S1 Ep.11: Youth sector - changing the way we're supporting youth TOGETHER

[00:00:00] **Kentse Radebe:** [Welcome to the **Just for a change** podcast, powered by the Bertha Centre for Social Innova?on and Entrepreneurship. First off, what you need to know about us is that thinking differently and innova?vely about big social issues is what makes us ?ck. We love offering new perspec?ves on social innova?on and social jus?ce, so we hope you'll be inspired to make a difference wherever you are! **We're changing the way we're changing the world.**

[00:00:36] Welcome to the **Just for a change podcast** with me, your host, Kentse Radebe. There are roughly 200,000 social development organisa?ons listed on the department of social development database - many of them focus on youth development. At first glance, this may seem like it's a great thing - so many people put their ?me and energy into developing and advancing South Africa's youth. Yes, that is a crucial part of making sure our na?on moves forward. However, the sheer number of organisa?ons doing the same, or similar work , is also evidence that our youth sector is facing a severe fragmenta?on issue.

At the Bertha Centre, we are passionate about youth development because we know the youth of today will shape the world of tomorrow. Within the Bertha Centre, the Youth Innova?on programme was established to support Africa's young people transi?oning from educa?on to employment by uncovering effec?ve, affordable, and inclusive solu?ons and by suppor?ng the accelerated uptake of these solu?ons in low-income seVngs.

On today's Just For a Change episode we are going to be hearing from some inspiring guests as we place the youth development sector in the spotlight by looking at this issue of fragmenta?on within the sector. We will also discuss the role of technology in driving integra?on and using technology as a leverage point to create more opportuni?es for young people.

[00:02:25] **Voice note:** [00:02:25] Online schooling was difficult near the beginning because of the workload. For some reason, I felt like there was more work than it wasn't we were doing normal schooling and it was difficult for me to. Develop a schedule and develop my own ?me table that goes with like my home life and my school life.

[00:02:43] I find it difficult to kind of find the balance between the two and to have a happy medium where I can have ?me to do my work and have ?me to rest and to relax because my home environment wasn't my work environment. So I had to work on that [00:03:00] and I had to work on keeping a ?me, your schedule to keep on track, to like not fall behind.

[00:03:06] My experience for online learning is that I've learned, firstly, I've learned that so_ discipline and self-confidence plays a massive role and it teaches you the basic steps of responsibility, learning to adapt to circumstances you're not used to is part of, of, of it's part of growing up in and adap?ng to things because.

[00:03:31] It is at the end of the day, it is very important because at the end of the day, no one is going to help you. You all on your own.

[00:03:38] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:03:38] It's clear that things are changing for all of us and most, especially for young people, this change has many moving parts, challenges, and opportuni?es. In systems thinking, we talk a lot about leverage points. Leverage points are places in a system where as systems theorists, Donella Meadows puts it a small shi_ in one thing [00:04:00] can produce big changes in everything. One such leverage point in the youth development sector is the use of technology. We all know the technology is progressing at an unprecedented pace and in 2020, more than ever, we've seen the significant role technology can play in driving integra?on.

[00:04:18] As noted in a compara?ve study on the response of NPOs in educa?on to the COVID-19 pandemic technology has been being abler of the work and study from home solu?on ins?tuted by NPO is in the country and around the world with growing recogni?on, that technology is a cri?cal part of the new normal moving forward.

[00:04:38] On the flip side, even though technology has been dubbed an equalizer in South Africa, that definitely remains a digital divide as access to technology remains a hurdle in 2018 status, a found that many South Africans more than 60% have access to the internet through their mobile devices. However, less than 10% of South Africans have [00:05:00] access to the internet at home, the numbers are even more dire in rural areas.

[00:05:06] Moreover recent sta?s?cs from the na?onal educa?on infrastructure management system indicate that even at school sites on my learning would only serve the privileged out of over just 23,000 school sites. Only 20% had access to internet connec?vity for teaching and learning purposes. A further 12,000 schools, the majority of which are in Limpopo, the Eastern Cape.

[00:05:28] And wasn't an adult indicated that they had no computer centers whatsoever. As a country, we need to ensure the crea?on of an inclusive enabling environment where opportuni?es are not determined by one's income, race, class, or neighborhood. The birther center's youth innova?on program works to create an environment in which young people have opportuni?es to improve their lives.

[00:05:51] They do this by targe?ng young people between the ages of 15 and 35 and through skills development in social innova?on, personal development [00:06:00] entrepreneurship and workplace skills. And secondly, through youth development, by capacita?ng youth development organiza?ons, to be more systema?cally effec?ve and impackul.

[00:06:11] On that note today I'm joined by Jason Bygate and Luvuyo Maseko. Jason is a digital disruptor solu?ons analyst and social entrepreneur with experience in mobile technology, ICT for healthcare interna?onal development, banking, automo?ve, and the gymnas?cs. Jason heads up capacitate, a social enterprise driving, social and economic change across Africa.

[00:06:35] Luvuyo heads up. The youth innova?on porkolio at the birth of center is passionate about holis?c community development, youth empowerment, sport, and contribu?ng to programs in which young people have the freedom to be the authors of their own stories. So Navea and Jason, welcome to the, just for a change podcast.

[00:06:53] I'm really looking forward to having this conversa?on with both of you. And we're so glad to have you join us.

[00:06:58] **Jason Bygate:** [00:06:58] Thanks for having us looking [00:07:00] forward to.

[00:07:01] **Luvuyo Maseko:** [00:07:01] Hi Kentse. Really good to be here.

[00:07:03] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:07:03] I want to start with you because you and I have had this conversa?on a number of ?mes where we've spoken about your work with the youth innova?on porkolio at the birth center and the fragmenta?on that you see.

[00:07:16] In the sector. And earlier on in the introduc?on, we were speaking about how there's over 200,000 youth organiza?ons in the space for somebody who doesn't have a sense of the youth development sector and what happens in the sector and the work that goes on. Can you speak a limle bit about what that fragmenta?on looks like and just give us a lay of the land?

[00:07:36] **Luvuyo Maseko:** [00:07:36] I think the answer, at least the way I see it is two-sided. Um, and I think it's also important to just state that on the DST database organiza?ons that you refer to our social developed organiza?ons in general, the majority of who my director towards user engagement, you and have a youth audience in mind.

[00:07:54] So there's not necessarily that all 200,000 deal directly with a youth, but [00:08:00] essen?ally it's a vast majority of those. And, uh, I think, like I men?oned earlier, the answer's twofold. There's one from. My point of view, which obviously is informed and isn't just taken from thin air and the Bertha Center point of view and posi?on as well. And then the other from the organiza?ons.

[00:08:16] And I think from our point of view, what we've seen is that, um, compe??on across organiza?ons is, is one of the key barriers to collabora?on and engagement and leads to the fragmenta?on that we see in this space. So there's compe??on for resources, compe??on for funding and the compe??on for beneficiaries.

[00:08:35] And some?mes it's not as simple as just reaching out to the organiza?on and saying, why aren't you, so why aren't you collabora?ng and thinking and adop?ng this collabora?ve mindset, because at the end of the day, having a collabora?ve mindset is something that we all agree at least on paper, right?

[00:08:51] So very few organiza?ons are going to say now we don't want any collabora?on at all, but at the end of the day, it's about saying that you're open. I'm saying that you're open to [00:09:00] collabora?on is easy, but following through is where organiza?ons fall short. So I will say takes, it also takes a lot of work to make collabora?ons happen.

[00:09:09] You need dedicated resources and you need people who have the ?me and space to look up from their own programma?c work. So I'm guess what I'm trying to say is that it's also an issue of resources within the space. And I think this comes to real rather clearly, through our engagement with different youth development organiza?ons.

[00:09:27] So one of the piece of work that we're planning on doing within the youth development is running a course on building collabora?on capacity within youth development organiza?ons, as part of our work for that, we've been engaging with

organiza?ons to find out where the gaps are. And I'm going to read verba?m from, from a few of the answers here.

[00:09:44] But a lot of the people who we interviewed said that ?me is o_en a challenge. Collabora?on requires planning, structure and effort, as well as the unpacking of how. Um, so not only is it about geVng organiza?ons to the [00:10:00] table, but there needs to be work done in terms of capacita?ng those organiza?ons to take those collabora?ons forward.

[00:10:07] So the fragmenta?on and the reasons for it sit across a number of levels. And I think one of the things that really has come through through our experience is compe?? veness, um, shows up in collabora?on. And this again is reading verba?m from one of the answers they say compe??ves and ego people just need to check their egos at the door.

[00:10:26] Um, so I guess as I men?oned, I could talk about this all day, but that is how we see sort of the main issues and the main causes for some of this fragmenta?on across the space.

[00:10:35] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:10:35] So sort of if I had to pull on that thread a limle bit more and maybe push back a limle bit, because you're speaking about collabora?on and the benefits of collabora?on and why this is good in the youth sector, somebody might come and say, well, actually we have a myriad of problems in the sector, you know, from unemployment educa?on, access to resources, we could even look at, you know, Loca?on, rural visits, urban, we could look agenda [00:11:00] and someone might say, well, actually we need all of these different organiza?ons to be focused on these different areas, because you can't have one organiza?on looking at all of these different pieces.

[00:11:08] How would you respond to somebody who says that? And perhaps maybe if you could explore, what are some of the incen?ves that are built into the system that prevent people from thinking about collabora?on, the way you talking about it?

[00:11:22] **Luvuyo Maseko:** [00:11:22] I'm not necessarily preaching to you and you would know this bemer than others. What about complex problems, wicked problems. And the problems that we deal with is that they're mul?faceted and you need a sort of holis?c systems approach to dealing with an unpacking with it. Some?mes it's hard to tell where one sort of social problem starts and the other begins. So it's about color.

[00:11:42] It's about seVng up a network of supporter on the young people that we're working with. So not to, um, limit the importance and the impact of an organiza?on that is doing a work dissimilar to yours outside of yours. But to think about how we can find synergies, um, to build off the work that [00:12:00] we're doing.

[00:12:00] So it's about incen?vizing and crea?ng. Um, I think there's a bit of advocacy work that needs to be done as well. That looks to highlight the importance of collabora?on and where collabora?on can look to fill the gaps and look to improve the work. There are already great impackul work that's being done on the ground.

[00:12:18] But I think there's a lot of organiza?ons doing really good work. And the issues with regards to collabora?on o_en come from an issue around our own resources within the

organiza?on and ?me to look up from your own programma?c work. Um, and I think again, to address the second part. Of of your ques?on around the structural barrier.

[00:12:36] I think as well, we need to think about the way we bring funders into the conversa?on. And we need to look at how we are looking to incen?vize working across organiza?ons. Um, and, and I think because of the way funding structures are set up, I think it does lead to an air of compe??veness. And again, I think I'd like to revert back a li?le bit to what was men?oned in, through the answers I men?oned earlier, and that people [00:13:00] do need to check their egos at the door to a certain extent.

[00:13:03] I think, um, a lot of the ?me we do a lot of this work with our hearts, which makes it hard for us to take a step back.

[00:13:09] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:13:09] Sure, thanks for unpacking that. And you spoke a li?le bit about the gaps and I want to bring Jason, I want to bring you into the conversa?on now because we all was, you know, telling us about the work that you've been doing at Capacitate.

[00:13:20] And part of this conversa?on is to explore how we can u?lize technology to perhaps close some of these gaps. And these barriers that Luvuyo was speaking about a li?le bit earlier. So perhaps Jason, you can tell us a li?le bit about capacitate and the work that you're doing to transform the space.

[00:13:35] **Jason Bygate:** [00:13:35] Yeah, many thanks. So I think that, um, there is certainly a lot of work to, to be done in the sector. Um, and in par?cular, looking at integra?on from outside of capacitate, our focus is primarily on providing strategic advisory for things like integra?on, but also driving the use of technology for. For impact and also leveraging data for more effec?ve delivery.

[00:13:59] So our [00:14:00] focus is principally across technology for development, but also looking at how data can be used more effec?vely and also how we can build rela?onships across the sector for more impact. So the area of integra?on is certainly one that's close to our heart and for us technology plays a cri?cal role in driving that integra?on.

[00:14:23] And I think just to pick up on one of the points that you made earlier around the need for so many different organiza?ons, because of the complexity of the system for us, I think that that is where the opportunity lies for technology to facilitate be?er integra?on.
And certainly there, there is no one organiza?on that can fulfill all of their requirements across the sector.

[00:14:45] And actually what we need is more diversity, but diversity in a way that is be?er integrated. So that we can manage a more seamless journey for a young person as they're transi?oning from, from school, into the workplace.

[00:14:59] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:14:59] So, Jason, I [00:15:00] like everything that you're saying, but I almost want to take a step back. Cause you said something just now about facilita?ng that transi?on. Could you unpack in layman's terms? What does that mean? What does that look like? What is the student journey? What does it look like for somebody who wants to support organiza?ons doing that work? Can you paint that picture?

[00:15:18] **Jason Bygate:** [00:15:18] Sure. Well, I think that the transi?on that we talk about as Israeli looking at that journey of a young person as they're, they're leaving the school and in some cases before they leave school and how they make a transi?on into the economy as a produc?ve member of society. So there's, there's been a fairly significant amount of research done, um, in par?cular by, by UJay and UCT in looking at that journey of a young person.

[00:15:47] And really there are mul?ple components to facilitate that, that process of transi?on. So looking at how a young person becomes a produc?ve member of society and, and enters [00:16:00] into the economy. And I think that within the South African context, what we have is, um, a pathway that that is a difficult one that's characterized by significant barriers or, or gaps in service. And a lot of that pathway that we now have for young people has been predefined through the legacy of, of our own social structures, specifically things like, um, segrega?on and apartheid that have limited the opportuni?es and ins?tu?onalized the barriers for young people as they move out of the school environment into a working environment.

[00:16:39] So there is a lot of complexity that has defined the landscape that we now we're now faced with and certainly has contributed significantly to the enormous level of unemployment that we're, that we're challenged with currently.

[00:16:54] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:16:54] I think Jay Jason, as you're speaking, you're bringing up some aspects that Lavelle, I think raised a limle [00:17:00] bit earlier. So if we are, want to lean on you a limle bit here, because I think w with Jason is unpacking and sort of like all the different moving parts that almost need to almost come together to make that journey. As you said, Jason, more seamless and I'm wondering the, we are from a policy perspec?ve, what are some of the barriers that are currently preven?ng that from happening? Because we know that. Policies can be a leverage point to, to bring the kind of change that we want to see in a par?cular system. What's what's the context like in South Africa?

[00:17:29] **Luvuyo Maseko:** [00:17:29] One of the things that we also need to remember is that in try and with filler ins?tu?on is the idea of co-opera?ve governance with that. The heart of it is around working together. But I think that that sort of idea can be applied across, across the whole space. So I, what, what, I will also take a step back and say, it's not necessarily up to me to decide. Where the gaps are. It's up to the organiza?ons that, who we're looking to bring on board and amplify their voice to iden?fy that you men?oned earlier that the youth development space is, is, and [00:18:00] Jason also touched on it is, is very broad.

[00:18:02] And there's a wide range of smaller organiza?ons opera?ng within the space and what we're trying to do with another piece of work, that Jason is also part of called the YD co-lab, which is which we'll get to talking to a limle bit later. But one of the key objec?ves of that is, is for the. RD itself, the collec?ve to act as a connected voice that looks to amplify the needs of smaller organiza?ons.

[00:18:27] So I think it's, it's around first and foremost, geVng a seat at that table for a lot of these smaller type of organiza?ons to then dictate and, and, and, uh, influence a policy level. Um, decisions.

[00:18:40] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:18:40] So it's interes?ng that you say that lovelier because when you speak about that and I, and I think it's a cri?que that anybody who's done in governance and poli?cs study or any social science degree has come across that cri?que around policymaking and South African that we write really well, but we implement really poorly.

[00:18:55] And I was reading an ar?cle. Um, I think it was a while ago about scaling up and, and what [00:19:00] it looks like when you take a program or an interven?on that maybe worked in a par?cular area or in a par?cular school or in an organiza?on, and try to implement that in, uh, an en?re government department.

[00:19:10] And one of the points that was brought up around that is that when you actually scale, even if your program got really posi?ve results, At a smaller level that is actually really difficult to replicate that at a macro or mezzo level. So I want to bring you in Jason A limle bit, because o_en?mes when we talk about tech, we think about it as one of those enablers that allow us to scale.

[00:19:30] I mean, o_en?mes I'll hear people speaking about how in Africa, in Southern Africa, we can u?lize tech to like leapfrog a lot of the developmental challenges that we have. And I'm wondering in this par?cular case, is that the same answer is tech going to allow us to be able to scale a lot of these interven?ons? And even if that is the case, are there any poten?al drawbacks in doing that?

[00:19:52] **Jason Bygate:** [00:19:52] So I'll sense a double-edged ques?on that you can say, but I think that, um, Absolutely. [00:20:00] So with the caveat, I'm a, I'm a tech guy. So, um, I look to take, to solve a lot of problems first. Um, I think that technology can, can certainly accelerate the process of scale and, and also provide some of the structures to allow us a broader reach.

[00:20:16] But I think that the important point around the use of technology is, is that it it's, it's just a tool. So unless you've got the, the other mechanisms in place that are required, Um, for the tool to operate, um, it just really becomes, um, an, an another tool that's thrown at a problem. So I think that there is, there's a lot of addi?onal work that needs to happen around the applica?on of tools, like technology to drive scale, and also to manage the complexity that's intrinsic in the environment itself.

[00:20:47] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:20:47] Thanks, Jason. I think that perspec?ve is very helpful and it helps paint a much more vivid context, but I want to shi_ gears a limle bit and we, I want to bring you back into the conversa?on because earlier you raise the issue around funding. And I think [00:21:00] when we're talking about funding, we're talking about resource flows.

[00:21:02] We're talking about power. And for me, you spoke earlier that you wanted to chat to us about the YD Co-lab project. And from what you've shared about that, it really sounds to me like you're trying to challenge the current narra?ves around who are the dominant players, because there really isn't a lot of informa?on sharing in the sector. Can you tell us a limle bit more about what the YD Co-lab project is about and what you hope to achieve?

[00:21:24] **Luvuyo Maseko:** [00:21:24] Essen?ally it is, it is a collec?ve of organiza?ons looking to achieve three overarching goals or objec?ve. I men?oned one earlier in terms of

amplifying the voice of small organiza?ons, but I guess the official official sort of objec?ve we have in our document is building a collec?ve voice for youth development organiza?ons and others in the ecosystem.

[00:21:47] Mapping the youth development ecosystem and advoca?ng for effec?ve prac?ce within the youth development. Uh, space. And one of the work streams that we're also going to be looking to develop through that [00:22:00] program is, is, is funders and how, and we've been s?ll thinking about how we, how we bring them on board.

[00:22:06] And you men?oned earlier the power dynamics that exists within the youth development space. And it's something that we're also very much aware of. And even before we think about introducing funders and having a conversa?on around the way funds are managed within the space, uh, we had a. Even to take a step back before that we had a conversa?on about whether or not it should be one of the overarching objec?ves of the collec?ve as a whole, but we thought that maybe going forward, we would think about seVng up a separate work stream that looks to engage and deal with funders separately because it is a very delicate conversa?on to manage.

[00:22:42] So you men?oned rather pointedly that. One of the things that we're trying to do is shi_ power dynamics, but even amongst the nine organiza?ons that sit amongst the steering comm now with some prety powerful organiza?ons and what we were trying to do, at least in the conversa?on that we had last week is to try and [00:23:00] include some smaller organiza?ons and cried to also include a space for more marginalized voices within the youth development space.

[00:23:07] So even amongst these conversa?ons that we having amongst par?es like the YD Co-lab, There's there's an under-representa?on of the smaller organiza?ons. And I think as we look to move forward with it, what we need to do is really dedicate a few days, a few months to thinking about how we can look to challenge some of those exis?ng dynamics within the space.

[00:23:28] And that what that takes is for the organiza?ons that form part of the steerco to, to, to step forward and be willing to, to, to, to eat a limle bit of humble pie, for lack of a bemer word. And to understand how they in certain places are barriers themselves, smaller organiza?ons actually, um, be li_ing off the ground and, and, uh, and, and growing essen?ally.

[00:23:50] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:23:50] So picking up on that thread of, you know, funding and the issues that are, you know, located in that space. I want to bring you in Jason. And I think for me, as [00:24:00] Luvuyo was speaking, I was thinking about, well, I'm located in Cape town and I understand that, you know, the tech sector here is, is quite as you know, it's bustling, it's innova?ve.

[00:24:08] There's lots of money being funneled into that space, but I don't necessarily know if that's. The correct assump?ons that I'm making. But I'm curious about hearing what Louis was speaking about around some of the work that they're trying to achieve through Y D co-lab hearing that and listening to that, how do you think tech can support those organiza?ons when they're trying to do that work and poten?ally, maybe even exploring how funding tech in that par?cular context should play out.

[00:24:35] **Jason Bygate:** [00:24:35] Thanks. Kentse, well, I think that's the role of the funder across the ecosystem is, is obviously a fairly cri?cal one. The challenge has been that the way that funders are inves?ng in social outcomes has been determined in a way that is disconnected from many of the challenges that exist on the ground.

[00:24:55] And in par?cular, the funding that's allocated towards [00:25:00] organiza?ons is, is usually quite project specific, which means that there's very lime funding available to build out infrastructure such as technology, which might bemer support the sorts of social outcomes that we're looking to achieve. Um, and that's, before we start thinking about how we're able to share informa?on across organiza?ons, If the, the underlying technology infrastructure is, is weak or non-existent, it makes it very difficult for organiza?ons to collaborate, even if they did want to.

[00:25:32] So technology is, is certainly, uh, a way of, for us to, to drive that integra?on and to provide a framework for, for collabora?on and sharing. But unless the funders are aware of that need. And the need to support and to fund the necessary technology infrastructure organiza?ons are going to be trapped in this state of perpetual paper, if you will, where there . Where they're [00:26:00] constantly having to generate reports to sa?sfy funders and don't have the systems in place that would firstly allow them to bemer report to funders and investors, but also allow them bemer visibility of. What is happening within their own organiza?ons and the results that they're achieving so that they can make bemer strategic and opera?onal decisions.

[00:26:19] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:26:19] I think Jason, you're pain?ng quite a, I think for me a picture that I would love to see for many jurors when I was working in the NGO sector. When you spoke about the paper load and all of that, I could just imagine. I could almost take myself back to those days. And I guess maybe the ques?on that I want to ask you is if you had to sort of imagine into in the next 20 or 30 years, what kind of role do you think technology will will have? And maybe if we had to paint a good posi?ve story, how do you imagine that would look? What's the ideal.

[00:26:50] **Jason Bygate:** [00:26:50] Well, I could go completely mad scien?sts on your own on this par?cular point. But I think that there, there are a lot of different ways that we could, [00:27:00] we could reshape the landscape. Um, I think that the underlying requirement is, is the intent to collaborate.

[00:27:08] For me, what would be an ideal outcome is, is really that point of digital or technological maturity, where the technology almost disappears. And we're not even aware of the fact that it's, it's doing all of this work for us. We simply have access to the informa?on that we need when we need it. And we're able to provide services, um, in a way that is directed and purposeful.

[00:27:34] And, and also meets the requirements of both the individual and the country as a whole. So for me, the, the sign of, of truly mature technology is, is when it starts to disappear. I think we've got a long way to go. Um, in par?cular, if we look at the, the digital maturity of most organiza?ons across the sector, and this is something that we are going to be teasing out in the, [00:28:00] the series around, um, Talking Tech For Good is how we're unpacking, um, the challenges that organiza?ons face and making that transi?on towards digital maturity.

[00:28:11] And how do we assess where organiza?ons are siVng and what are the steps that they need to take in order to accelerate that transi?on within the organiza?on that would drive. More efficiency and effec?veness and delivery.

[00:28:25] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:28:25] That's an amazing future. And I think Luvuyo I could possibly ask you the same ques?on, what do you imagine your, your emphasis on collabora?on and breaking down those barriers and not working in silos in the next, you know, half a decade? What kind of picture do you think we should be seeing in the, in the development space?

[00:28:44] **Luvuyo Maseko:** [00:28:44] I'm probably not going to go as mad scien?sts as Jason, uh, on stuff. But I think that the key outcome that I'm looking forward is if you imagine, uh, range of organiza?ons working in a certain community, and [00:29:00] each of them are building off the programma?c, uh, successes of, of each of their work.

[00:29:07] So for you example, if you were to look at a high school, let's say in Gugulethu, and, uh, the organiza?ons each addressing a sort of a youth development outcome, Are engaging consistently in conversa?ons around how to address an issue such as a high school dropout, for example, um, if, as we know that there's many different reasons that lead to high school dropout.

[00:29:29] So for example, you may have a academic type organiza?on that's looking to address content. Then, then you may have an organiza?on looking to address teenage substance abuse. And then you have an organiza?on looking to address a child headed homes. If, for example, all of those organiza?ons are working around the same co cohorts of youth and young people are across these nodes across Africa.

[00:29:53] That's kind of what I view to be success. Um, so, so part of what we need to do in order to [00:30:00] get to that stage is we need to begin to, uh, emphasize advocate to run programs that look to capacitate organiza?ons with the, with the key frameworks and tools required to develop. Innova?ve and impackul collabora?ons. So that's the hope.

[00:30:16] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:30:16] I love both of your answers because it's very inspiring. And I think we o_en say this is the podcast team at the end of each episode, we're like, Oh, we're so inspired. So many people are doing amazing things in South Africa and the con? nent across the world. So we o_en, when I hear people speak the way both of you have spoken, I get so excited.

[00:30:32] And I guess I want to, I want to bring us back down a limle bit to earth as we sort of get to the last ques?on for today's conversa?on. And to say that o_en?mes when we think, and imagine these new horizons, these new futures, as amazing as they may be, o_en?mes we're already plan?ng the seeds for those new systems for those new networks.

[00:30:51] Well, there's new ways of working and we've just while we haven't completely come out of it, um, we're s?ll sort of in the thick of the impact of COVID-19 and the way that [00:31:00] it's really reshaped the way organiza?ons work and operate. So I'm wondering that in these amazing futures that both of you have painted.

[00:31:08] Are there any seeds or ideas or just things that are happening now that you think will really inform what happens in the future? Perhaps there's examples from organiza?ons

that you can pull through that you think what these guys are doing is really going to help build the kind of future that we're trying to, to get to. I'll start with you, Jason.

[00:31:30]Jason Bygate: [00:31:30] There are a number of ini?a?ves underway that's that are star?ng to, to shi_ the landscape for me, I think there has been a silver lining to COVID-19 in accelera?ng, digital transi?on, and also an awareness and interest in the use of technology to improve programs and even opera?ons.

[00:31:51] And I think that's a lot of the opportunity that I see is, is around the management of data and the sharing of data and, [00:32:00] um, how data is made more accessible and available in par?cular, when it comes to, to young people themselves more o_en than not it's through, through various programs. Um, and I don't think it's exclusive to, to the youth sector, but o_en, o_en beneficiaries and par?cipants of programs are completely disconnected from their own data.

[00:32:19] They have no idea of what informa?on is being collected about them or for them. And they certainly don't have access to that informa?on. And it, firstly, it's a mamer of, of, um, freedom of access as well as privacy and confiden?ality. But it's also having access to informa?on so that I could make my own decisions about my own life.

[00:32:41] And I think that the ini?a?ves that are underway with the Youth Explorer and twist with the SA youth.mobi, as well as the work that we're doing with UNISEF and PWC around the establishment of a na?onal youth record, those are the sorts of ini?a?ves that our hope can improve access to [00:33:00] informa?on and allow us to bemer direct.

[00:33:02] Interven?ons across the sector, because for me, I think that's one of the key things that's missing is a bemer view of, of what, what is happening, who is doing, what, where, how are they doing it? And what's working and what's not because that's the sort of informa?on that can direct the work that we're doing bemer.

[00:33:19] So that the outcomes that we can achieve can keep improving and keep adding value.

[00:33:25] Kentse Radebe: [00:33:25] Sure. That's great.

[00:33:27] Luvuyo Maseko: [00:33:27] I think, but also to be honest, thinking about, wait, what may happen in the future as one of those ques?ons that more recently has made me a bit more anxious, but who's to know. And who could have we been envisage?

[00:33:39] What has happened over the last year? But I think one of the things that's come out and perhaps it's something that we can see, you'll look back on and seeing it as it develops is a sense of resilience that exists across I think the wider social development space. And I think that resilience is something that for most part is something that's really [00:34:00] encouraging and inspiring to me.

[00:34:01] No mamer what the circumstance is, organiza?ons are able to pivot and organiza?ons are making the best with what they have in order to deliver some form of impact. And I think one of the things that, that, that has come through other clearly, and again, not to not to play the point is this appe?te and openness to change that COVID has, has forced upon us across the social development space and across all society as well.

[00:34:27] And I think in terms of prac?cally examples and thinking back to, to the answer that I gave in the previous segment around what the goal is, I, I think of an, I am slightly biased because I used to work there for a limle bit, but the Amandla Safe Hub model, which looks to also incorporate and bring on other organiza?ons, um, at Nyanga junc?on, for example, Ikamva Youth is there, there's a bunch of organiza?ons working holis?cally to support young people.

[00:34:54] And if we were to NF and looking at that, that, that for me is a source of inspira?on and looking [00:35:00] forward. And again, Uh, to hop back on what I said earlier, the resilience and the appe?te to con?nue to go with something that, that, that, that I know will con?nue in the future without me necessarily forecas?ng what will happen. That's that's kind of how I see it.

[00:35:16] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:35:16] Thank you. I mean, Jason and Luvuyo, you've shared so much with us today. I'm definitely le_ with a lot of food for thought, but also really, really excited and inspired that we have individuals like yourselves as well, working in the sector who were thinking about these ques?ons were thinking about these challenges.

[00:35:31] I think that's really, really exci?ng. So that was some food for thought. Actually something exci?ng that Jason and Luvuyo we are men?oned in our conversa?on is that the Bertha Center's Youth Innova?on porkolio team is launching its own podcast in collabora?on with Capacitate in the near future.

[00:35:47] We'll keep you posted because it's something you're not going to want to miss the podcast aims to provide prac?cal tools and insights to organiza?ons working in the youth sector to transform digitally and serve their beneficiaries bemer. [00:36:00] Next up is our posi?ve outlook segment hosted by Fergus Turner

[00:36:04] **Fergus Turner :** [00:36:04] Ini?ated in January, 2012. Ac?vate change drivers objec?ve is to equip young people of South Africa to be innova?ve, ac?ve ci?zens, influencing and provoking posi?ve change. To date they have provided more than 4,000 young South Africans with training to change their lives and the world they inhabit. The organiza?on is present across all nine provinces from ci?es to rural areas.

[00:36:31] These young people or ac?vators as they are called are consciously and cri?cally engaged in mul?-sectoral ini?a?ves across the economic, poli?cal, and social spectrums. Today, we are welcoming Tarryn Abrahams. From Ac?vate Change Drivers. We're happy to have you. Yeah, Tarryn.

[00:36:48] **Tarryn Abrahams:** [00:36:48] Hey, thank you for having me. I'm quite excited to be here.

[00:36:52] **Fergus Turner :** [00:36:52] Perfect. So I'd really like to know a limle more about what exactly an ac?vator is.

[00:36:58] **Tarryn Abrahams:** [00:36:58] So an [00:37:00] ac?vator is someone who has competed out is essen?al training program, which we ran from 2012 up un?l 2019. Unfortunately in 2020 COVID happened and we could no longer host it residen?al trainings.

[00:37:13] And so there's no cohorts since then. Um, and hopefully when things change and open again start doing those residen?al trainings, again, essen?ally, they are passionate

about change within their communi?es, as well as South Africa. These young people, um, or ac?vators are consciously and cri?cally engaged in mul?-sectoral ini?a?ves across economic, poli?cal, and social spectrums.

[00:37:37] **Fergus Turner :** [00:37:37] So despite the pandemic shi_ing Ac?vate Change Drivers work, and, but. What can you tell us about the Ac?vator Alumni Community and how they con?nue to engage with one another and with ac?vates work?

[00:37:54] **Tarryn Abrahams:** [00:37:54] So they are s?ll ac?ve and we've moved a lot of our programs into the digital space. So we s?ll host webinars [00:38:00] for them in the online spaces. So via WhatsApp, um, crea?ng spaces for them to engage with thought leaders with other organiza?ons, but on digital plakorms. Due to the fact that we cannot sort of be in the same room, was colored, um, being what it is.

[00:38:21] **Fergus Turner :** [00:38:21] Well, this, this, this echoes what was discussed earlier in the feature of the, uh, of this episode, uh, recognizing technology's role as a key leverage point, um, in youth development.

[00:38:35] Um, so perhaps you could tell us a limle bit more about how ac?vate in general, uh, recognizes its role in the sector, um, and perhaps share ac?vates sense of it's theory of change.

[00:38:49] **Tarryn Abrahams:** [00:38:49] So Ac?vate video change says that if young people are provided with a provoca?ve plakorm to meet, connect, and be inspired to ac?vely contribute to the common good strengthen, [00:39:00] develop their abili?es and skillset, then they can be innova?ve and ac?ve ci?zens who can drive posi?ve social, economic, and poli?cal change for South Africa and the global good.

[00:39:11] So we've also both the Ac?vate Academy, which is on an online learning management system that provides digital courses to just, not just the ac?vators, but to beyond the ac?vators, um, and the jaded public at large. And we've sort of expanded on that theory of change in that space where we look at the lack of access to relevant knowledge, skills, and informa?on prevents meaningful and effec?ve transforma?ve change. And our theory of change basically says that access to the dynamics of knowledge, skills, and informa?on will encourage, empower individuals to take responsibility for their own lives and ul?mately make choices that will benefit the greater good.

[00:39:58] **Fergus Turner :** [00:39:58] And in reference to sort of [00:40:00] what, what, what some?mes is referred to as blended learning models, how do you incorporate blended learning models in that mission? That mission to create my inclusivity and create a more radically inclusive digital landscape in South Africa. Um, and what those, um, what do those models look like? How do they work? Um, and have you seen any success with them?

[00:40:24] **Tarryn Abrahams:** [00:40:24] The blended learning approach, the whole idea behind that was to provide a digital space. For learning and informa?on, as well as the face to face space, because we do feel that some?mes just having the one without the other, doesn't give that in-depth learning that one needs. So we've incorporated social, emo?onal learning. Into all our content that's created. We have a combina?on of masterclass and self-led courses.

[00:40:56] Masterclass courses are inclusive or [00:41:00] facilitated sessions, so that's sort of online lectures. And then we also found that recrui?ng that I team and providing resources and infrastructure will ensure success just to get back to sort of the blended learning, um, ques?on. We also had fortunately found ourselves in a posi?on last year where we couldn't gel out the blended learning exactly as we had planned due to COVID. We have started, you know, on a small scale this year. So we ran a project in partnership with, for life we've just completed the pilot of the pilot should be finishing soon where we took a group of young people in Limpopo and they went through the course that we had uploaded onto the plakorm that teaches you about growing your own garden.

[00:41:56] And so we had a facilitator out in Limpopo who would meet with these young [00:42:00] people. Obviously I can open it cause you all giving a garden. So it's fairly safe with COVID protocols in place. Of course. Um, and they would then go their own guidance and go through that course and learn about what it means to grow your own garden, what you need to know.

[00:42:16] Cause it's not as simple as just plan?ng a seed, right. So that's our first pilot that's, that's gone out and we hoping to see how that's, how that's panned out.

[00:42:27]**Fergus Turner :** [00:42:27] Thank you so much ?me for sharing your work at Ac?vate Change Drivers. Uh, I, for one have been greatly inspired, but also just, um, incredibly interested to find out more.

[00:42:38] **Kentse Radebe:** [00:42:38] What I'm taking away from today's episode is the technology is impera?ve in crea?ng more opportuni?es for youth in South Africa. What we need to address, however, is the access issue and finding a way to overcome that. The other mamer that seriously needs to be addressed is fragmenta?on within the youth development sector, David Ehrilchman co-founder and coordinator of the converged network [00:43:00] notes that leverage points were present opportuni?es where par?cipants can have greater impact by working together than they can by working alone.

[00:43:07] He says that in collabora?ve efforts, they have worked with common leverage points that par?cipants have iden?fied include increasing public awareness of the problem, securing resources as a network to con?nue or enhance their ability to collaborate or drawing on the strength of their collec?ve voice, to influence public officials and policy makers.

[00:43:27] Ul?mately, we know that it's the youth that need to benefit. So we need to ask ourselves if having such a myriad of youth organiza?ons and ini?a?ves is accomplishing or hindering that. What if we could bring the various role players in the youth sector together, what if we could see more collabora?on and less compe??veness in the fight for funding?

[00:43:51] Thank you for tuning in to **Just for a change**, powered by the Bertha Centre for Social Innova?on and Entrepreneurship: the podcast where we offer new perspec?ves on social innova?on and social jus?ce. If you're curious about solving social issues in your community or believe we can make a posi?ve, tangible difference in the world, then make sure you subscribe so that you don't miss any of our upcoming episodes!

[00:44:15] Also remember to have a look at the show notes, if you're interested in finding out more about the birther center for social innova?on and entrepreneurship.

Links:

Donella Meadows: hmp://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/

A compara?ve study on the response of NPOs in educa?on to the COVID-19 pandemic: hmps://www.jet.org.za/covid-19-research-response/south-african-bootcamp/theme-2

Stats SA: hmp://www.statssa.gov.za/publica?ons/P0318/P03182018.pdf

Educa?on, inequality and innova?on in the ?me of COVID-19: hmps://www.jet.org.za/covid-19-research-response/south-african-bootcamp/theme-9

ACTIVATE: hmps://www.ac?vateleadership.co.za/
                   hmps://ac?vateacademy.org.za/

Bertha Centre Digital transforma?on webinar: [hmps://www.youtube.com/watch? v=p3j1DsXb1E0](hmps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3j1DsXb1E0)

David Ehrlichman Leverage points:

hmps://medium.com/converge-perspec?ves/iden?fying-leverage-points-in-a-system-3b917f70ab13