

Just for a change powered by the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship. -Episode 6 Transcript

THEME: Change, challenge and systemic shock: realigning strategically during and after a systemic shock

[00:00:00] **voice pops:** [00:00:00] How the lockdown has affected me as a worker for the city of Cape town. It was a bit difficult seeing that we are used to working with clients statically, so were to deal with them on an online basis, which was all new to, to everyone. So we had a bit of challenges, especially when it comes to, um, the Wi-Fi and some people didn't have fiber.

[00:00:32] Some people didn't even have a laptop and had to come and Fitch the tools from work. Which is a bit challenging.

[00:00:42] Things that were easy to do has now become a challenge. It is challenging in setting boundaries, new boundaries, in setting protocols, in place, in doing things the way, uh, the [00:01:00] workers or the officers now shed, you all do to do things. And it is just more challenging in adhering to those protocols. Honestly, speaking, it has had a huge impact on livelihoods. Because most people, like I would say myself, who has family who told us in the tourism business, um, how can I put it desert? It's a major effect name because it's an Aries. First of all is, and they had a life prior to that and they had a life. It would depend on their salaries.

[00:01:44] I work in human resources. So with COVID-19 19 taking the world by surprise, we've all had to adjust to home-based work. So a lot of things have had to change in how we assist stuff. Um, you know, with HR related [00:02:00] matters. Now they're having to send documentation for various things online, um, scanning and, um, scanning and emailing the documents rather than physically dropping off documentation to the office.

[00:02:15] As a family, we really close. And with Cobra 19, the lockdown, now we are honest with each other and then my kids, you know, they, they grew up what, from the family, from the frames. Um, my kid couldn't go to school and no, and, uh, you know, she's in educational life affected her.

[00:02:33] **Khanyisa Oyowe:** [00:02:33] Welcome to the Jasper change podcast, powered by the birther center for social innovation and entrepreneurship. First off, what you need to know about us is that solving big social issues by thinking outside the box is what makes us take you left offering new perspectives in social innovation and social justice.

[00:02:52] So we hope you'll be inspired to make a difference wherever yo are. We changing the way, changing the world? [00:03:00] Welcome to the, just for a change podcast with me, your guest hosts. Can you stop? Are you going? I am a birther scholar and I'm currently reading towards an Mphil in inclusive innovation at the GSB at UCT in simple terms, I'm

interested in institutional change in government through empowered change agents and collectors.

[00:03:21] My work experience in the past decade has been in the public sector. And I believe that transport government institutions can play a key role in pushing the progress of humanity forward on the African continent. This is challenging work and it's what gets me up in the morning. Systemic shocks come in all shapes and sizes.

[00:03:42] It could be global pressures such as the academics or climate change. It could be a government or regime change, or it could even be an organizational strategy change. Basically a shock to any system that disturbs the system enough to drive it out of equilibrium systems practitioners usually [00:04:00] require these systems to be able to withstand or recover from foreseeable systems shocks.

[00:04:05] Therefore, many systems are designed with mechanisms in place to restore a state of equilibrium. However, some systemic shocks just hit you when in ways you least expect it. Enter the year of 20, 20 AKA fear of COVID-19. They have a health crisis. Yeah. Job losses, financial crises, isolation to name, but a few dramatic events such as COVID-19 has far reaching repercussions on an individual level, but also on a much broader scale when the COVID-19 lockdown was enforced.

[00:04:42] Many headlines married, but most people thought the case of bad flu. I'm sure this will pass soon. However, three weeks became a month, which became two months and soon people were starting to not only feel tired, isolated, frustrated, and often just downright angry, but also to [00:05:00] fear for their lives. However, it did not end it when a stone is flicked into a body of water, the ripples keep coming and there's not much you can do about it.

[00:05:11] From affecting individual lives on a personal level, the systemic shock waves of COVID-19 work. We keep out by the public safe tab as well when the public sector needs to evolve without warning. As in the case of the current pandemic where government resources have been stretched, it does pose some opportunities of the back of the myriad of pricing challenges.

[00:05:34] Perhaps this is an example of that idea that futures are created and not determined. This crisis is an opportunity to recalibrate many industries and the public sector is not exempt for the public sector. It is an opportunity to move forward by creating an integrated, digitized public service, as well as an opportunity for the government to move towards having more cohesive, equitable, sustainable, and [00:06:00] responsive systems in general, one that makes government services available to all and reduces costs and delivery turnaround times.

[00:06:09] Thereby improving the lives of all South Africans from a social justice and philanthropic perspective, we would also do well to talk about how we accelerate digital literacy and provide access to electricity and data to all our citizens, amongst everything. It is futile to talk of smart cities without the real consideration that a city's only smarter because of its people.

[00:06:33] Civil society organizations, NGOs and philanthropic organizations have had their own challenges to deal with, especially with fenders dropping projects and redirecting fans

at the last minute. This also needs consideration. It is a time to be reflective in the way we frame the pandemic is having presented the world with a window of opportunity to build better, to do business unusual and to build green, essentially an [00:07:00] opportunity for systems to evolve and innovate.

[00:07:04] So anything has to further unpack this topic. Today is dr. Salons Rosa. Head of the birther center for social innovation and entrepreneurship and Lorenza David's who is the CEO at the community chest in the Western Cape. Welcome everyone. I look forward to our conversation today. Let's dive right in what stood out for you the most about the voice notes and what the reflections of the participants were.

[00:07:32] Maybe Lorenzo, we can start with you.

[00:07:34] **Lorenzo Davids:** [00:07:34] Well, thank you Khanyisa , , I suppose the, the thing that, that we hear in these kinds of messages is the sense of. That the, the pandemic, the crisis around COVID-19 impacted people, both personally and corporately back and families impacted communities. It impacted systems as people work, how they experience the reality that we're in.

[00:07:54] And so there's this, this multilayered, uh, impact that, that occurred [00:08:00] does this sort of notion I have with this as fact. I, I suppose my own, my own reflection on, on, on that story, on the narratives that we heard is that that essentially is, is, is not, is not something that I am surprised by. I'm not that I don't consider it to be profoundly new.

[00:08:18] I think this is, this is bringing to fall. Into the foreground sufferings that have been hidden for decades. It's, it's sort of foregrounding things that people have lived with, uh, for decades in this country. And now the society as well, which is, which is this notion that there is a sense of suffering that exists within communities, which, which.

[00:08:39] The, the sort of moral narratives don't foreground. Don't tell don't show because we have this veneer, the sense of that things are okay. Our systems work, our societies function, people have food to eat. They have transport to go to they, a bus to catch. They can jump on a plane and fly anywhere and they can come home and feed their families.

[00:08:56] Where as that, that narrative is about a S. [00:09:00] Smidgen of the two narratives that exist within our society, the bulk of the narratives. I exactly the kind of WhatsApp messages that you are getting is that people are suffering.

[00:09:11] **Dr Solange Rosa:** [00:09:11] So my, my reflections on their WhatsApp messages, um, was that the. The fluidity of people's lives was interrupted in particularly in relation to their work lives and their interpersonal interactions.

[00:09:28] And so really get a sense of how, um, how disruptive and difficult that has been so that their work space in a work environment is. You know, he's generally very interactive and requires us to build relationships, whether it's with customers or clients or colleagues or, um, employees, et cetera. And so, so that disruption of the world of work, um, I think really took people, um, somewhat by [00:10:00] surprise as well as the fact that still continue fairly easily working.

[00:10:05] Yeah. Um, remotely, I think what. What the voice notes don't necessarily capture is really the issues that Lorenzo is talking about is, you know, those people who don't have

access to wifi and data and, you know, easy, um, uh, equipment, um, do not have their voices heard in the same way and do not have the resources to accommodate, um, such a big change, um, in the working environment.

[00:10:37] So, yeah. The economic impact I, you know, is very clear from all of the data from Stats SA, from the Ned's data, et cetera, that the, that the unemployment, um, factors that have, uh, exhaust being exacerbated due to the pandemic really impact, um, The lower levels of workers and those that don't have [00:11:00] that kind of flexibility and fluidity that it allows, um, that the kind of remote working allows that the, you know, that, that having access to all of those additional resources allows.

[00:11:11] So that's my, uh, reflection on what the, on what the, the WhatsApp messages said, but I think what Lorenzo is talked about and how the pandemic has. Highlighted really what we've already known for a very long time exists, whether it's food insecurity or lack of quality of basic education, you know, the high dropout rates that we've seen, which are now even higher.

[00:11:40] So kids on finishing school because they have an access to all of this remote learning and teaching. So the differential that inequality, um, I think is what really, uh, It's so stuck during this time of the pandemic,

[00:11:56] **Khanyisa Oyowe:** [00:11:56] Moving onto the next question, which is [00:12:00] in moments of crisis, where able to revise entrenched rules and norms as the status quo is no longer an option in your particular area of work.

[00:12:09] Solange, What would you say has been open to revision in a way that it wasn't before in mapping the way forward, perhaps for the, both the center and advocacy for social justice.

[00:12:22] **Dr Solange Rosa:** [00:12:22] Thanks for that question. Yes. I think as I said before, it's really high Thai highlighted. What are the key social justice issues and they're issues that I have worked on for decades actually like the promotion of the basic income grant.

[00:12:38] And so back in the day I was. The chairperson of the basic income grant coalition. And, um, and so this was in the early two thousands, really promoting a basic income grant for all those people who do not necessarily benefit from unemployment insurance, but who are adults and have access to [00:13:00] no other income, if they're unemployed.

[00:13:03] Um, and I think. You know, it's so interesting that the time, you know, has arrived, uh, for a basic income grant to really be properly considered on the table. Um, and that we, you know, as civil society organizations, as academics doing research on the high rates of unemployment and the lack of, um, income to support families that, um, in our, you know, discussions with government and thinking about policy solutions going forward, that these.

[00:13:33] Are real policy options now. Um, and the grinds that the government has put in place and that it has extended in order to tide people over during this time during this pandemic of, um, of great job loss and food insecurity, um, has, has been shown to make a difference. And so it should be considered going forward.

[00:13:56] Um, same with what, what astounded me was [00:14:00] how incredibly, um, Uh, collaborative the private and the public and the civil society sectors were around food

distribution. So, you know, when, when lockdown and COVID food was kind of at its peak, um, there was just this huge upsurge in a response to food insecurity.

[00:14:21] And, and so I think that going forward that's really. Um, also another cause that we can advocate for that food distribution, um, be more efficient and effective. Obviously the schools have not had a similar, I mean, they had to be a court case in order to get the national school nutrition program back, um, uh, you know, into the schools because the schools were closed, but the NSNP has always covered many learners.

[00:14:50] So actually that's something that I think. Can quite effectively continue. Um, so in our work, as the birth center, there are definitely areas that [00:15:00] we want to highlight and advocate for policy change in the future. And the other area that I mentioned briefly is around, um, the high level of school dropouts.

[00:15:10] So our unemployment rates amongst young people has really gone up, also seen in the figures recently released. And, um, and so that is made worse by. Young people dropping out of the school system earlier. And so you can, well imagine that, uh, learners haven't been to school very often, or haven't had the, you know, online support or the teacher support, or, you know, even, you know, the kind of minimum of what they used to have and now trying to get through exams, whether you're in matric, whether you're in grade 11, grade 10, um, And so, so dropping out of school becomes an option.

[00:15:49] And whether you go back or not, um, next year or the following year is still, you know, open question. So I think there needs to be a whole lot more support around, um, [00:16:00] For learners who have dropped out to either reintegrate back into the schooling system or find other ways to then, you know, get into kind of some job trajectory.

[00:16:10] Um, so those are some of the key issues that, um, that we have picked up on that we are advocating for.

[00:16:17] **Khanyisa Oyowe:** [00:16:17] Thank you, Solange. Um, knowing that you endurance will have quite a few intersections between the work that you do. Um, in terms of the social justice space trends, I'd like to hear from you as well. Um, other as affected your, your organizational strategies, um, in terms of how, how has the situation in your organization before COVID in terms of the urgency and the appetite to push boundaries in the area of social justice and now, is there a difference, has there been a shift.

[00:16:50] **Lorenzo Davids:** [00:16:50] Very early in 2020, we, we, we adopted and it's always been sort of my, sort of in my toolkit. [00:17:00] That I think that social justice organizations such as ourselves, or those who advanced justice or those work broadly in the justice space and added advocacy, social justice, food security, uh, you know, uh, but I do education advancing, uh, the SDGs.

[00:17:15] Those organizations essentially must have. But by nature by, by, by, by intricate DNA, they must have a risk facing profile organizations such as ours do not have the luxury of being risk averse. And I think part of the challenges that you sit with, so many of sort of NGO, CBO, FBO types who are completely risk averse, they, they only do what they feel.

[00:17:38] They have the money to do what the boards would allow them to do. And sometimes they sit with boards that are completely conservative because their money.

Classes, they, they, they watch the, the w w w where the funds are spent, but they don't have an understanding of a contextual response of a justice orientation.

[00:17:58] And so you have this disconnect between what [00:18:00] boards would say and what staff were social justice activists would do. And, and, and they hold the organization back because they are risk-averse, I've always insisted that, that we have both at board level and at staff level a risk facing profile, a risk facing orientation, which means that we, we, we understand that this game to be inevitable at us, that we are getting to face.

[00:18:23] Uh, th that may be a conflict with the law. That may be a conflict with people, with conflicts, with people of power that may be internal conflicts between which directions to follow which strategic priorities we're going to be embracing. Um, and as I said, As well as external threats to our viability as an enterprise.

[00:18:42] But, but, but, so I think that the sort of cool thing for me is that we have to have a common understanding that we are a social justice entities and we have an obligation to be at risk facing. Now, when I say in that we have an obligation to be at a facing out, also imply with that, that, [00:19:00] that we, we sit down and we predict everything that could go wrong.

[00:19:04] That we, we, you know, w when, when, when. The sort of the, the, the pandemic began and people began to talk about COVID-19. We were, I think, one of the first entities. Uh, as early, as about beginning of February to go into lockdown, we, we say to our staff, you can begin working remotely. And I think it was around the eighth or 9th of February that we went into lockdown at community chest.

[00:19:28] And I said, look, we're not going to sit here and wait for somebody to tell us that somebody is sick in our organization. We're not going to sit here and wait for somebody to approve that. It's okay. Now for us to work remotely, I said, To, to the team. And collectively, obviously we, we discussed this, I said, my view is that we should go into lockdown work from wherever we can.

[00:19:46] And we did not say work from home. You said, work from wherever you want to, um, and then connect with the ecosystem. And it immediately gave staff the comfort that we were not sitting on edge all the time, trying to predict. At what point will we go [00:20:00] into the sort of hideaway? Um, and immediately went when logged on, happened on the 26th of March, we will ready.

[00:20:07] Fairly geared up for what we had to deal with. And so, so what is the second thing that I wanted to just deposit here is this notion besides being at us facing is this notion that we have to predict every possible crisis. Now that in any business school, they're going to tell you that's Don hall to do, but I firmly believe that that is NGOs.

[00:20:28] We have to go through that conversation with each other, what could go wrong? What, what reputationally could go wrong? What financially could go wrong? One of the challenges we're going to face, who's going to come against us. Who's going to disagree with us. And then a host of other external calamities that could, that could, you know, come our way.

[00:20:48] And we've done. I mean, over the years, if you look at each year, as we update the strategic plan, the issues around emerging. Threats. And those emerging threats are both predictable threats [00:21:00] and unpredictable threats. In our strategic plan, we highlight that we say what's predictable so we could have a cash crisis.

[00:21:07] You know, our donors abandoned us, but an unpredictable threat is something like COVID 19 is that we have no idea when and how that's going to happen with cash flow. You can easily begin to project. You know, this, this may be on the cards three years from now, two years from now. But with, with stuff like COVID-19 or, you know, an earthquake or something else that's that, that causes calamity.

[00:21:29] It's an unpredictable threat and we have to be prepared for unpredictable threats of what do you do with unpredictable threats. And so there's this continuous orientation. And I must say it's not easy. It's certainly I like what dr. Rosa said, it's, it's said there's a challenge to begin to navigate those kinds of spaces.

[00:21:45] Uh, in your organization because it makes it quite challenging because you have to both be celebrated and, and, and keep going with what you're doing and announce the wins and the gains and the successes you've achieved. At the same time. You have to sit down and keep [00:22:00] looking at. The notions of what threats are we facing today and begin to keep on making these shifts and changes within your organizational ecosystem, within the structures, within the designs, within your plans, um, within your models of intervention, to, to look at what threats are we responding to in this particular instance?

[00:22:22] **Khanyisa Oyowe:** [00:22:22] Thank you. That was really, um, something, um, in the sense that I just like to match onto that line of thinking in terms of the meltdown of the global economy, due to the pandemic and with many companies and donor partners actually having been negatively impacted in the financial sense. Um, how has this affected the philanthropy space?

[00:22:47] Is it too soon to tell, um, In terms of risk consciousness and maybe a pivot in how, um, let's say donation assistance partnerships are formed. [00:23:00] Is there a rethinking or revising?

[00:23:04] **Lorenzo Davids:** [00:23:04] Um, so on, in the philanthropy space, I've sort of made two conclusions based on engagements with. Our donor partners and with, um, the sort of broader philanthropy community that we've engaged with, we've had, you know, a few, a few webinars on this issue, but the one is that donors have a doctor, two approaches, basically one is the delay and the other is the defer method.

[00:23:29] Uh, or approach to philanthropy. This one is the one that the delay one is that the uncertain, uh, you know, what they need to be doing. Um, they, they want to wait until the sort of crisis has settled. They want to wait until they are back in office. They want to wait until they've got, they have enough people to make proper assessments of what is happening.

[00:23:47] They delay as they are waiting on further information to come in, et cetera, et cetera. So, so that's, uh, the, the, the latest sponsor has been often the most popular response. That I've encountered people say to me, no, no, he's still making the decisions it's

[00:24:00] there, but you know, we'll, we'll postpone it till November when we feel that, that we have a better handle on what is happening.

[00:24:07] So we're not saying no, but you know, you're going to have to wait a few months. The second response that we've picked up is the differ approach. So the lay on the first being the two options, the first is where they go in. They say to, well, Uh, we started, we can't fund you this year because we've deferred the money to COVID 19, uh, you know, special cases like solidarity fund or to the department of health or to, you know, a local COVID 19 specific cause.

[00:24:32] So, so the lane, the first being the two approaches I've encountered. Uh, in the philanthropy space, but here's the other thing that I also picked up, and this has been sort of the ongoing thread that we've, that we've seen is the, is the, the sort of, I think the unpreparedness of the philanthropy space to actually deal intelligently with this.

[00:24:51] There's a, there's an absence of, of, of, of intelligence that, that does not prepare. Uh, the donor market, the philanthropy space, [00:25:00] uh, you know, uh, for this, I mean, there's almost a sense of fickleness that I come across, which, which is quite scary for me. Um, you know, I still encounter the people to say to us that, um, you know, they they've decided not to fund this year, what they decided to fund this year and they've changed their focus on they've changed that, and they've changed this.

[00:25:20] And, and what, what is required now, if, if, if for those of us, because we do philanthropy as well, and we, and we grant, you know, we spend \$37 million a year in making grants to NGO partners is that now is the time for donors to pitch up and say, I'm in this game. I'm yeah. I'm sticking with you guys. We're going to see you through this crisis.

[00:25:41] The, the fact that you have to almost renegotiate terms with donors is, is completely it's. It's laughable. Now is the time for philanthropy to pitch up and say, we are standing by our causes. We are standing by our partners. We're going to see this crisis through with you. We'll make sure we come out [00:26:00] on the other side together.

[00:26:01] And, and I, I think that donors. Uh, uh, ground themselves, the fickleness to just up and go, because they now find something far more interesting to fund and, and the backroom of all of that, the back end of all of that is that essential social services in communities that are desperate are collapsing because donors have found.

[00:26:23] A far more important thing to go and do. And, and I find that as we go and salon should refer to it, that the food security issues, educational issues, the school dropouts, the, the, the, the babies that are dying in townships that's, those are real stories. That's what I have seen with my own eyes. The fact that they are now crises upon crises within communities, because the traditional funding that has gone there.

[00:26:47] Uh, is now gone, uh, Dennis say to us, Oh, we've got, we've given to the solid solidarity fund. Uh, when they've normally funded, you know, several, uh, township communities, uh, feeding schemes, [00:27:00] uh, you know, school enrichment programs, afterschool staff in communities. They now no longer thing. And I just go like, this is crazy.

[00:27:07] This is really, really crazy because if there was a residual intelligence, if there was a local intelligence, it should have informed them to say, hold on. The impact of the virus, the

impact of the pandemic is going to collapse several systems. Now we have to pitch up with greater resources to 45 infrastructure.

[00:27:24] At least now it's probably going to have to, we have to be probably going to have to increase our resource intervention by 50%, 60%, 70% in terms of what we traditionally give. So as to five, the local infrastructure, instead of stepping away from it,

[00:27:40] **Dr Solange Rosa:** [00:27:40] I want to actually first attach on the points that Lorenzo made around risk averse and risk appetite, and give a shout out actually to the Bertha Foundation who are our core funder because they, um, they really push us to be more.

[00:27:59] Advocacy [00:28:00] great advocates of social justice. In fact, we get into trouble for not being enough of a social activists and social advocates. So I think it's a very unusual situation. And I mean, I can hear Laura laughing and, um, but it is, it is an unusual situation. So I, I don't by any means, um, Uh, mean that this is, you know, something that generally organizations experience, but we are very fortunate, um, especially in times when there are crises and that we are called upon to really push the debate, push the public discourse as much as we can and, and bring in innovative.

[00:28:40] Um, approaches to, to policy responses and, and that, um, we really are pushed to take responsibility for doing that as an organization and not just sitting back on our research and on our projects and, you know, thinking that we're doing great work. So there definitely is a difference depending on the donor as to what kind [00:29:00] of, um, Risk appetite exists, but I agree that you know that in general, um, perhaps it is more of a conservative, um, leaning and, and I think in times of crisis, um, what I wanted to also latch onto that Lorenzo said is that.

[00:29:18] Uh, I did work on the green paper for the social economy, for the national department of economic development and the social economy as a concept, um, you know, globally and also pushed a lot by the international labor organization. Um, is, is. That part of the Condamine that picks up all of the social dynamics that picks up the social, um, issues and, and then helps to basically support, uh, W families, you know, the poor, um, unemployed people, et cetera.

[00:29:55] So, so it, it, it really is a big part [00:30:00] of the economy that steps in, um, to support vulnerable populations. And so when there is a crisis, like a pandemic that. Problem becomes worse. And so the social economy should grow in order to support, um, and rebalance what the general economy then requires as able-bodied working population with opportunities, people, kids going to school, et cetera.

[00:30:28] And so. In fact, you see the opposite of what is happening. Um, you should see the social economy being propped up. Those people who are providing social services, whether it's for-profit or not-for-profit and whether it's public sector or private sector, that, that, that part of the economy, the social economy, as it's called is there to prop up society into supported at times of crisis and, um, and great change.

[00:30:56] And so. Um, you know, what we see in South Africa at the moment [00:31:00] and what Lorinda was talking about about, you know, people, diverting resources, um, the basics of society still require being addressed. And in fact, they even worse, like we've said, they've

just been highlighted. And so, so philanthropists and government need to be pooling their resources together in order to address these issues and not just leaving communities to fend for themselves.

[00:31:23] Um, I mean, there's been some amazing examples through the community action networks that we've talked about on this podcast before where communities have come together and cross subsidized and collaborated, and really tried to address these, um, These issues that have arisen. Um, but largely that social economy, can't just be, uh, you know, volunteer based.

[00:31:46] It's got to have the resources to be able to support what is needed more broadly.

[00:31:53] **Khanyisa Oyowe:** [00:31:53] In your experience as a former public servant. You worked in that space for a very long time and as a [00:32:00] citizen of South Africa. But how do you think the public sector has faded during the, and then they can turn off resilience? How resilient has it been to a shock like COVID?

[00:32:13] **Dr Solange Rosa:** [00:32:13] Sure. Look, I think there's a lot of room for critique and I also think there's a lot of room, um, for support and acknowledgement. And I think that, um, the aspects of the public sector that, um, have, you know, stepped in and stepped up. So as a former public servant, I don't believe in.

[00:32:33] Bashing the public sector all the time. Um, because actually there's a lot of people who do a lot of good work and, and do actually put in a whole lot of effort. Um, and so, so I think there are definitely aspects, um, that, that, where they've risen to the occasion in terms of some aspects of food security, as I said before, not the national school nutrition program.

[00:32:57] Um, but why the distribution? [00:33:00] Um, I think that, um, That in terms of the decisions around, um, locked down and when they came into effect and the impact on the health sector in particular, which they were trying to prevent, you know, an overflow in the health sector. I think that those were the right decisions.

[00:33:21] And I think that the health sector especially, um, has really stepped up and done, um, And amazing, um, uh, piece of work around responding to this COVID pandemic. Um, and then I think, I think the education sector has not responded as well as they could have. Um, I think that there is that the education sector really has been in so much trouble.

[00:33:45] And, um, and so especially for, uh, schools in underprivileged areas and, um, And th th the, the highly unequal education system. I think that, um, that there, there [00:34:00] hasn't, there haven't been enough resources put to, to that to ensure that, um, learners in underprivileged schools are able to learn and continue as schools in more advantaged areas did.

[00:34:13] So, um, but I think our education sector, you know, in general is, is, is far behind. Um, and then in terms of, you know, trying to address the economy, I think that there was a lot of efforts around, um, you know, putting in place measures, like the grind, Slack, unemployment insurance, like, um, entrepreneurial funds.

[00:34:39] Like the solidarity fund. I think there were lots of efforts, but I suppose that there were a bit of a drop in the ocean compared to what the need has been and compared to the

impact of the lockdown had, um, on the economy, um, putting pressure on, on already an already difficult situation and in a very, an already depressed economy, [00:35:00] um, with high rates of unemployment.

[00:35:03] **Khanyisa Oyowe:** [00:35:03] Yes, Lorenzo. the visionary what are the possible learnings like Dr Solange Rosa, or as I explained so nicely that are coming out of this pandemic to help us reimagine and build the public sector. We want to see,

[00:35:17] **Lorenzo Davids:** [00:35:17] you know, I mean, I think that for a developing society, such as ourselves, our systems responded incredibly well.

[00:35:27] I believe that. There was from the get go a significant momentum in the public sector to respond to this crisis. I think it showed a show resilience. It showed predictability, it showed, uh, you know, uh, Okay. Sort of looking into the emerging, uh, you know, problems that may come out of the, the, the, uh, the pandemic president was upfront leading that crisis.

[00:35:55] Um, and, and I think we all felt 26th of March all the way through to [00:36:00] the sort of middle of June, or felt like, Whoa, we managing this thing. And there was a sense of communication and a sense of that when a great health minister in Dr. Mkize, And that, you know, uh, the, the intelligence that surrounded him, uh, informed it was where I think we began to feel a sense of lopsidedness with this was with the national coronavirus command council, where I think, um, outside the role players, big business, and others began to crowd around the public service.

[00:36:33] And I think there, there was an imbalance of power. Um, in, in, in imbalance in terms of where the pressure was. Um, and, and I think that often you saw a president who then emerged sort of towards the middle of July and August the president that, that almost looked a little bit unsure as to what to do next.

[00:36:53] And I think you'd afflicted the tension between the, the strength of the public service and the interest of business. In, in that [00:37:00] particular dialogue. And I think that was very visible in the president's demeanor. His sense of do we do this or don't we do this. And, and I think that in itself has as almost undermined, I think the, the sort of strength of, of, of our public servants, our public officials, who, who, you know, I think manage this video.

[00:37:20] Well, now, now face that that attitude is that there's a, there's a whole nother story about production and, and everything that went wrong. This is a mess. She's 40 then in and of itself. But I think so I'm an affecting on the leadership of this crisis and in the leadership models of this crisis, we started out the right.

[00:37:38] I do think I ever the president. Um, did not contain the power of big business to advise him on what is next and that often conflicted with what his health officials, um, he's he's health department and associated ministries in that collective decided. Um, and, uh, and I think that [00:38:00] that's where I found it problematic.

[00:38:02] **Khanyisa Oyowe:** [00:38:02] That takes us to the end of our part costs. I just wanted to say a special thank you to Lorenzo and Solange for joining us in this talk today. It's been really insightful.

[00:38:13] **Fergus Turner:** [00:38:13] Hi there. This is Fergus Turner with the systems justice team for the birther center. Today, we'll be hearing from Shawn Kaia, Andrew of forum for the future where he is a principal systems change coach.

[00:38:27] So climate change, poverty, malnutrition, pandemics, civil unrest. Well today's facing complex challenges because our fundamental systems are possibly no longer fit for purpose. Forum for the Future is a leading international sustainability nonprofit. That's been working in partnership with business governments and civil society to accelerate the shift toward a sustainable future for over 24 years.

[00:38:53] They specialize in addressing critical global challenges by catalyzing change in key systems, from food to [00:39:00] apparel, energy, to shipping, and they do this by convening transformational collaborations to drive change by partnering with organizations to help them lead by example, and by building a global community of pioneers.

[00:39:12] And change-makers. Thank you for being here with us here today, Sean. So to get us kicked off, what are the specific opportunities and perhaps if you could link it to some examples, um, of opportunities for. Uh, taking that attitude, that, that system sensibility, if you will, um, applying it to the public sector, to public sector institutions and government agencies.

[00:39:36] So as to increase, uh, the possibility of innovation and rapid, um, you know, people send to change, um, at these, um, at these, um, High-level institutional, um, spaces. Um, so if you could point us to a couple of examples, um, either examples that you worked on in the past, um, or currently, um, public sector institutions that are rapidly changing and taking on [00:40:00] these models.

[00:40:01] **Sean Andrew:** [00:40:01] So I think there's absolutely something around broadening the perspective of governments, governance, and government. So moving state from, um, a delivery of services to an enabler, So how can this statement and enabler? So that means how are we having more, um, bottom up approaches, which once again means a diversity of different expressions, the move towards a common purpose versus, uh, a homogenous way of looking at how we're dealing with this issues.

[00:40:30] So government can't always do all that work. So how has government really enabling a multitude of sectors and actors to come up with their own unique context, people in place based approaches? So that would be one level. Uh, another thing that's I think it's come up in quite a few spaces. That's almost a tension that's emerged during coronavirus.

[00:40:53] You know, we've made a lot of progress over recent years in terms of really understanding the interconnections between the [00:41:00] environmental, uh, and the interdependencies between the environmental economic and social environments.

[00:41:06] What's emerging is also like a dangerous dichotomy, uh, kind of do we prioritize human health or climate change or do we prioritize, um, human health or jobs?

[00:41:17] And how do we not fall into that misleading binary that both end? Um, there will be trade-offs, but how are we making sure that we're being explicit when there are, and where there aren't and we're not letting that become the dominant narrative that's guiding policy.

[00:41:32] **Fergus Turner:** [00:41:32] If you could provide any for anybody listening in a public sector, civil service or governmental agencies of any kind who are. Wanting to nudge their organizations, to be more aware, to, uh, work with more of a long-term arc using some of these systems sensibilities, how to nudge them, where to start, what to do.

[00:41:55] **Sean Andrew:** [00:41:55] Sure. So I'm gonna maybe just start with, um, some of the systemic [00:42:00] practices that we found in our work are useful in these.

[00:42:03] Again, these are. Practices, but they're also mindsets. And when I say mindsets, this is the kind of the guiding assumptions in terms of how we see the world. And at forum, we've developed a number of, um, practices that we work with organizations to kind of cultivate, um, you know, basic things around kind of enabling people in the system to see itself and hold the whole picture. So there's often like a, uh, you know, again, a, um,

[00:42:25] a closed system approach where we're looking outside or inside out of the system versus seeing that we're all in a nested open system. So that's one thing or understanding that however we're making change in the system is going to have a feedback loop into ourselves.

[00:42:38] Another thing is absolutely about just engaging different perspectives. Um, that's, you know, I think that it's nothing new there, but it's very easy to kind of stay in our. Siloed thinking and an hour, um, especially when we're kind of beating the same people we're getting into the same kind of reporting mechanisms, a big part of that has to do with collaboration and what we actually mean by collaboration.

[00:43:00] [00:42:59] We, um, You know, and I'll say this, having worked in the public sector is often a, um, we call it collaboration, but really what we're doing is we're just coordinating or we're just reporting or we're just cooperating. So what does deep collaboration look like? What does it look like to actually have a blank canvas and work together on something and kind of have an emergent approach in which we're building it up.

[00:43:19] **Fergus Turner:** [00:43:19] Thank you so much for participating and contributing. Sean

[00:43:23] **Khanyisa Oyowe:** [00:43:23] The systemic shock of COVID-19 has revealed many challenges, opportunities for systems innovation and the need to create truly integrated and responsive sectors across the board shooting the public sector in order to effectively serve the people of South Africa strategy, the willingness to take risks, flexibility and collaboration are essential in moving forward.

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