking in South Africa and its associated societal harm by raising the price of liquor. There is a lot of evidence that an increase in the excise tax will raise the price of alcohol, which in turn causes people to purchase less of it²³. While this approach has been used in many countries, including South Africa, and has the support of the World Health Organization as one of the "best buys" in improving public health²⁴, the drawback is that it is not a particularly sharp instrument. Our research suggests that a 10% increase in the price of alcohol will reduce alcohol consumption by about 4% among moderate drinkers, but only by about 2%-2.5% among binge drinkers and 1.5%-2% among other heavy drinkers. While this does not mean that a tax increase is ineffective in reducing alcohol use and abuse, it works best for moderate drinkers whose personal behaviour is less likely to harm broader society.

Our research indicates that a more effective way to reduce abusive drinking is to impose a minimum unit price (MUP) on alcohol, similar to the Scottish model. The reason is that binge drinkers, and especially other heavy drinkers, drink such cheap alcohol that a minimum unit price will substantially increase the price that they would have to pay. Our analysis indicates that, should a minimum unit price be implemented at, for example, R6.00 per standard drink (expressed in 2019 prices), this would decrease alcohol consumption by 6.2% among binge drinkers, by 15.5% among other heavy drinkers, and by 4.6% among moderate drinkers. Of course, should the minimum price be set at a higher level, it would reduce alcohol consumption by a greater amount.

A minimum unit price would have a limited effect on most alcohol products sold in standard retail outlets. However, it could have a substantial impact on the price of ales and other very cheap industrially-produced sugar-fermented alcohol, much of which is produced in the Western Cape. These products are targeted at those earning low wages and are nearly always consumed in an abusive way.

Reducing alcohol abuse requires a multi-pronged approach. While we do not suggest that the imposition of a minimum unit price (or for that matter, an increase in the excise tax on alcohol) is a silver bullet, it would indicate that the government is serious about addressing the crisis of alcohol abuse in the country, and would be a strong foundation on which other interventions can be built.

BOX 3: WHAT IS A MINIMUM UNIT PRICE?

Whereas an alcohol tax affects all types of alcohol, a minimum unit price affects a smaller pool of alcohol, typically cheaper forms of alcohol that heavy drinkers consume in large quantities. They are therefore more likely to feel the effects of a price increase than moderate drinkers, and are therefore less likely to buy/consume large amounts of this alcohol.

OTHER STRATEGIES FOR ALCOHOL HARMS REDUCTION

Strategies to reduce the availability of alcohol in residential areas through conditional licensing linked to shorter opening hours, reduced density of outlets and monitoring sources of supply of alcohol have been shown to reduce consumption^{15,16}.

In terms of behaviour change, the restriction on alcohol advertising may be an effective intervention¹⁷. While evaluation of impact is difficult, it is likely that public information and media play an important role in providing information and focusing attention on the link between alcohol and violence. It should, however, be noted that poorly designed public awareness campaigns focusing on emotions of fear might, in fact, be counter-productive¹⁸.

At local level, active community mobilisation, such as the monitoring of bar service practices (to combat serving inebriated customers and selling liquor for consumption off licensed premises) may help to reduce crime and violence^{19,20}.

For too long, alcohol and alcohol abuse has been a silent driver of enormous social and economic harms in South Africa, going back to the pernicious 'dop' system. As part of our work of restoring dignity and ensuring greater social justice, we need to talk about this elephant in the room. Structural interventions (such as taxes and pricing) are a particularly well-suited, and currently underutilised, strategy for lifting this burden on South African society, together with accessible and well-crafted public communication campaigns and support for effective community interventions.

BOX 4: THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S FIVE HIGHEST IMPACT STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL-RELATED HARMS

- > Raise prices on alcohol through excise taxes and pricing policies.
- > Strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability.
- > Facilitate access to screening, brief interventions and treatment.
- > Enforce bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship and promotion.
- > Advance and enforce drunk driving countermeasures.

A summary of work by Corné van Walbeek, Grieve Chelwa from the University of Cape Town and David Harrison (CEO of DGMT). Corné van Walbeek is a professor in the School of Economics and Grieve Chelwa is a senior lecturer in Economics at the Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town. The mentioned study was done for the Western Cape Government and was funded by DGMT.

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GENERAL

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BOX 1

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BOX 2

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OPPORTUNITY

1

Drive public innovation by reigniting civil society

SEPTEMBER 2019

Sharing the sun: How South Africa’s renewable energy has the power to generate social change

South Africa’s renewable energy sector took off in 2011 when the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) programme invited Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to submit competitive bids to build and operate large-scale renewable energy power plants¹. In addition to its core business, REIPPP aims to drive positive social change and requires approved energy projects to share ownership with local communities. This is commonly structured by establishing a community trust, which receives the share dividends and invests them in community development projects. However, these trusts do not necessarily have all the skills and knowledge to use the financing most effectively. Use of an independent, third-party organisation, with a track record of social development impact and experience, can add considerable value by tapping into their programmatic expertise and economies of scale.

This learning brief shares important lessons learnt by the Lesedi Solar Park Trust, Letsatsi Solar Park Trust and Peace Humansrus Trust (PHT).

IPPs are found in peri-urban/rural locations, often near mining towns and local communities that are fighting a daily battle with poverty, unemployment, lack of education, drug/alcohol abuse and the attendant social problems. Although many welcome their share in the IPPs, they are not sure what this really means for them.

This is partly because although there is a requirement that distributions from the trusts benefit local community members living in a 50km radius of the power plants, there are no government guidelines stipulating exactly in which areas the funds should be spent². (See Table 1 for the lists of towns and municipalities covered by the trusts.)

There are diverse approaches to the governance of community funds³. The most popular is to channel all community benefit investments into one entity — the community trust. The trust is then tasked with spending the funds on community projects. The driving idea behind

this model is that a community knows its most pressing developmental needs and so is best-placed to address them. The onus is on the community trust to make a difference. However, they often lack the development expertise to use the funding optimally and spend inordinate costs starting initiatives from scratch. A possible solution is to include a civil society-based third-party organisation as a benefactor, while still ensuring that 100% of funds are directed back into the community. This allows the trust to utilise the experience of a social development specialist with a proven track record in implementing evidence-based programmes that are well established and have demonstrated economies of scale.

The popular approach (the community trust identifying and developing its own initiatives) is used by the Peace Humansrus Trust (PHT), established in 2014 by the Jasper Power Company. The Jasper Power Project operates in the Northern Cape, approximately 30km north-east of the town of Postmasburg and 170km from Kimberley.

¹ South Africa’s state-owned utility Eskom will buy all power generated from the parks under a 20-year power-purchase agreement.

² Wlokas, H. 2015. WWF Technical Report: A review of the local community development requirement in South Africa’s renewable energy programme. World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa (WWF-SA), p31.

³ Eight governance approaches have been identified for community funds. (see Wlokas, H. 2015).



Table 1: TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN THE 50KM RADIUS OF THE IPPS

Image 1: THE JASPER SOLAR PARK NEAR KIMBERLY

TRUST	PROVINCE	TOWN	MUNICIPALITY
Lesedi and PHT	Northern Cape	Postmasburg	Tsantsabane LM
	Northern Cape	Danielskuil	Kgatelopele LM
Letsatsi	Free State	Dealesville	Tokologo LM
	Free State	Soutpan (Ikgomotseng)	Manguang Metro

The objective of PHT is to use the dividends “to engage in improving the wellbeing of the community through the identification of community improvement initiatives; funding existing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or community-based initiatives; and/or engaging directly in community development projects.”⁴ Due to legal issues, PHT could only start spending dividends this year (2019). The trust decided to focus on education and ran a programme that helped eligible matriculants apply for university bursaries. It also initiated a winter school for Grade 9 children, to inform them of various job options and to help them select the most suitable subjects for their desired careers⁵.

In 2012, Lesedi Solar Park Trust (near Kimberly in the Northern Cape) followed the third-party approach, appointing the DG Murray Trust (DGMT) as a beneficiary organisation. Similarly,

Letsatsi Solar Park Trust in the Free State appointed DGMT and the Rural Education Access Programme (REAP) as co-beneficiaries. As a beneficiary organisation, DGMT receives the dividends, and in consultation with the trusts, decides which programmes to invest in, in the communities concerned.

Since September 2018, two initiatives focused on early learning and literacy – SmartStart and Nal’ibali – have been operating in the Lesedi and Letsatsi communities. SmartStart is an early learning social franchise working to expand access to quality learning for children aged 3-4 years old; Nal’ibali is a campaign that seeks to create opportunities for caring adults to read stories to children in their mother tongues. They were selected because their models have been shown to be effective and scalable.

4 Peace Humansrus Strategy Document 2019-2020, p13.

5 PHT strategic imperatives, target groups and community development care focus areas were defined based on the community profiles from a number of research documents. PHT Strategy Document, p10.

These targeted interventions aim to improve education levels and reach a group of children not normally able to access any form of early childhood education. Janet Du Preez, an independent trustee for Lesedi, Letsatsi and Peace Humansrus Trusts, explains: “Lesedi and Letsatsi are fairly poverty-stricken communities, and have high school dropout rates. The children are not reaching the standards they could be. Building a strong foundation through the two programmes will give all the children a better start in life and improve their prospects of at least getting a matric.”

INTERVIEW WITH GABRIELLA VAN ROOI, SMARTSTARTER⁶, LESEDI (DANIELSKUIL)

What were you doing before joining SmartStart?

I was just at home with a passion and dream to become a teacher and work with children one day.

What are you doing now?

Giving the 12 children in my playgroup the opportunity to early learning using the SmartStart programme to make sure they have the skills and behaviours they need when they start school.

What do you find rewarding about your work?

It challenges me to reach the goal of SmartStart, which is to give every child the power to succeed.

What are your hopes for the future?

I hope that the Lesedi Trust continues doing what it is doing because that stipend means a lot to us. It contributes to the things we need in the playgroups. I want to help as many children as I can to succeed in life. Maybe Lesedi could help us as SmartStarters to get more ECD training, to improve in our work.

COMMENT FROM WILHEMINA TSOKOLIBANE, MOTHER, LESEDI (DANIELSKUIL)

“When Gabriella recruited my children, I was at ease. I have two children who are now part of the SmartStart programme at her playgroup. Before my children couldn’t play together without fighting over toys, but now they know how to play and share. I couldn’t afford to have them in a formal ECD centre.”



“Think of Steve Biko, Robert Sobukwe. I want to help the black community to empower themselves. Because we know that our mental capacity is one of the things that will help us to get out of the poverty-stricken kind of communities. I think my biggest role to play in my community is helping people see themselves correctly so they continue living life the way it was meant to be - prosperous and productive.”

Millicent Kaila, Nal’ibali Story Sparker⁷, Lesedi

2017 was a milestone year for all three trusts. Although officially established in 2014, PHT only became fully operational in 2017, the same year DGMT also held the first trustee meetings and contracted SmartStart and Nal’ibali to implement in Lesedi and Letsatsi. Two years later, in 2019, significant challenges and opportunities have been identified. These are the five lessons learned through interviews conducted with various stakeholders:

- 1) Communication is paramount
- 2) Lag time is a problem
- 3) Trustees should be trained
- 4) Institutional capacity is crucial
- 5) Trusts should collaborate

1) Communication is paramount

There must be a clear communication strategy in place explaining the role of the trust and/or beneficiary organisation, as well as the model being used to distribute the funds and the community projects initiated. The strategy should also solicit feedback from the community to ensure they are comfortable with how the dividends are being spent. Helena English is a community activist dedicated to improving the lives of the community in the Tsansabane municipal area. She represents her community on the Lesedi Trust and cautions that “a community who are not informed can become a violent community.”

Other key communications issues raised by interviewees for this brief include:

- 1a) Building trust
- 1b) Managing expectations
- 1c) Delineating roles

1a) Building trust

Good communication is based on trust. It is essential that the beneficiary organisation or trust has a representative on the ground as soon as possible to connect with the community. This role is typically fulfilled by a community trustee or a community liaison officer. This person should ensure there is a two-way stream of communication at all times.

⁶ SmartStarters are women and men implementing the SmartStart programme in communities throughout the country.

⁷ A Story Sparker conducts Nal’ibali reading-for-enjoyment activities with children and communities.

1b) Managing expectations

It's important to, from the start, manage the expectations of the community around the benefits they will receive from the project. Depending on the financial structure of an IPP project, dividends for local communities are generally only expected to flow a few years into the project's lifetime. In the initial years, there may only be a small amount of return⁸. It may also take some time to accrue enough funds to invest in a community programme. To ensure a steady flow, the dividends may have to be reinvested. These factors must be clearly explained to the community as they can delay implementation of programmes.

1c) Delineating roles

DGMT-funded programmes had been active in the Lesedi and Letsatsi communities prior to the REIPPP project. Du Preez observes that some community members were confused by DGMT's multiple roles. She explains: "The communication strategy became key so that people understood right from the beginning that while DGMT has always been helping their community, it has also absorbed the role of making sure that the dividend funds are spent in the best possible way. There may be a lot of unknowns here, and it is a highly politicised area." Each time the trust intervenes through a beneficiary organisation, the communication strategy should ensure that the community is aware of this.



"The community needs to understand what community development programmes their dividends have bought."

Janet du Preez, independent trustee of the Lesedi, Letsatsi Solar Park and Peace Humansrus Trusts

2) Lag time is a problem

The community will not reap the benefits of their shareholding immediately. This is due to the financial structure yielding dividends after some time, as well as complicated legal requirements meaning it can take years for a trust to start implementing projects effectively. Du Preez notes: "A beneficiary organisation is able to start working straight away because they have existing staff and infrastructure; community trusts don't have staff. The trust does not allow us to appoint staff. You can only appoint the implementing agent when all the trustees are in place. DGMT managed to get going faster as it was already set up."

3) Train trustees

Typically, the board of trustees is made up of independent trustees, community representatives and, if applicable, beneficiary representatives or power company representatives. The Independent Development Corporation (IDC) advises that success of community trusts rests on sound management⁹, and effective management tends to come from education and experience. In many instances, community trustees and power company representatives are unfamiliar with their roles and associated responsibilities. In order to effectively serve the community, they should be given training.

Helena English received training and says she learned that trustees should play a vibrant oversight role, but not interfere in the management methods of the programmes. Another significant learning was the importance of baseline studies (conducted for Lesedi and Letsatsi) to establish the needs of the community. "I learned that you involve your community, right down to the individual level. The researchers go to different people in the community and interview them. That was a very important learning curve for me."

4) Institutional capacity is crucial

The nature of solar plants means they are typically located in far-flung areas with sparse populations. This means there is usually limited institutional capacity to implement social transformation programmes. Compare, for example, the number of NGOs available in Johannesburg, as opposed to Postmasburg. Additionally, some trusts have been incubated from asset management organisations, and may have limited experience identifying the urgent needs of a community and finding the right implementation partners.

Du Preez believes the main advantage of a beneficiary organisation is that it has the capacity to quickly bring tried-and-tested programmes to these remote areas. Justine Jowell, programme design lead for SmartStart, comments: "It is just an amazing opportunity. Through the partnership with the solar park trust, which funds the programme and the stipends for the participants, we can now afford to go to an area where we didn't yet have a presence." Ramabele Litabe, provincial support coordinator for Nal'ibali in the Northern Cape and Free State, notes too that these interventions are reaching communities that have never before benefitted from these kinds of services. "Schools in Letsatsi and Lesedi are requesting that we extend our programmes to cater for the Grade 7 to Grade 11s as there is still a challenge of learners who cannot read for meaning. This is a sign that the programme is being well-received and is appreciated in these communities."

English hopes that these interventions can empower local NGOs to take over educational initiatives. "While the funding is available in the current three-year cycle, we must empower local NGOs so that if the SmartStart and Nal'ibali programmes end, we have NGOs that can carry on with this kind of intervention in our community. Our communities are growing. We want local NGOs to be equipped and empowered for the future."

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION:

"Does DGMT charge a cost for the management of the funds?"

ANSWER:

No, DGMT charges no administration/management fee and often contributes to the funding of the projects as a co-investor.

8 Wlokas, H. 2015, p32.

9 Nelwamondo, T. 2016. History of challenges and successes in SA: Community Trusts. Industrial Development Corporation presentation, p3.

5) Trusts should collaborate

The IPPs are situated in the warmest or windiest places in South Africa, and so are often co-located, sometimes even on co-joined sites, with the Northern Cape identified as the optimal solar park area. Consequently, the 50km beneficiary radius of the trusts often overlaps. For example, eight IPPs are located in close proximity to De Aar¹⁰. This is problematic as it means that all the money will be spent in the same communities. But, if the dividend is not spent on the local community, the trust will not be meeting one of its legal requirements. One solution could be to extend the radius. Another could be to establish a forum where trusts could shake off the competitive nature of their respective projects and collaborate with each other. They could cooperate on various projects, avoid duplication of spending and leverage off each other's experiences.

Du Preez thinks there should be more coordination in terms of all the trusts coming together and deciding on critical programmes, "because, at the moment, the funds are being located in one fixed area. Lesedi, Letsatsi and PHT are all wanting to be involved in early childhood development (ECD). We should identify other focus areas where we can collaborate and coordinate our activities."

Scott Henderson, DGMT representative on the Lesedi and Letsatsi Trusts, points out that as approved projects are also required to spend a certain amount of their generated revenue on socio-economic development (SED), there is an opportunity to coordinate this spend with that of the community trusts. Furthermore, there are instances of overlap with mining companies that also have their own SED and community obligations.

Conclusion

REIPPP has the potential to drive great social transformation; however, some trusts are only now initiating community programmes. If one considers the time frame of the 20-year power purchase agreements, nearly half that period has elapsed. The impact could be far greater – both for local communities and for the country as a whole – if stakeholders used the expertise of an experienced third party to quickly tap into high-quality programmes with a proven track record at marginal cost, as these can be sustained at sufficient scale and intensity to have long-term sustainable effects. In so doing, they would also be assisting in enabling these initiatives to achieve the national reach needed for socio-economic transformation in South Africa.

BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (BEE)

"We are conscious of the recent pronouncements by the BEE Commissioner and the impact that this may have on the structuring of the community ownership component of REIPPP transactions. However, we are confident that established organisations will continue to have a key role to play in the development of communities surrounding the power plants. If necessary, this could be achieved through new, innovative models whereby identified community beneficiaries are empowered to participate in community development activities through their ownership stake. An example of this could be the SmartStart social franchise model whereby the franchisees, or the ECD practitioners otherwise known as SmartStarters, use their ownership stake to fund both their living costs and the costs of operating their playgroups or ECD centres. This could then be complemented by the SED spend of the power plant, which could be used to fund the franchisor costs."

Scott Henderson, DGMT beneficiary representative

DO WE TRUST COMMUNITY TRUSTS?

"Community trusts are commonly used as vehicles of social development in South Africa, particularly in the mining sector, but they are not always seen in a positive light. In recent years, some community trusts have not functioned as intended and therefore did not achieve the desired community objectives. There are various reasons for this; among them is the "gross misappropriation of funds, which results in no value for either the investor or the beneficiaries".¹¹ Additionally, there is a degree of opacity and secrecy around the IPPs and associated trusts¹², perhaps because the competitive nature of the bids has percolated through to the activities of the trusts and the fact that the spending of the dividends can become highly politicised, with diverse opinions on how the funds should be allocated."

¹⁰ Wlokas, H. 2015, p24.

¹¹ Lubbe, A and Walaza, N. 2014. The pros and cons of community development trusts. Tshikululu Trust. Available at: <http://tshikululu.org.za/the-pros-and-cons-of-community-development-trusts/>

¹² Wlokas, H. 2015, p31.

Learning brief by **Daniella Horwitz**

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OPPORTUNITY

3

Create unlikely networks to stimulate positive change

The influence of faith: How faith-based organisations can drive social change

A number of faith-based organisations (FBOs)¹ played an influential role in the struggle against apartheid, but since the advent of democracy they have, with notable exceptions, been less visible agents for social change, despite continuing to provide relief for the poor. There is no doubt that faith has great transformative power, yet it is not always easy to see how this can be harnessed to help change society. This brief explores how FBOs can mobilise their members to bring about broader social change – an aim that is often expressed as part of their mission.

Faith is a deeply held personal belief that shapes an individual’s worldview and influences the way people act. Typically, a person of religious faith is on a journey of personal transformation. Sometimes this can result in a privatisation of faith, with an individual regarding their religion as an internal experience, which does not translate into everyday life.

Religious leaders encourage congregants to use their faith in daily interactions with others and in promotion of the common good. Richard Lundie, one of the pastors at Common Ground Church in Wynberg, Cape Town, explains: “When I read that 29% of South Africans are unemployed, what does that mean for me in my household? Many people see that as an external problem unrelated to an internal faith. Actually, your faith moves you to address and be part of the solution to that problem. We are perpetually trying to push people towards engaging in their communities.”

Imam Dr A. Rashied Omar of the Claremont Main Road Mosque (CMRM) agrees: “Poverty alleviation is not the sole responsibility of economists or public officials; it is an integral part of what it means to be an engaged and conscientious person of faith.”

FBOs have enormous reach; congregants are an audience who typically share a common value system and are open to religious instruction or at the very least, conversation. How can these faithful congregants become a transformative force in South Africa? Charity provided as ‘alms for the poor’ provides temporary satisfaction for both the giver and receiver, but rarely profoundly changes the lives of either. On the other hand, genuine upliftment and empowerment requires far more deliberate and sustained engagement with both communities and institutions. For many FBOs, the desire to be involved in fundamental social change creates a real dilemma when they start to organise themselves more professionally to be able to influence the levers of power. Often this takes the form of a new non-government organisation, only to lose the spirit of voluntarism and commitment of the wider congregation.

The potential of faith-based congregants to change society is largely untapped. In this brief, interviews with various faith leaders and congregants highlight six lessons of how FBOs can make the shift from doing charity only, towards mobilising their congregations to contribute to long-term social change in South Africa.

¹ This brief defines faith-based organisations as religious institutions and their congregations.

1) PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION IS FUNDAMENTAL



“We don’t just want people to throw money at something. We want them to go on a personal journey, get involved and transform themselves. Communities don’t need to thank us. We need to thank them for dignifying us and making us more whole and human, because if you develop selfishness and greed, and don’t think about others, what kind of faith, what kind of compassion and human being are you fostering?”

Imam Dr A. Rashied Omar of the Claremont Main Road Mosque

Common Ground Church has ten congregations in the Western Cape. Their experience is that community projects are less successful when too much focus is placed on volunteering, at the expense of the personal transformation journey. Therefore, they only host formal volunteer initiatives that achieve the following two things: (1) advance the internal transformation of the volunteer; and (2) deepen the impact of the programme.

CHOOSING TO BE A MOTHER ‘MY PATH TO MOTHERHOOD’

“I moved to Common Ground when I was in my late twenties. I was a single working woman at the time and joined the evening service. The church ran a programme where volunteers could read bedtime stories to kids at the Christine Revell Children’s Home (a place of safety) in Athlone. I have always loved kids and it just felt like an easy opportunity to incorporate into my life. I had been volunteering there for about a year and a few of my friends at Common Ground were adopting, so it wasn’t far from my mind, but never something I thought I would do on my own. One day I just had this thought out of the blue: ‘Will you be Brody’s mother?’ He was one of the little boys there. I did not know anything about him, really. It was just this random thought, but it definitely took root immediately and did not go away.*

Two weeks after this idea popped into my head I remember seeing the social worker at the home and saying: ‘I just want to know the answer to this question: Is Brody available for adoption?’ She looked at me with big wide eyes and said: ‘Yes’. She also told me that of the 49 children in the home, only two were legally available for adoption, and he was one of them. And so my journey of discernment began. Being a mother didn’t scare me but being a single parent did. I didn’t have any role models or people who had done this before. After an intense four-month process involving my family and a small group of close friends, I eventually decided to say yes! My son came home for good in December 2012.”*

– Christy Wheeler

*Not his real name

2) CHOOSE A FOCUS AREA THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL CHANGE

JL Zwane Church Centre in Gugulethu was established in 1994 as a joint initiative between Stellenbosch University, the community and the JL Zwane Presbyterian Church. Sakhele Plaatjie, an ordained elder, explains that Dr Rev Spiwo Xapile identified a leadership gap in the congregation and the community, and so in 2008 initiated ‘The Platform (Stories Move Mountains) Programme’, which aims to empower communities through storytelling. He says: “We have found storytelling to be a powerful tool – not only does it include a people who are not necessarily literate, it also embraces and affirms a culture that has used storytelling as a means of communication for centuries. Consequently, the programme has had a lasting impact on people, helping them to lead richer lives. This is the only programme on leadership that meets people at whatever level of education they have.”

THE PROGRAMME FOLLOWS THREE BASIC STEPS:

- › **Discover:** listening to participants’ personal stories.
- › **Dream:** co-creating competing images of what they want to be.
- › **Design:** working out how they can get to their imagined future and who they want to enroll in the process.

Initially only the ministers were upskilled, but then other members of the congregation, such as the elders, were also enrolled. Plaatjie shares: “Every Sunday morning at 8am, we as leaders, meet and share our experiences, stories and challenges to say, ‘How can we support one another?’ This has been something that has worked very well for us for the last 10 years or so, and so we don’t foresee changing it.”

Sarah Binos of Common Ground Church² explains that instead of trying to do a thousand things, they selected three specific areas that are high levers for change in terms of human potential. “We came to these by conducting research, asking: ‘What are the biggest issues in the city? Where do we feel we can leverage our collective social capital to make the biggest change? What is stopping the God-given potential of people from being realised?’” Through this process, they decided to concentrate their efforts on three aspects of human development: early life, education and employment (EEE).

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) researched poverty and inequality in South Africa, and in consultation with leading economists, identified early childhood development (ECD) as the best intervention to effect long-term social change. After discussions with church leaders in 2013, the DRC dedicated the next 30 years to playing a leading role in ECD. In 2016 they formed a joint ministry group with the United Reformed Church of South Africa, with a total of 520 congregations.

Education support has also been identified as a target area by JL Zwane. In 1996 it started an in-house programme, Rainbow Afterschool Programme, which assists primary school learners with their homework. The staff comprise mainly professional educators from the community and congregation who volunteer their time for a small stipend.

² Binos is CEO of Common Good, a non-profit organisation of the Common Ground Church that has a very strong emphasis on social justice and drawing on the volunteerism of the congregations.

THE POWER AND PERILS OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

“People with a strong sense of religious faith represent a powerful influence throughout society – often for good, sometimes for bad. Their strong sense of mission imbues real dedication to the causes they champion. They really care. Their focus on values tends to drive a commitment to prosocial behaviour. They are often great role models.

The essence of faith is about relationships, which allows them to respond to the hard soft-aspects of social transformation. Love is an instrument of change they’re not afraid to use. They are often sensitive to differentials of power, and pay attention to those that society ignores.

They are bound together by a common identity that transcends class and race.

These attributes make faith-based organisations powerful agents of social change. But sometimes they are part of the problem. The dominance of men in religious hierarchies reinforces patriarchy. Few faith-based organisations in South Africa have owned up to their role in perpetuating the diminution of women in our society or confronted the power dynamics of gender-based violence. Strict moral codes often alienate young people, and there are still congregations that ostracise pregnant young women, just at a time when they need love and support most.

Radical transformation must start deep within each one of us.”

– David Harrison, CEO of DGMT



“Whatever challenges the community face, JL Zwane is a leader in that. We have to provide leadership to make a social difference within the community. That is why the church is called a beacon of hope.”

Sakhele Plaatjie, elder of the JL Zwane Church Centre, Gugulethu

3) BUILD ON STRENGTHS, WORK AROUND WEAKNESSES

Common Good (the NPO of Common Ground Church) recently conducted research to determine what contribution the local church could make in support of the First 1 000 Days³ of a child’s life. They found that congregations often have difficulty sustaining community development and delivering social welfare services for which they are not equipped, but that they can make a significant contribution if they build on their core strengths. They further report that local churches are uniquely positioned to make a positive impact in the First 1 000 Days by practically showing love, kindness and empathy to mothers, fathers, carers and the youngest of children within communities, and can make a significant contribution towards the flourishing of young lives.

“We don’t necessarily want to create a ‘programme’. Rather, we are asking: ‘What does the church already do to support families? The answer is it provides loving human connections. Now the question for us is how can this be focused and strengthened to provide

stronger support for the First 1 000 Days?” asks Ruth Lundie, leader of Common Good’s Early Life initiative.

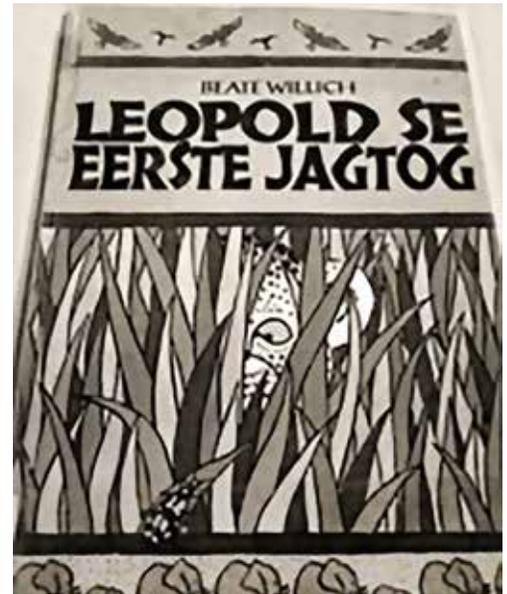
The DRC learned a similar lesson through experience. Nioma Venter, minister in the synodical service of DRC in the Western Cape and member of the ECD steering committee explains: “Initially we thought that support groups for pregnant mothers would be a helpful initiative for congregants to participate in, however, it soon became clear that support group sessions required quite a bit of planning and facilitation skill. Therefore, the requirement of motivated, skilled local leadership with available time and expertise meant that these groups could only be activated in a few congregations. However, reading to children, in support of the Nal’ibali⁴ reading-for-enjoyment campaign, proved to be a good match because it required little local skill and resources with limited planning, while the enthusiasm of children works to keep the motivational levels and commitment of volunteers high.” Venter believes congregants are willing and eager to do something meaningful. “It is often church leaders who fail to offer pragmatic ways in which congregants can participate,” says Venter, “most likely because such transformative ministry is a recent development in the DRC and will take some time to take root.”

“Supporting the sources of strength can unlock indigenous, organic resources, which can make the community self-sufficient and self-propelling – this is the most important challenge; it is easy to speak about, but not easy to do,” says Dr Omar from the Claremont Mosque. Dr Xapile’s narrative approach to leadership and community building invites people to reclaim and co-create their own stories of strength and hope. It helps bridge divides, heal relationships and leverage a group’s diversity as people coalesce around common goals and collective action. The approach is also strength based.

³ The First 1 000 Days – from conception until a child is two years old – offers a unique and invaluable window of opportunity to secure the optimal development of the child, and by extension, the positive development trajectory of a country.

⁴ Nal’ibali aims to inspire a reading nation. The campaign creates opportunities for children to have caring adults read stories to them in their mother tongues. Read more about the evidence-based reading-for-enjoyment campaign at: <https://nalibali.org>

“The starwalkers of Sutherland read the book Leopold’s First Hunt yesterday. It is a lovely illustrated book – the children immersed themselves in Leopold’s adventures. At the back of the book is a nice game where they could paste pictures of an animal next to the animal’s name. They pasted, they laughed and enjoyed eating their snacks!”*



*– Shared by Helen van Dyk of Sutherland on the DRC reading club Facebook Page (13 August 2019). Congregation members in Sutherland were trained by Nal’ibali to start reading clubs for children in this small and remote town in the Northern Cape in 2018. They form part of a network and have continued support through the DRC-Nal’ibali partnership. *The starwalkers is the name the children chose for their reading club.*

4) GET PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND AND CARE

Pastor Lundie says they do not want Common Good to become the outsourced ‘do-good’ department of Common Ground congregations, so they are constantly seeking ways to get congregants involved. Common Good’s research revealed that there was not much awareness of the importance of the First 1 000 Days within local churches across Cape Town, so they ran events across the city, specifically for clergy and congregants, explaining the significance and unique role that churches can play in positively changing the trajectory of children’s lives in South Africa.

Once the pastors and congregants were on board, they held a planning event with church volunteers, looking at their particular strengths, and seeing how the First 1 000 Days could be incorporated into church activities. They are also developing ways to ensure that the First 1 000 Days can be integrated into the activities of the church and featured in sermons, by developing biblical reflections and sermon guides to equip church leaders. Pastor Lundie acknowledges that it is challenging to build enough capacity to spread the big idea, so Common Good also provide access to information and resources on digital platforms.

The DRC developed awareness videos, both on the importance of ECD and on different project/programme options, such as Nal’ibali and SmartStart⁵. Currently a congregation mobilisation and sign-up process is being developed that includes sermon outlines on ECD, workshops, facilitated ministry formation, community mapping processes, introduction to programmes, and guidelines on what the appropriate intervention for the specific community could be. Venter says a congregation needs to commit whole-heartedly before they engage, otherwise it leads to disappointment and failure.

5) COLLABORATE WITH AND DRAW ON THE RESOURCES OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Rabbi Emma Gottlieb of Temple Israel, a Progressive Jewish congregation in Gardens, Cape Town, says the shul most often partners with non-profit organisations (NPOs) for community development initiatives. “In terms of getting involved in civic justice and social action, we’ve noticed that people are very stretched for time, for money; they are overcommitted and overwhelmed by the amount of need. I think what works well is giving people tangible things that they can do within a system that is already created. So, when we

⁵ SmartStart is an early learning social franchise with the objective of expanding access to quality learning for children aged 3-4 years old. Read more about the initiative and its programme here: <https://www.smartstart.org.za>

partner with organisations, there is already an infrastructure in place. We are just asking if people have a specific amount of time for a specific task that they can fit into their busy lives, and still be engaged in good work – not be overwhelmed with recreating the wheel or starting something from scratch. In our community those options tend not to work as well.”

Faith-based institutions are not opposed to their members piloting volunteer initiatives, such as starting a moms-and-tots group, but experience has taught them that most successful interventions require an experienced partner. Binos shares: “The minute that we expect a pastor to be a development specialist, or that he/she assumes that role, things don’t often work out well. Well-meaning people with big hearts don’t necessarily implement the best development initiatives.” Immediate relief projects, such as collecting food or clothes, are often successfully led by volunteers in the congregation. However, more complex theories of change or complicated interventions to trigger and support long-term behaviour change require people skilled in a particular area.

As mentioned, the DRC collaborates with specialist programme implementers, Nal’ibali and SmartStart. Nal’ibali provides train-the-trainer opportunities to local reading champions (congregation members or other members of the community mobilised by congregation members), and offers them ongoing support, while the DRC promotes the programme to congregations and funds the training workshops. Congregants offer their time to reading projects or start their own reading clubs for children in their communities. The DRC has also become one of 14 SmartStart franchisors throughout the country. Through the partnership, community members are empowered to start and run good quality early childhood development playgroups that can function as their own small enterprises.

6) BRIDGE DIVIDES [RESPECTFULLY] AND SPREAD THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Pastor Lundie of Common Ground says that for congregants to contribute effectively they need to understand their impact. Hence, Common Good created a course to help people understand the context of initiatives, and to develop sensible and sensitive practices. A degree of self-awareness is required to cross cultural and socio-economic divides. South Africa’s painful past means that intentional work is often necessary to help people recognise the value of the other person. Over the years Common Good and Common Ground have created resources, courses, campaigns, sermons and devotionals to help people cross bridges. Ruth Lundie shares: “The only times you can cross the divide is when people have invested the time to build a genuine relationship. Where people say: ‘I am going in to learn, not to fix.’”

Mensch is an NPO that seeks to support and empower Jewish people and those they work with in social change to increase their impact, and the impact of their organisation. Through professional

WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?

The inherent value associated with social networking is called ‘social capital’. While social capital includes money and material objects, it is much more than this. It is everything that people share through networks to benefit others – such as information, mobility, time, expertise, experience, skills, acceptance and support.

development and capacity building, Mensch offers a network of over 70 changemakers in the Western Cape, the skills they need to serve their beneficiaries better. Mensch also facilitates bridge-building connections between these changemakers and the broader community. Gina Flash, Mensch CEO, says the Jewish community in Cape Town is small, but has many community members actively working to improve the lives of those outside of the Jewish community to create a more equitable South Africa for all. Mensch community partnerships are not once off, but are meant to be sustained connections, either by hosting regularly recurring volunteering events or by helping community members identify particular needs, which might be addressed by someone in the Mensch network. In this way social capital is shared between two different communities that normally would not be very accessible to each other. “Cape Town today is still a very segregated society,” explains Flash, “but people really do want to be part of a creating a better country, and Mensch’s mission is helping us get there.”

Similarly, the Claremont Main Road Mosque is sharing social capital between communities through a project interacting with a group of impoverished farmworkers outside Paarl. This began about seven years ago during wildcat strikes on farms in the Western Cape. The mosque invited farmworkers to speak to the congregation and discovered that they were living on farms in dire conditions. The mosque decided they could not help everyone but partnered with a trade union representing farmworkers and adopted one farm as a pilot project. Congregants now conduct regular visits to the farm, interacting and listening to their stories. Besides making individual donations to farmworkers as needs are communicated, they have also established little libraries for the farm children. Imam Omar’s hope is that this support of a single farm can inspire a larger project that will involve more congregants and farms.

Faith-based organisations can encourage and facilitate the sharing of social capital by creating platforms for people to connect and to form relationships. For example, congregants from Common Ground run financial literacy workshops for participants in the The Zankhanyo Network (TZN), Common Good’s employment initiative. Through this platform they get the opportunity to share their employability and financial knowledge and experience.



CONCLUSION

People trust their mosque/synagogue/church. Faith-based institutions have an authoritative voice and their value and belief systems can influence helpful actions, debunk myths and inspire social change. Religion is a powerful vehicle for motivating people, but it is important to recognise that it is not the only one. FBOs have always had an impact on social development. Sometimes their theology/ideology has hampered social development, but often they have made huge contributions – consider, for example, the impact of Catholic education in Africa⁶. However, through government funding criteria and/or for the sake of providing a more consistent, professional service, participation in social development efforts by faith-based

organisations have generally been outsourced to an NPO closely associated to the church. In many cases these NPOs have become fairly divorced from the theology of the mosque/synagogue/church and its congregants. The rise of civil society organisations that call not for specific services, but for large-scale behaviour and cultural change (for example, valuing and supporting the journey of pregnant women and helping children to read for enjoyment as a foundation for lifelong learning) is an opportunity for faith-based organisations to once again offer platforms for congregants to actively engage in a personal transformation journey – while contributing to long-term social change in South Africa.

Brief developed by Daniella Horwitz

⁶ For more about the history and the impact of Catholic Education in South Africa, read: 200 years of the Catholic Church in South Africa. Available at: https://www.cie.org.za/uploads/files/CatholicEducationMagazine_Issue1_2018_Small4.pdf. Read Jonathan Jansen's article explaining how the strong education system (until recently) in Zimbabwe, is due to Catholic and Anglican church management systems. Available at: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/ideas/2017-11-30-sa-can-learn-a-thing-or-two-from-zimbabwes-education-system/>.

This learning experience is shared by:

- › **Common Ground Church and Common Good Foundation**
- › **Claremont Main Road Mosque**
- › **Dutch Reformed and United Reformed Church**
- › **Temple Israel**
- › **Mensch**
- › **JL Zwane Church Centre and the Zwane Presbyterian Church**

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