



CSSI 2024

Power and Inclusion in Cross-Sector Social Interactions

Cape Town | 3-6 APRIL 2024

University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business



CONFERENCE REPORT

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Introduction

FROM THE CHAIRS

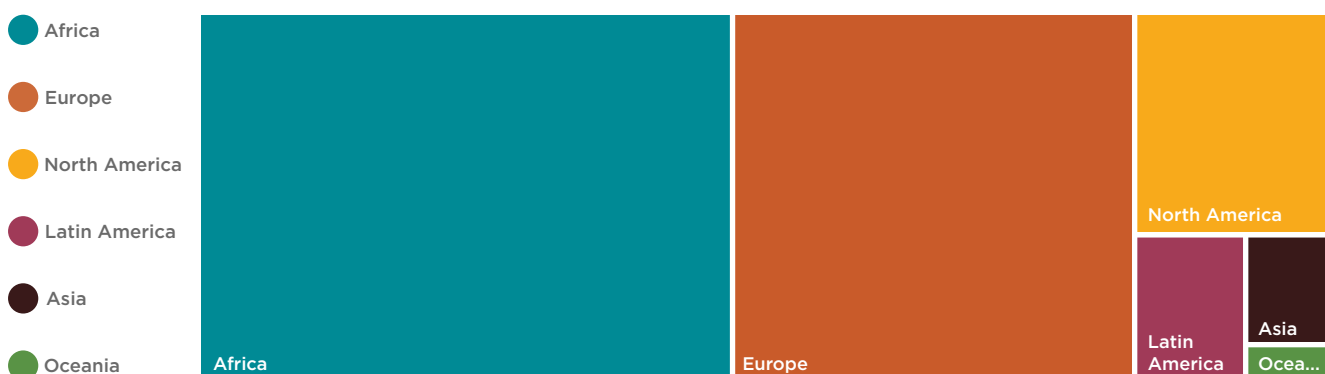
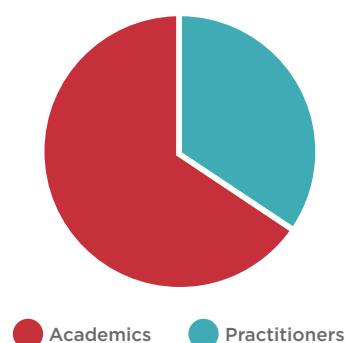
Between 3-6 April, 2024, the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business (GSB) hosted the 9th biennial International Symposium on Cross-Sector Social Interactions (CSSI 2024) in collaboration with The Partnering Initiative (TPI), PRME Chapter Africa and The Embedding Project. The CSSI symposia are important gatherings of academics and practitioners who come to share research and practical experience and consider how best to effectively design and implement cross-sector partnerships. They present an opportunity for academics, policy makers, business, and NGO leaders to discuss both the challenges and successes of multi-stakeholder initiatives that focus on socio-ecological issues such as climate change, food security, health, education, energy and biodiversity conservation.

This was the first time the CSSI community met outside Europe or North America, and it provided an important opportunity to extend our networks, expand our horizons, and make new connections. As the conference theme was **Power and Inclusion**, holding the event in the global South was an important signal in terms of localizing conversations and enhancing inclusion. Scholars and practitioners in the CSSI network are united in pursuing enhanced collaboration for fairness, inclusion, and community wellbeing. These are clearly vital challenges in Cape Town, South Africa, and the continent more broadly.

Our aim was to **build on the long tradition** of the CSSI Symposia but also to **diversify and evolve** its approach. We understood that the CSSI community has much to offer to scholars and practitioners in southern Africa. By the same token, over and above our challenges, there is a deep and inspiring tradition of cross-sector collaboration in this region. We therefore sought to create a highly contextualized experience and foster locally grounded discussion among scholars and practitioners from different parts of the world.

This objective of **fostering diversity** and **enabling more connection and exchange** across geographies, disciplines, perspectives and sectors thoroughly informed our planning and the programme. We put much effort into ensuring that approximately 1/3 of our paper submissions came from practitioners. We raised funds to promote greater access through differential fees and bursaries, which resulted in nearly 60% of the 134 participants joining from LMIC countries – predominantly the African continent. While more than 90 delegates attended CSSI 2024 in person, we also ensured a hybrid set-up which enabled virtual participation for the majority of conference sessions.

CSSI 2024 research submissions



We **evolved the design of the conference** by building the programme from the bottom up, based on the submissions received. We also prioritised immersion in the local context by including day-long learning journeys, and created opportunities for dialogue and questioning of our assumptions as well as the practical implications of our research.

Finally, we **harnessed the power of collaboration**, leveraging the goodwill and talents of so many to make the conference a success. The CSSI Scientific Committee and CSSI Organizing Committee provided guidance and support during the planning and preparations to ensure we had both academic rigour and practical grounding. The hosts of the Doctoral Consortium, PRME side meeting, and Learning Journeys ensured participants gained valuable insights that framed and contributed to their overall experience. The conference sessions benefited from the generous support of committee members, bursary holders, and other participants who agreed to design, facilitate, and moderate sessions. And finally, our logistics and organization team ensured that everyone was well taken care of.

We hope CSSI 2024 was a deeply rewarding and thought-provoking experience for everyone involved. The following report offers a summary of what emerged through our collective effort and exchange.

Regards,

Sarita Sehgal and Ralph Hamann
Conference co-chairs

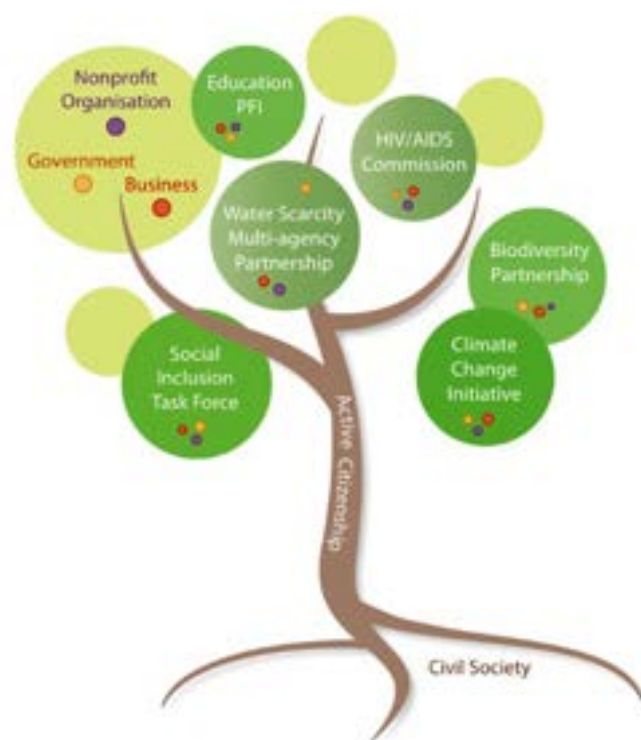


History Of CSSI SYMPOSIA

As socio-ecological crises intensify and cross-sector social interactions expand, there is a growing need to take stock of developments, to discuss and analyse effective and context-sensitive practices, and to exchange knowledge, concepts, tools and methods among scholars and practitioners.

The CSSI International Symposia Series is organised every two years at leading universities around the world with the aim to bring together a wide constituency of business and nonprofit leaders, public sector policy makers and academics to engage in open dialogue with the aim of contributing towards social impact.

The first scoping symposium on CSSI was organized in 2007 through funding received by Dr. M. May Seitanidi, a leading scholar of cross sector collaboration. Since then, each CSSI conference has focused on important themes which continue to advance the field. While the 2020 and 2022 conferences were online events due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 2024 offered us the opportunity to come together in person again, which was deeply appreciated by all.



Below is a summary of locations and themes of the CSSI International Symposia series:

CSSI2007: London	• The future challenges of cross sector social interactions
CSSI2010: London	• Re-imagining partnerships for the global social good
CSSI2012: Rotterdam	• Making a difference: Enhancing the impact of partnerships for the social good
CSSI 2014: Boston	• Innovative collaboration for a complex world: Reaching across institutional divides
CSSI 2016: Ontario	• Cross sector partnerships for systemic change
CSSI 2018: Copenhagen	• Orchestrating cross sector social partnerships for social welfare
CSSI2020: Limerick	• Putting partnerships in their place: Exploring the relationships between practices, policy and place in cross sector organising
CSSI 2022: Wageningen	• Partnering for resilience and transformation
CSSI 2024: Cape Town	• Power and inclusion in cross sector social interactions

Overview Of CSSI 2024



CSSI 2024 looked and felt different to previous CSSI Symposia. It was held at the GSB Breakwater campus between the Conference centre and the lecture theatres, which are located in a former prison. There was a total of 134 delegates from 31 countries, with 90 attending in person and 44 on-line. Nearly half of all delegates were at CSSI for the first time, and many of these were practitioners.

Scene setting

CSSI2024 was primed by two academic-practitioner conversations that were shared on the conference website a month prior to the event. These served to initiate collective thinking and reflection on power and inclusion in cross sector collaboration.

In their 15-minute conversation, Professor Barbara Gray of Pennsylvania State University and Dr Rajesh Tandon, Founder of PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia) discussed their experiences of power in collaboration, reflected on the role of diverse knowledge systems, and explained the concept of “epistemicide”. They also considered different factors that perpetuate exclusion of communities and other actors in collaborative initiatives for social development.

<https://youtu.be/SJqJe9PowDw>

VIDEOLINK



In their 17- minute conversation, Professor Domenico Dentoni of Montpellier Business School and Resson Kantai Duff, Portfolio Funding Director of Maliasili, discussed the history of conservation in Africa and what is required to shift the long-standing power imbalances that characterize multistakeholder collaboration in this space. They reflected on practical strategies from the recent Africa Community Conservation Forum to promote inclusion and considered what can sometimes appear like a disconnect between discourse, strategy and behaviour.

<https://youtu.be/MTorzYcg9yl>

VIDEOLINK



Coming together in Cape Town

The four days in Cape Town included multiple components all of which were highly interactive and promoted both rich and challenging discussions. The follow sections of the report give an overview and some brief highlights.



Doctoral Consortium

DAY 1

The hybrid CSSI2024 Doctoral Consortium was led by Oana Brnzei and attended by 27 doctoral, postdoctoral, and junior faculty on Day 1 of CSSI 2024. The interactive programme included scholarly presentations from 30 faculty at all stages of their careers from all around the world. Five CSSI Doctoral Consortium alumni presented dissertations that have grown through the CSSI community of inquiry. Participants also had the opportunity to receive feedback from more senior scholars on their proposals and ongoing research.



PRME Meetings



The PRME Chapter Africa Annual General Meeting (AGM) also took place on Day 1 of CSSI2024. During the AGM, the Chapter Steering Committee, guided by Sherwat Elwan Ibrahim, Mumbi Wachira, and Jill Bogie reviewed the Chapter's strategy for 2024. The session included an annual review and report on past activities for 2023 and a welcome for new members of the steering committee. A second panel session followed, which focused on the theme "*Collaborating for Impact: The Imperative for Business Schools in Africa.*" This panel underscored the need for enablers such as UN Global Compact to accelerate SDG achievements in collaboration with universities and business actors. Empowering students with relevant coursework on sustainability and supporting their ideas with resources is also essential in driving the SDGs forward.

Welcome Cocktail

DAY 1

The day finished off with a welcome cocktail on the roof of the GSB conference centre during which participants heard how May Seitanidi's spontaneous dinner invitation to Sarita at CSSI2018 in Copenhagen led to the idea of hosting one of the next conferences in Cape Town, thus demonstrating the "power of inclusion". Ralph shared the history of the Breakwater prison where GSB is housed, and reaffirmed how critical it was to be discussing the theme of Power and Inclusion in cross sector collaboration in this context. Delegates were entertained by Mapumba Cilombo, a singer, songwriter, and diverse multi-instrumentalist based in Cape Town.





Learning Journeys

DAY 2

The second day of the conference comprised learning journeys, which took participants to diverse locations around Cape Town and surroundings to hear first-hand about ongoing collaboration initiatives.

The day began with a framing session during which Ralph gave an overview of all the seven journeys and Rebecca Freeth of Reos Partners invited participants to reflect on the lenses, with which they would engage with the local context and the associated and deep structural inequalities.

The journeys were extremely diverse in their focus and style and offered participants a range of different experiences. The following pages present each journey and include participant testimonials.



Learning Journey 1

Cross-sector collaboration for early childhood development

DAY 2

In South Africa, formal schooling for children aged 7 to 15 is mainly provided by the public sector, but schooling is not compulsory for children under the age of 6. This creates a critical role for Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, particularly in low-income communities where parents rely on these centres to care for their children while they work. However, many ECD centres operate informally, and affordability remains a major issue, with many parents unable to afford the fees. Despite efforts by non-profit organizations, significant gaps remain in providing access to quality early childhood education.

In this learning journey, conference participants visited ECD centres in Langa, South Africa's second oldest township, and explored the complexities of Early Childhood Development in peri-urban South Africa. Delegates engaged in conversations with a cross-section of ECD principals, representatives of the local ECD forum and other local CBOs and NGOs working to enhance the quality of ECD in South Africa. The ECD forum was a particularly intriguing initiative offering important lessons for other low-income communities

About the hosts:

Pierre Coetzer is Director of Reciprocity, an Africa-focused consultancy specialising in low-income markets, inclusive business and social enterprise. Asanda Sigwadi and Lindiwe Liva work as Navigators for Reciprocity.



Testimonial

"The learning journey to the ECD centres starkly demonstrated the relatively disempowered position of the women who run ECD facilities in Cape Town. The women we spoke to do not receive administrative support from the relevant regulatory national government departments, or even anywhere near enough funding to deliver adequate services. They also struggle for the administrative attention required from the municipality for registrations and find it difficult to motivate to parents who do not value ECD to pay for ECD services. This powerlessness persists despite inclusive membership of local ECD fora designed to strengthen the individual voices of practitioners through collective action. The visit was sobering, after the up-market facilities at the conference centre. The learning journey offered an important reminder of the power disparities that impact the ability of different actors to enter into beneficial cross-sector partnerships, that black women in informal settlements are far removed from the types of relationships on which they rely to deliver critical services, and that this contextual nature of access to partnerships must be borne in mind when conceptualising the values and methodologies for cross-sectoral interactions. A valuable, if not always comfortable, start to the conference, framing the thinking and discussion which followed."

- Emma de Villiers



Learning Journey 2

Cross-Sector Collaboration in Health Care

DAY 2

Primary health care remains a significant challenge in low-income settlements in South Africa, where issues like unemployment, HIV/AIDS, and crime exacerbate the situation. In townships like Mfuleni, close to Khayelitsha, one of the largest and fastest-growing townships, state clinics are scarce and severely under-resourced. Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches and collaborative efforts.

In this learning journey, conference participants visited a community-based, nurse-driven primary health care facility in Mfuleni. This facility is twinned with a pick-up point for the distribution of chronic medication for stable state patients. The initiative aimed to retain chronic patients in care while reducing the burden on state facilities. The visit included discussions with the partners involved and insights from CIPLA leadership, focusing on the collaboration's outcomes and sustainability.

About the host:

Herman Grobler, Head of Impact and Sustainability at Cipla hosted this learning journey. The Cipla Foundation has been making a difference in communities through various projects over the last 18 years and gained valuable learning and insights with regard to sustainable enterprise development projects that they are eager to share.



Testimonial

“Our learning journey began with a visit to the Cipla Foundation Headquarters, where we explored their impactful social innovation projects. One standout initiative is Sha’p Left, which establishes nurse-driven, community-based healthcare clinics that provide high-quality, affordable primary care, aiming to ease the burden on public healthcare facilities. The initiative also includes pharmaceutical pick-up points that help destigmatize chronic medication collection and further reduce congestion in the public system.

We then visited one of these clinics in Mfuleni, witnessing the work in action and speaking directly with the nurse leading the local clinic. Her insights into the daily challenges and rewards of providing primary care in the community deepened our understanding of the initiative’s impact. I especially appreciated having the Head of Impact and Sustainability from Cipla Foundation join us not only for the learning journey but also for the discussions that followed, in which he was very open about both the premise as well as challenges that corporate social innovation projects like Sha’p Left face. This unique experience provided an excellent complement to the academic sessions that followed, so a big Thank You to the organizers for making it possible!”

- Anna Szerb

Learning Journey 3

Energy Access in Low-Income Communities

DAY 2

Providing energy services to low-income households is a complex challenge in South Africa. The interaction of resource constraints, technological options, and political dynamics makes it difficult to find sustainable solutions. Innovation and collaboration among stakeholders are crucial to addressing these challenges.

During this learning journey, conference participants visited Khayelitsha, an informal settlement, to see an energy innovation project in action. Delegates met with community members who were beneficiaries of the innovation and visited a Zonke Energy mini-grid. The visit provided insights into the practical challenges and successes of delivering energy services in such a context.

About the host:

Josephine Musango is a Professor at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business interested in doing impactful research in energy transitions, green economy, and urban Africa energy issues. She brought to bear not only her research on these themes but also her experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder engagements in tackling energy challenges in low-income communities.

Testimonial

“With a long history of having no reliable supply of electricity, Zonke Energy provides a spark of hope to the community of Khayelitsha. The arrangement is an embodiment of both innovation and inclusivity, by making electricity accessible to low-income households through an affordable price point. This access empowers community members with opportunities that for some have led to starting businesses. Our community host enlightened us with stories of the dangers of illegal connections that she now no longer has to worry about, thanks to Zonke Energy. This solution does not fix the problem of a lack of access to electricity but it is an example of what is possible with cross-sector partnerships in action.”

- Landiswe Binza



Learning Journey 4

Partnering for Food System Change

DAY 2

South Africa's food system faces multiple challenges such as food poverty, lack of dietary diversity, and child stunting affecting vulnerable populations. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges, highlighting the need for collaborative approaches to strengthen the food system.

This learning journey took delegates to the Philippi Horticultural Area (PHA) in Cape Town, where they explored various cross-sector efforts aimed at addressing food system challenges. Conference participants visited Vegkop Farm, the headquarters of the PHA campaign, and participated in a workshop that highlighted the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in driving food system innovation and resilience.

About the hosts:

Prof. Andrew Boraine and Tessa Chittenden from the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) and Prof. Ralph Hamann from the GSB and the Southern Africa Food Lab (SAFL) hosted this learning journey. The EDP initiated the Western Cape Food Forum in 2020 as a collaborative cross-sector response to the aggravated food crisis during Covid and has worked with the Save the PHA Campaign on partnering strategies.

Testimonial

"This journey offered a fabulous experience to hear from Nazir, a black farmer, turned activist who shared his journey of reclaiming farming land once taken during apartheid from his grandfather. He vividly presented the challenges an organic farmers' campaign is facing to stave off development pressure to protect an ecologically critical farmland above the largest aquifer in South Africa. Nazir's presentation and tour passionately detailed the struggle the campaign and



he himself endured (including defending challenges to land ownership in S.A.'s supreme court) to preserve close-in farmland and the economic well-being of black farmers. A second presentation, by Andrew Boraine, addressed the challenges of this activist Forum to stimulate change within the food system in the Western Cape. Through an extensive mapping exercise, the Forum had to first help local organization understand how the food system worked in order to promote their goal of local production for local consumption.

They organized 160 community action groups to promote active involvement in promoting food safety and small-scale food production to shift the system from one dependent on community aid to self-sufficiency based on community involvement. Learning journey participants witnessed disparities in land-use on the farm tour (from vibrant crop production to dumping and illegal development) and enjoyed a nutritious lunch from locally-grown items. The journey brought home the power struggles between development, farming and water protection and the difficulties faced by collaborators to promote and sustain a new generation of local farmers."

- Barbara Gray

Learning Journey 5

The Lived Experience of Cross-Sector Collaboration at the V&A Waterfront

DAY 2

The V&A Waterfront is a 23-hectare precinct and working harbor adjacent to Cape Town's city center. Managed by the Waterfront Company, this privately-owned land operates as if it were public space, making it a unique and complex operational environment. The precinct is home to about 25,000 residents and workers and attracts around 26 million visits annually. It is one of Africa's leading tourist attractions and contributes approximately 2% of the provincial GDP.

In this learning journey, delegates toured the V&A Waterfront to experience firsthand the challenges and successes of cross-sector collaborations within this vibrant precinct. The tour included a walking exploration of the waste-water-energy nexus and discussions on balancing environmental sustainability with social and commercial objectives. The day concluded with visits to the Turtle Rehabilitation Facility and discussions on supporting social sustainability through initiatives like the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator.

About the host:

Heather Parker is one of the founders of SOLVE@Waterfront, an NPO established to give effect to the Waterfront's shared value ecosystem strategy and to extend its work beyond its geography and into the wider community. She was joined by various colleagues working for or in the Waterfront precinct.

Testimonial

"As a privately owned entity, it was interesting to hear about the different ways the waterfront was building cross-sector partnerships, with local government, with local non-profits, other businesses to create a space that allowed sustainable practices (own recycling center, water salination plant, renewable energy sources for HVAC), intentional workforce development (pipeline to include marginalized individuals into the workforce) and capacity strengthening for small businesses owned (start-up ventures, co-working spaces). However, its mission is still a bit exclusive of the local Cape Town communities that are from lower socio-economic levels. This learning journey made me ponder on whether strategies to create public spaces that are sustainable and inclusive and profitable are truly achievable? Our team was quick to identify that power imbalances and exclusion of local community was apparent in the business development practices – however can businesses take incremental processes to move from profitable to sustainable to inclusive (in this case) or do strategies need to include all three aspects from the beginning? What is the best approach for viability?"

- Priyanka Brunese



Learning Journey 6

Partnerships Between Economic and Conservation Support Organisations

DAY 2

The interaction between economic development and ecological conservation is rapidly evolving as global trends shift towards sustainable development. In the Western Cape, the Cape Floristic Region—a biodiversity hotspot—faces significant challenges, including urban expansion and the impact of invasive species. Addressing these challenges requires effective cross-sector partnerships.

During this learning journey, delegates visited a conservation site where various partners collaborate to protect endemic plant and animal species, including efforts to clear invasive species. The journey showcased how partnerships can support holistic solutions for economic, social, and environmental resilience.

About the hosts:

Lynette Munro, Conservation Partnership Facilitator for the Nature Care Fund at Nature Connect, Val Charlton, promoter of Integrated Fire Management practices, and Tauriq Jenkins, convenor of the Save Our Sacred Lands campaign, hosted this learning journey. They were joined by Karen Bosman, Head of Advocacy and Advisory at Wesgro, the official tourism, trade, and investment promotion agency for Cape Town and the Western Cape.

Testimonials

“The Conservation learning journey came with few nice surprises for me. While I was expecting to visit a park or something with abundant nature and a sustainable business model, it was really interesting and insightful to have the cultural aspect of conservation brought to discussion. Having indigenous perspective of what conservation means, expanded and reinforced to me how humans are part of nature, and how the wellbeing of all living beings shouldn’t be approached with separate strategies. Learning more about the community-led fire fighting model was super inspiring! It’s amazing the scale it has reached and how effective it has proven to be in many different social political contexts. An example to guide many other countries in how they can prevent big fires from spreading. Lastly, coming across different business models to allow conservation to happen that takes into account the different needs of different stakeholders involved (in a more commercial way) was something new to me. Although that can be frustrating and a lot of politics involved, it clearly shows that any effort and any patch of native biome is precious for our current situation.”

- Renata Minerbo



"The learning journey focused on initiatives in and around Cape Town that are striving to balance urban development, social justice, biodiversity conservation, indigenous aspirations and the well-being of communities through different collaborative efforts between the government, private sector, civil society organizations and activists. Like many other large cities of the world, Cape Town is experiencing rapid growth which often involves large scale development projects in areas that are ecologically sensitive. Being from New Delhi in India, I could see many similarities between the two cities when it came to side-lining environmental realities in the name of urban development. We visited a large construction site that encompasses Amazon's Africa headquarters. This is also a location of great importance to the Khoisan, recognized as the 'first people' of Southern Africa with the oldest human lineages. Situated at the meeting point of the Black River and Liesbeek River, it is spiritually significant for the community which is currently locked in a legal battle to stop the construction. We also visited a conservation site where different partners are collaborating to address the protection of endemic plant and animal species, including through the clearing of alien invasive species.

For me, the most inspiring part of the visit was to learn about the collaborative nature of the firefighting efforts of the provincial government which involved a diverse spectrum of stakeholders and entities. While forest fires are important to sustain the biodiversity of a particular region, changing climatic conditions are resulting in frequently unpredictable forest fires that go on for days. In Western Cape, most wildfires are started by people so spreading fire awareness messages in communities and schools is critical for firefighting efforts. This part of the visit was led by a woman firefighter who has served in different parts of the world to contain wildfires. I was particularly struck by her courage, empathy, local knowledge and a brand of leadership that put the well-being of the community at the centre of her work."

- Supriya Singh



Learning Journey 7

Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Philippi Village

DAY 2

Philippi Village, set on the site of a repurposed cement factory, is a hub for entrepreneurship and community engagement in one of Cape Town's poorest areas. The UCT GSB Solution Space at Philippi Village aims to foster innovation and entrepreneurship through strong community networks and resources. However, challenges remain in fully realizing cross-sector collaboration to drive significant community impact.

In this learning journey, delegates toured Philippi Village, explored the history and development of the site, and interacted with entrepreneurs working within the community. The visit provided insights into the obstacles and opportunities for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in a low-income context.

About the host:

Vanessa Ramanjam, business consultant and manager of the UCT GSB Solution Space in Philippi Village, hosted this learning journey. They brought extensive experience in community development, strategic consultancy, and supporting start-ups and social enterprises.

Testimonial

"Philippi village was definitely a unique experience for me. When I first read the description of the learning journey, I thought we would be visiting a standard business incubator-I secretly wanted to compare it with what we have in my home institution! Instead, I found a group of passionate, ambitious and kind people who were working tirelessly to build a safe community space for arts, sports, business and healthcare activities (among several others) for the Philippi community. The solution space is such an essential part of the village, but I appreciated how harmoniously the space works with the rest of the initiatives in place. It's an experience that will stay with me for a long time."

- Renata Minerbo



At the end of the day, participants regrouped at the GSB for an interactive debrief session to exchange insights and experiences. The World Café format enabled participants to reflect on important questions in relation to their own journey, as well as hear from two other groups and identify some common themes that were then carried into the main conference days. Overall participants felt that the learning journeys provided important context and a reality check on the challenges related to cross sector collaboration on issues of social and environmental concern.





Main Conference

DAYS 3-4

5-6 April were the traditional conference days and included both plenary and parallel sessions. The programme was oriented around five tracks that explored different aspects of power and inclusion in cross sector social interactions. Apart from paper sessions, the programme included three workshops and six panel discussions. All sessions were designed in a way to promote as much dialogue, reflection, and exchange as possible. Ample time was also given for informal and social connection which helped to foster connection across diversity. The complete programme is included in the annex.

Opening keynote panel

The opening panel provided an inspirational start. Luvuyo Maseko moderated an interactive conversation between Barbara Gray, Sibongile Mkhabela, and Mahmood Sonday, which blended rich insights from both academia and practice. Each speaker reflected on their own experiences of cross sector collaboration and challenges they had witnessed in relation to power and inclusion.

Panelists emphasized that collaboration may not always be feasible or desirable, and that conflict may even be a necessary pre-requisite to collaboration. The audience was invited to consider the relationship between power and love, and how power in itself is not necessarily a bad thing – what matters is how it is wielded and asserted. The value of self-reflection and inner work emerged as a common theme across all speakers, and humility was encouraged, especially when in unfamiliar spaces. An important distinction was made between uncomfortable vs unsafe spaces, and participants were encouraged to consider “brave spaces” for collaboration.

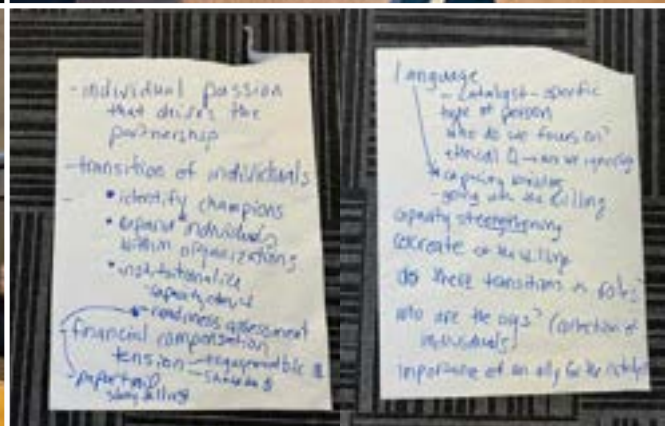


Paper-driven sessions

DAYS 3-4

The conference programme included five tracks oriented around the overall theme of power and inclusion in cross sector social interactions. The majority of the parallel sessions were paper-driven and had been carefully curated and organized around the more than 80 abstracts that had been accepted. Each session included both academic and practitioner research, and the aim was to model an inclusive session design, recognizing that valuable knowledge and experience was held by all participants, not only academics or those at the front of the room. Abstract authors were therefore requested to keep presentations brief and focus on the “so what”. Moderators were charged to ensure ample time for interactive discussion with the audience. Excellent AV setup and support in the GSB lecture theatres ensured seamless connection and exchange between virtual and in-person participants. Collective discussions were often charged yet dynamic as participants aimed to surface common themes, call out potential blind spots, and focus on the implications for practice. The diversity of participants often led to thought-provoking questions, notably about how research is conducted, the lenses that are held, and the impact on research participants.





Panel discussions

DAYS 3-4

Panel discussions focused on a range of themes from partnership brokering to various forms of impact measurement, to strategies for working with powerful actors. Each panel brought together a range of different speakers from academia and practice, and the majority focused on collaborating for social and environmental impact in the global south. Some of the themes and questions that emanated included:

- The acknowledgement that power is malleable and shifts with context and the nature of interactions, and that both courage and authenticity are needed to create “brave spaces” to discuss potentially conflictual concerns and uncertainties.
- Whether partnership brokering and the promotion of principle-based collaboration can make a difference in the navigation of power with and among marginalised communities, and how it might assist members of those communities to enhance and make use of their own power.
- Whether or when gatekeepers may become hindrances to collaboration.
- Problematizing the expectation that community actors should be able to speak up and take risks and endanger relationships that they depend on
- The different sources of power in partnerships and how data is often a critical one and depends on the questions that researchers ask.
- Challenges of “organizational ego,” and the reluctance for actors with traditional sources of power to self reflect and question their own ways of being and working.
- The societal impact of partnerships may differ depending on perspective (corporations, governments, impact investors, non-profit organizations, communities) and hence the measures of success very much depend on who you are asking and what levels and types of impact and change they are interested in.



Workshops

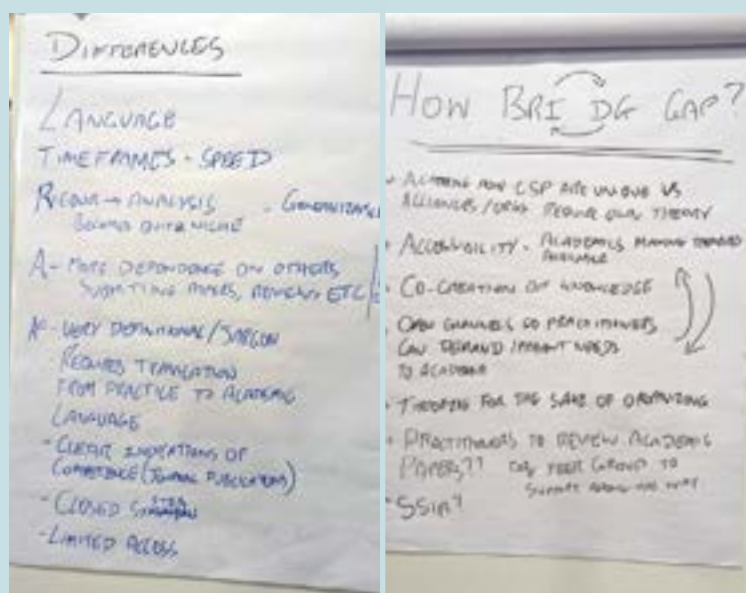
DAYS 3-4

One of the novel aspects of CSSI 2024 was the inclusion of three workshop sessions in the main programme. They provided an opportunity for participants to delve deeper and reflect collectively on questions of particular importance to the CSSI community.

The **research translation** workshop acknowledged the individual power that participants held through their roles as researchers and practitioners and reflected on the impact this has on the way they conduct and disseminate their research. Strategies and approaches to foster knowledge co-creation with communities, and to engage in pro-active rather than post-facto research translation was discussed. A South African partnership case experience illustrated how such practices can guide evidence-based policy implementation.



The **Theory vs Practice** workshop invited participants to examine their own identities as more practice or academic oriented. Participants identified and examined factors that perpetuate the gap between academia and practice such as language and terminology, timeframes, rigor, and incentives. The group brainstormed on how these differences and gaps could be addressed: One of the suggestions was to involve practitioners in the review of academic papers. A [TPI think-piece](#) captures the key insights and recommendations.



The workshop on **What inclusion looks and feels like**, offered a space for participants to reflect and exchange on their personal experiences of inclusion, belonging, and power. There was acknowledgement that power is not necessarily “bad”, and that inclusion is not necessarily “good”, since being an outsider can be powerful. The importance of self-reflection was highlighted and participants were encouraged to consider what they can do to overcome or bridge divides and foster more inclusion in their own spaces of research and work.



Lifetime Achievement Award

DAYS 3-4

Chris Huxham, Emeritus Professor of Management at the University of Strathclyde, was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award at CSSI2024 for her contribution towards collaboration research. The award was announced by Barbara Gray at the end of day three and participants had the privilege of listening to Chris's address on zoom. Chris has co-authored four books and published over twenty journal articles (and many book chapters) on interorganizational collaboration and action research. Interestingly, she came to this field from operations research where she studied group decision making (in the 1980s). Chris's research has addressed virtually every aspect of collaboration, including trust, structure, learning, identity, inertia, goals, and leadership, but she is probably best known for her work on collaborative advantage.



Conference Dinner

DAYS 3-4

The conference dinner took place in the famous Two Oceans Aquarium. Participants had the aquarium to themselves and explored the many magnificent exhibits. The dinner tables were in front of one the largest aquarium pools in the southern hemisphere, including sharks, rays, and many other species. It was a truly magnificent event, bringing together marine conservation and indigenous music .

Helen Lockhart, Manager of Conservation and Sustainability at the Aquarium, introduced the exceptional marine diversity that exists in the two oceans surrounding Cape Town and provided an overview of the different types of cross-sector partnerships that the Aquarium engages in to promote conservation. They included the Aquarium's Turtle Conservation Centre, the Marine Wildlife Programme focusing on marine life in and around the V&A Waterfront, and campaigns aimed at raising public awareness around the plight of African penguins and South Africa's Marine Protected Areas, both of which involve a range of conservation, communication, and environmental education organisations.

Dizu Plaatjes and his fellow musicians then delivered an outstanding performance of indigenous African music, which got everyone dancing.





Closing dance and discussion

DAYS 3-4

The closing panel was moderated by Nicole Banister and began with a collective dance to *Tshwala Bam* by TitoM and Yuppe.

The collective joy and energy were palpable as participants offered creative moves and danced in sync with the music and each other. It felt like a tribute to the trust and connection that had been generated through challenging and insightful exchanges during conference sessions, as well as the experience the night before of dancing in the Cape Town Aquarium.

Andrew Boraine and Monicah Mbiba then shared their key learnings and impressions from the four days, highlighting what they felt had made CSSI 2024 truly unique – and much of it had to do with not only the content of the sessions, but also the way they were led and experienced. The audience was then invited to share their perspectives via menti which enabled a quick and interactive consolidation of participants' key takeaways from the conference and insights on what should come next which was reflected on collectively. The group then joined together in a closing prayer from the Khoi tradition which was led by Tauriq Jenkins in acknowledgement of the land and local wisdom of First Nation peoples of Cape Town. The energizing session ended with a sense of enthusiasm and connection within the growing CSSI community.



One word to describe this conference...

118 responses





CSSI2024

KEY INSIGHTS & CONCLUSIONS

Consolidating everything that came out of CSSI2024 is not possible, especially since each participant's experience was unique.

However, several themes emerged from the different reflection posts, discussions and notes that were captured during the conference and are outlined in two categories below.

Research and practice of cross sector partnerships

1. Power dynamics and inclusion:

The exploration of power dynamics and inclusion within cross-sector partnerships remained a dominant theme. Discussions focused on addressing power imbalances and ensuring representation of all voices, particularly those from marginalized communities. The additional insights highlighted the complexities of power, emphasizing the need for deep personal reflection and intentional effort to navigate these dynamics effectively. This includes acknowledging and naming the “elephants in the room”—the unspoken issues that can undermine genuine inclusion and equity. It also includes being vigilant about how power is exercised, who holds it, and how it can be shared more equitably. The work doesn't end with recognizing power imbalances; it requires deliberate effort to address and correct them.

2. Contextual relevance and historical awareness:

Participants emphasized the necessity of understanding the specific historical and cultural contexts in which cross-sector partnerships operate. Without this, there's a risk of missing critical factors that shape these collaborations. The feedback underscored that each context brings unique challenges and opportunities, which must be carefully considered to make partnerships effective and meaningful. Thus, tailoring partnerships to the specific historical and cultural contexts of the communities involved is crucial. This ensures that efforts are relevant, respectful, and responsive to the unique challenges and opportunities within those contexts. Without this grounding, partnerships risk being disconnected from the actual needs and challenges of those they intend to support, potentially reinforcing existing inequalities.



Future conferences and convenings

1. Bridging theory and practice:

A key theme was the need to close the gap between academic research and practical application. The conference highlighted the potential of involving practitioners deeply, not just as participants but as co-creators and equal partners in the research process. This approach aims to make academic work more relevant and impactful by ensuring it addresses real-world challenges. Thus, creating experiential learning exchanges where academics and practitioners can collaborate more closely and equitably is vital.

The learning journeys and field visits stood out as particularly impactful by providing a tangible connection to the local context and enriching the theoretical discussions and grounding them in real-world challenges.

2. Inclusive design and thoughtful planning:

The structure and design of the conference itself were seen as critical to its success. Yet, some moments of exclusion revealed a need for even more intentional planning to prioritize inclusivity in both design and execution. For example, special attention should be given to hybrid formats to help remote participants engage in the discussions as well as some of the more spontaneous conversations and activities. Future events can also be more thoughtful and intentional when planning for inclusion of community voices. This involves not only inviting diverse voices but also ensuring that these voices are fully heard and valued and help to shape the outcomes.

3. Self reflection practice combined with connection:

The theme of reflection, both personal and collective, was prominent and involved grappling with uncomfortable truths and questioning established norms. The notions of “inner work” and “productive discomfort” were emphasized, especially in relation to navigating power dynamics and fostering genuine inclusion. Future events should encourage participants to engage in self-examination regarding their work, assumptions, and the broader impact of their research, while also creating avenues to foster a sense of community. The act of dancing together, particularly during the closing session, demonstrated the collaborative spirit that the conference aimed to foster. It was also a moment of unity that reflected the connection, balance and mutual respect required in multistakeholder partnerships.

4. Sustainability and legacy:

Sustainability was more than just a buzzword—it was a call to action for not only the sustainability of partnerships themselves and their impact but also the legacy of the conference. Participants were encouraged to think about how the insights and connections made during the conference could lead to future projects and tangible outcomes. They were also urged to take these insights back to their communities and integrate them into future projects to sustain the momentum of what emerged in Cape Town. The true success of CSSI 2024 will be measured by the lasting impact it has beyond the event itself.







CSSI 2026



The 10th Cross Sector Social Interactions Symposium will be held in Udaipur, India. Hosted by the Indian Institute of Management Udaipur, in collaboration with Indian Institute of Management Lucknow, CSSI 2026 will examine how to leverage the power of cross-sectoral social interactions to address marginalization and related challenges that impact human lives. It will bring together scholars, practitioners and policy makers for discussion and debate on such an important yet unaddressed issue. CSSI 2026 will stimulate discussion on some of the issues related to marginalization, its impact, and role of cross sectoral social interaction to address marginalization issues.

Bringing CSSI to India is particularly appropriate for this symposium theme. India serves as an interesting context to understand marginalization challenges and explore the role of cross-sectoral social interaction in addressing those challenges. Indian societies are plagued with caste, gender and economic marginalization and their intersectionality. It therefore provides an opportunity to understand how such marginalization gets manifested and how they impact human lives. Further, there are several attempts by social enterprises and government to bring together partners across sectors to address marginalization and associated challenges. The mandatory CSR regime in India, post-2013, also provides an interesting institutional context to understand enablers and inhibitors of cross-sectoral interactions to confront marginalization. Understanding some of these initiatives could contribute significantly to academia, practice, as well as policy making. Understanding marginalization challenges and exploring the ways to address those will also help in achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

ANNEXES



CSSI 2024

Power and Inclusion in Cross-Sector Social Interactions



Cape Town | 3-6 APRIL 2024
University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business

PROGRAMME

DAY 1 | WED 3 APRIL 2024

Doctoral Consortium and PRME Annual General Meeting

	Lecture Theatre 06	Lecture Theatre 07
8:00 – 13:00	Morning Session: Doctoral Consortium Break out rooms: Executive Room, Boardroom 1 and Boardroom 2	9:30 – 12:45 Session 1: PRME Chapter Africa Annual General Meeting Session 2: Panel Discussion - Collaborating for impact: The imperative of business schools in Africa
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch for Doctoral Consortium and PRME participants (GSB Protea Breakwater Restaurant)	
14:00 – 17:00	Afternoon Session: Doctoral Consortium	Session 3: i5 Workshop
17:00 – 19:00	Welcome Cocktail for all conference participants with music by Mapumba Cilombo (GSB Conference Centre rooftop)	

DAY 2 | THURS 4 APRIL 2024

Learning Journey (LJ) Day

8:00 – 9:00	Registration – coffee / tea						
9:00 – 9:30	Introductory Plenary Session (GSB Conference Centre Auditorium) Introducing the learning journeys and setting the scene for the day						
9:30 – 10:00	Travel to learning journey sites						
10:00 – 15:00	LJ 02 Cross-sector collaboration for early childhood development Hosts: Nico Pascarel and Pierre Coetzer (Reciprocity) Location: Langa township	LJ 03 Cross-sector collaboration in health care Hosts: Herman Grobler and David Grier (Cipla Foundation) Location: Cipla HQ and Mfuleni township	LJ 04 Energy access in low-income communities Host: Josephine Musango (University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business) Location: Khayelitsha	LJ 05 Partnering for food system change Hosts: Andrew Boraime and Tessa Chittenden (Western Cape Economic Development Partnership) Location: Philippi	LJ 06 Collaboration at the V&A Waterfront Host: Heather Parker (SOLVE@ Waterfront) Location: V&A Waterfront	LJ 07 Building partnerships between economic and conservation support organisations Host: Lynette Munro (Nature Connect) Location: Kenilworth	LJ 08 Supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in Philippi Village Hosts: Bushra Razack and Vanessa Ramanjam (Philippi Village) Location: Philippi
15:00 – 16:00	Travel back to GSB – coffee / tea at Conference Centre at 15:30						
16:00 – 17:30	Interactive debrief and exchange (GSB Conference Centre Auditorium) Moderators: Ralph Hamann and Rebecca Freeth Sharing perspectives and learnings from the visits – common themes, ideas, approaches						

DAY 3 | FRI 5 APRIL 2024

Main Conference Day 1

8:00 – 8:45	Registration – coffee / tea				
8:45 – 9:15	Welcome and Opening (GSB Conference Centre Auditorium)				
9:15 – 10:30	Plenary Keynote Panel Speakers: Barbara Gray, Sibongile Mkhabela, Mahmood Soday Moderator: Luvuyo Maseko				
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee / tea in Conference Centre				
THEMATIC TRACKS	TRACK A Knowledge and identity in collaboration	TRACK B Collaboration to promote inclusion	TRACK C Inclusion in the process of collaboration	TRACK D Convening, envisioning, storytelling	TRACK E Technologies, models, scenarios
GSB B Block	LT 02	LT 04	LT 05	LT 06	LT 07
11:00 – 12:40 Parallel sessions - 1	A1 Framing cognition or identity Moderator: Jonathan Doh When a public good becomes a common good: The challenges of institutionalizing collective action (Bertello , Ricciardi, Forliano, De Bernardi) We are gonna need a bigger frame: A frame alignment method to include diverse perspectives in transformative innovation (Margolis*) How Organizations in Cross-Sector Partnerships Reach A Compromise on Differently Perceived Social Risks (Fiske)	B1 ... in food systems Moderator: Jill Bogie Participatory program assessment of a resilience and food security activity in Zimbabwe: Analyzing youth and adult perspectives to improve relationships, services, and results (Mguwata , Chiromo, Jonson, Matsinhe) Alternative food systems and social alliances: The Valdivia-Antioquia Colombia case (Diaz* , Monsalve, Ordóñez, Muñoz, Rodríguez, Marín) Driving sustainable dairy development in Kenya: Unlocking the power of cross-sector collaboration (Gitundu) Fostering participation across the policy cycle for food systems transformation: Examples from across the world (Ilie*)	C1 Panel Conversation (online speakers/moderator) Working with communities: Can partnership brokering help to navigate power imbalances (and promote inclusion) Conveners: Leda Stott* / Bulbul Baksi* Moderator: Leda Stott* Drawing upon experiences from different country and cultural contexts the panel will discuss whether partnership brokering and the promotion of principle-based collaboration can make a difference in the navigation of power with and among marginalised communities, and how it might assist communities to express and make use of their own power. Speakers: Kwasi Amponsah Boateng* Anindita Majumder* Olukayode Soremekun (Sbaba)* Peni Tawake*	D1 Convening and tensions Moderator: Marlene le Ber Building the boat while sailing – How orchestrators navigate member engagement tensions when building multi-stakeholder coalitions (Pfisterer , Maas) The role of orchestrators and catalysts in building and progressing cross sector partnerships: Evidence from South Africa (Szerb , Sehgal) Difficult Conversations (De Villiers) The challenge of establishing cross-sector partnerships: Problematising power asymmetry in the global south's water governance (Abreu , Nascimento, Studart)	E1 Technology and innovation Moderator: Annika Surmeier Building cross-sector collaborations for sustainable seafood supply chains: Using technology to support marginalised small-scale fishing communities in South Africa (Meyer , Luiz, Grutter, Parker) Cross-sectoral approach in ending technology facilitated gender-based violence - a global research (Daniel*) Big Data Sharing in Cross-Sectoral Partnerships: The Cognitive and Social Grounds of Willingness to Share (Renzi*)
12:40 – 13:50	Lunch in Conference Centre				

THEMATIC TRACKS	TRACK A Knowledge and identity in collaboration	TRACK B Collaboration to promote inclusion	TRACK C Inclusion in the process of collaboration	TRACK D Convening, envisioning, storytelling	TRACK E Technologies, models, scenarios
GSB B Block	LT 02	LT 04	LT 05	LT 06	LT 07
13:50 – 15:30 Parallel Sessions - 2	<p>A2 Workshop (Executive Room)</p> <p>Embedded Research Translation: Conducting contextual and relevant research for social impact through equitable academic – practitioner knowledge co-creation</p> <p>Conveners: Priyanka Brunese / Chelsea Coakley / Yuehwen Yih</p> <p>In this workshop participants will first take stock of their power as academic researchers and practitioners in field, and will then engage in activities to re-imagine/ re-design the research lifecycle to intentionally embed translation and utilization of research in practice and policy.</p>	<p>B2 ... in environmental sustainability and climate action</p> <p>Moderator: Monica Mbiba</p> <p>Co-creation of an eco-cultural corridor in the lower Eerste River Catchment, Western Cape, South Africa, to scale social impact: A case study of the Faure Community (Lewis)</p> <p>Cross Sector Partnership for Sustainability: Lessons from Lake Tana Watershed, Ethiopia (Adgo, Waldmann, Fetene, Tiruneh, Andarge, Terefe, Asfaw)</p> <p>Exploring cross-sector partnership structures for equitable local climate action: a qualitative study utilizing structuration theory (Samuel*, Clarke, Isabu)</p> <p>Rural Action for Climate Resilience (Harding)</p>	<p>C2 Fostering inclusion in context</p> <p>Moderator: Anna Szerb</p> <p>Power imbalance in local corporate-community interactions: a human security perspective and evidence from Colombia (Bojicic-Dzelilovic, Martin)</p> <p>The role of political and cultural embeddedness of global healthcare innovations: A case study of global healthcare partnerships (Karakulak, Stadler)</p> <p>Erased from the table: Perils and pathways forward for CSSI in transformative innovation (Ganson)</p> <p>Fostering cross-sector collaboration to combat corruption in South Africa (Madonsela*)</p>	<p>D2 Panel Conversation</p> <p>Working with powerful actors</p> <p>Convenor: Sarita Sehgal Moderator: Jim Austin</p> <p>This panel will bring together actors who hold different sources of power to engage in authentic dialogue and exchange on how to navigate and transcend deeply entrenched power imbalances. Speakers from Business, Philanthropy, Government, and Civil society will briefly share their perspectives and experience before engaging in active discussion with the audience.</p> <p>Speakers: Heena Brahmbhatt Tim Conibear Caroline Kioko Adam Kendall</p>	<p>E2 Scenarios, stories and visualization</p> <p>Moderator: Ralph Hamann</p> <p>Collectively re-imagining the future of polarised situations (Freeth)</p> <p>Blowing into the Embers, Sparking Substantive Change: Storytelling as the Key to Community Development (Mkhabela, Poee, Magalela)</p> <p>Collective imagination and visualization for a desired future (Lin)</p>
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee / tea in GSB B Block				
16:00 – 17:40 Parallel Sessions - 3	<p>A3 Learning in collaboration</p> <p>Moderator: Andrew Boraine</p> <p>A Review of Learning in Sustainability-Oriented, Cross-sector Partnerships (Singh)</p> <p>(Re)considering sustainability leadership at the nexus of biodiversity and inclusive economic growth (Stanberry)</p> <p>Inclusive Insurance Innovation Lab (Jones)</p> <p>Learning Communities as a Sphere for World-Building: The Case of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia (Gutiérrez Pérez, Gómez Cortés, Díaz Ramírez)</p>	<p>B3 Panel Conversation</p> <p>No one left behind? What role for business schools in enabling inclusive partnerships?</p> <p>Convenor: Rob Van Tulder</p> <p>This panel explores how to empower students, academics and practitioners at the same time. How to design inclusive approaches for teaching and research on effective cross-sector partnerships? What role for Partnership Portfolio Management. This panel will introduce a poster competition and share the experience of scholars on how to use the recently released book 'Principles of Sustainable Business' that is part of the PRME series. (www.principlesofsustainable-business.nl)</p> <p>Speakers: Oana Branzei David Horan* Amelia Clark Mumbi Wachira Luke Fisk</p>	<p>C3 Workshop (Executive room)</p> <p>What does inclusion look and feel like, and who are we asking?</p> <p>Conveners: Landisiwe Binza / Shazia Islamshah / Sarah Miller</p> <p>In this interactive workshop participants will explore inclusion from a variety of perspectives and consider individual and institutional barriers as well as strategies to address them. The conversational design of the session will promote active inclusion of all participants' views, experiences and insights.</p>	<p>D3 Convening and power</p> <p>Moderator: Kay Lala-Sides</p> <p>Ensuring equal voice at a tilted table? An explorative study among partnership conveners about their role and practices in addressing power dynamics (Van Hille, DiVito, van Wijk)</p> <p>Building and sustaining collective power (Zerda*)</p> <p>Cooperation at Eye Level in Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: Preparing Guidance for Practitioners (Hemmati*, Limbach)</p> <p>Power and partnership, the role of a collaborative intermediary in igniting transformative potential (Cullinan, Winkler)</p>	<p>E3 Business model innovation</p> <p>Moderator: Camille Meyer</p> <p>Digitally Enabled Business Models for a Fair and Sustainable Energy Transition (Oja Da Silva, Bohnsack)</p> <p>Combining cross-sector partnerships with decarbonization tendencies, digitalization, and energy transition decentralization (Abreu, Siebra, Linneberg)</p> <p>Building Innovative Business Models and Sustained Capabilities for Rapidly Transforming Electricity Sectors: Conceptual Considerations and Preliminary Evidence from a Cross-Country Comparison of South Africa and Switzerland (Worch, Makiva, Kabinga)</p> <p>Frugal Innovations at the base of the pyramid: Inclusive Business models and partnering to leverage societal benefits (Kyejijusa)</p>

17:45 – 18:30 Auditorium	Plenary Connecting Session – Moderator: Lea Stadtler Presentation of CSSI Lifetime Achievement Award by Barbara Gray
18:45 – 21:00	Conference Dinner at the Two Oceans Aquarium Brief walk from the GSB to the Aquarium Keynote talk by Helen Lockhart , Conservation & Sustainability Manager at Two Oceans Aquarium, on collaboration for marine conservation South African traditional music performance with Dizu Plaatjies and friends

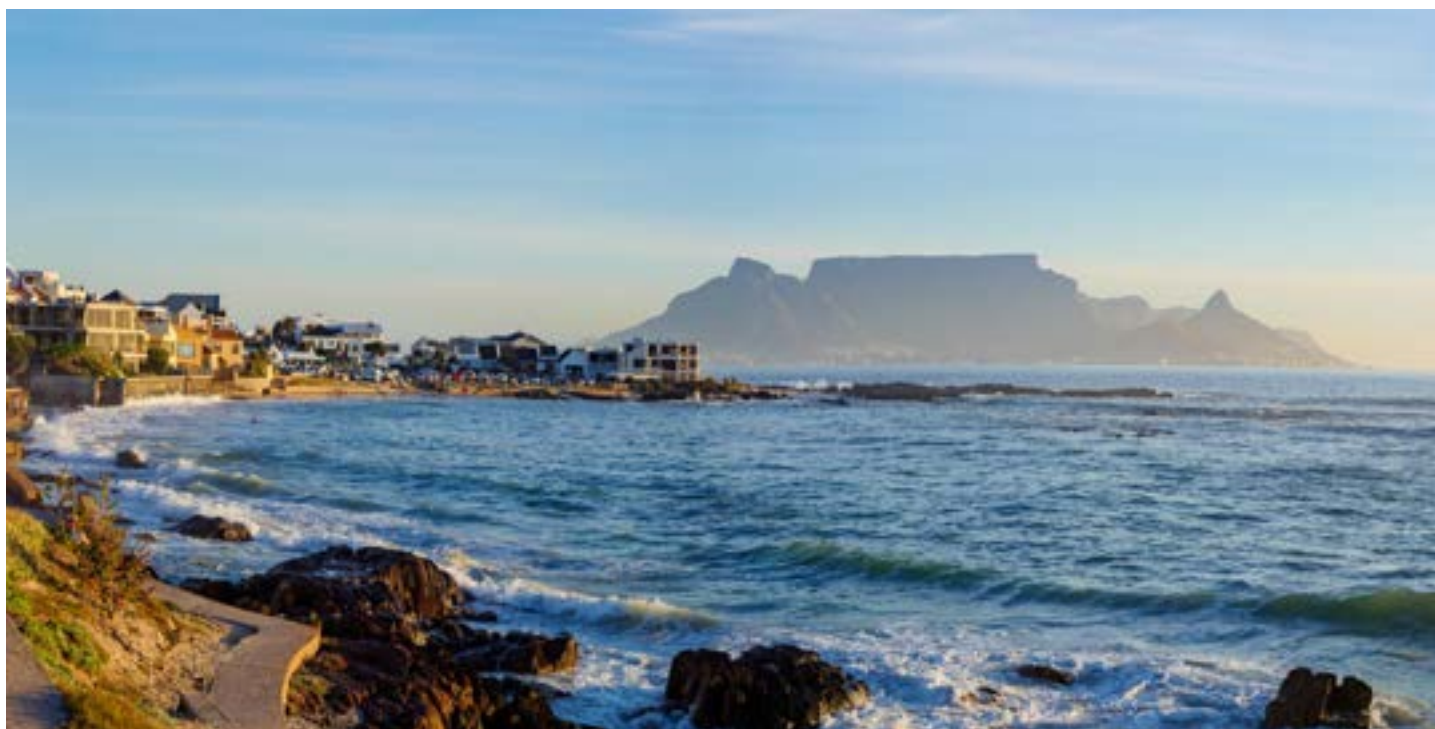
DAY 4 | SAT 6 APRIL 2024

Main Conference Day 2

8:45 – 9:15	Plenary Connecting Session (GSB Conference Centre Auditorium) - Moderators: Darian Stibbe and Sarita Sehgal				
THEMATIC TRACKS	TRACK A Knowledge and identity in collaboration	TRACK B Collaboration to promote inclusion	TRACK C Inclusion in the process of collaboration	TRACK D Connecting across divides	TRACK E Examining impact
GSB B Block	LT 02	LT 04	LT 05	LT 06	LT 07
9:20 – 11:00 Parallel sessions - 4	A4 Knowledge inclusion and research-practice collaboration Moderator: Cynthia Rayner Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion accountability in knowledge mobilization: Insights from a cross-sector action research partnership (Cornelius-Hernandez) Dynamics of power and inclusion / exclusion in collaborative interdisciplinary research teams (Freeth) Better understanding and evidencing the processes and outcomes of community engagement with global health research (Bladon) From intent to action: Embedding organizational practices of equity, diversity, inclusion & decolonization in leadership (Le Ber , Fryday-Field)	B4 ... in the workplace and labour markets Moderator: Jill Bogie Fostering sustainable partnerships: A systemic approach linking TVET college system and the automotive industry in South Africa (Burmeister , Patel) Networking power: A partnering model for achieving inclusive decision-making between government and grassroots (Paterson) Exploring the effects of menstruation leave (Mother's Day) on the representation and retention of women in Zambian organizations (Chirwa) Rethinking partnership models for greater impact: lessons from the Year Beyond programme (Boulle)	C4 ... in grant-making and international development Moderator: Brian Ganson Shifting power through flexible grant making: Experiences of a feminist fund in Uganda (Afoyomungu, Bogere , Tamale, Mbabazi) Demystifying partnerships between international development actors and private sector organizations: Multi-case study of USAID's private sector partnerships (Brunese , Yih) Drought and small-scale farming: Coping mechanisms and the needs for adaptation and mitigation in Kenya's Narok and Nakuru counties (Falkenberg*) Articulating social alliances in post-disaster reconstruction situations: The case of Presentes in Medellín – Antioquia, Colombia (Díaz, Ordóñez* , Monsalve)	D4 Panel Conversation Advancing sustainability and climate action through collaboration with African universities Convener: Mumbi Wachira PRME Chapter Africa This panel will explore the opportunities African universities have as brokers and catalysts for cross-sector collaboration on sustainability and climate action on the continent. The discussion will focus on opportunities for joint efforts in research, curriculum development, community engagement, and institutional operations to promote sustainable practices, drive ambition towards achieving the SDGs and address regional challenges. Speakers: Rob Van Tulder Priyanka Brunese Jim Austin Ralph Hamann Joanne Harding	E4 Exploring Impact and value of collaboration Moderator: Cecile Feront Results of multi-stakeholder partnerships: Social, ecological and economic impacts at the local level (Hemmati* , Limbach) Appropriating relational value from collaborative networks for sustainability (DiVito , Good, van Wijk, van Hille, Lam, Martina, Wakkee) Countervailing idealism: The dark side of cross-sector partnerships (Stadtler , MacDonald, Knight, Hustad) Unpacking the ephemeral impact of philanthropic initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa (Kioko)
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee / tea in Conference Centre				

THEMATIC TRACKS	TRACK A Knowledge and identity in collaboration	TRACK B Collaboration to promote inclusion	TRACK C Inclusion in the process of collaboration	TRACK D Connecting across divides	TRACK E Examining impact
GSB B Block	LT 02	LT 04	LT 05	LT 06	LT 07
11:30 – 13:10 Parallel Sessions - 5		B5 ... in local development/resilience Moderator: Chelsea Coakley Partnering for impact: Transformative social innovation through an intermediary organisation (Mayson) Grassroot-level Brokering: From Transactional to Transformative Cross-sector Social Partnerships (Mahanti , Pedersen) Sensemaking to Enable Sustainable Development: Shared and contested notions of the Global Goals in local implementation (Murphy* , Stanberry) Bouncing back the same way? The role of cross-sector social interactions for equitable business resilience (Nussbruch)	C5 Researchers and universities as catalysts for collaboration Moderator: Barbara Gray African universities as enablers of social innovation and sustainable development: a partnership perspective (Surmeier , Leger, Littlewood, Hamann, Awor, Kwakye, Holt, Doherty, Bignotti, Lashitew) Researchers convening dialogue to address grand challenges: Affordances and tensions (Hamann , Nilsson, Drimie, Freeth) Cross-sector partnering and sustainability transitions: Examining University-directed multi-sector organising for decarbonisation in the shipping industry (Knight , Norris)	D5 Complexity, goal heterogeneity, and global-local linkages Moderator: Iteke van Hille Strategies and challenges to implement SDG13 and its connections: A comparative study of multi-stakeholder partnership responses to a governance-by-goals approach (Fast*) Participation and inclusion in transnational multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainability (Horan*) How multi-stakeholder partnerships can achieve transformative effects (Wanner*)	E5 Panel Conversation Assessing CSPs’ Societal Impact: Understanding the past and shaping the future Convenor: Lea Stadler Moderator: Rebecca Freeth How can partnership practitioners and scholars learn from each other when it comes to assessing CSPs’ societal impact and what should the future of CSP evaluation look like? Speakers: Lea Stadler Jonathan Doh Sarita Sehgal Georgia Bladon
13:10 – 14:15	Lunch in Conference Centre				
14:15 – 15:55 Parallel Sessions - 6	A6 Decolonizing relationships and grappling with history Moderator: Lori di Vito When the story (rather than the impact) remains at the centre: Uncovering colonial traces in business-NGO partnerships (Becker* , Stadler) The relational work of heterogenous collectives (Rayner) Facing the demons of the past: Grappling with collective trauma in a multi-stakeholder process (Jones , Hamann, Sehgal) Understanding community-level contestation in processes of intermediation between traditional communities and mining companies: A relational justice perspective (Makaula)	B6 ... in supply chains and entrepreneurial ecosystems Moderator: Oana Branzei Informal – formal sector interactions: Challenges and opportunities from India’s e-waste management systems (Bhaskar, Griffin , Radulovic) Power and Inclusion in Collaborating for Entrepreneurship (Purdy*) Mismatch in African entrepreneurial ecosystems: how to cater to smallholder farmer entrepreneurs? (Derks , Romijn, Knorringa) Differences in entrepreneurial ecosystems: Implications for entrepreneurship training in Africa (Derks , Bidmon)	C6 Partner selection and portfolios Moderator: Amelia Clarke Partner selection in cross-sector collaboration: Why an environmental NGO may not prefer to partner with the greenest firms (Norheim-Hansen , Donmez) Configuring partnership portfolios for enhanced sustainability performance: A QCA analysis (Dzhengis*) Fostering Intersectoral Collaboration in Madagascar through the Population Health Environment (PHE) Network (Andriamalala)	D6 Leadership and boundary-spanning Moderator: Helena Knight Exposing the hidden effect of Galvanism during Cross-Sector Collaborations (Lala-Sides) Exploring the roles of boundary spanners in multi-stakeholder partnerships: a multiple case study investigation in the Agro-Processing Industry of South Africa (Pillay) All hands on deck (Webb)	E6 Workshop (Executive Room) That’s all very well in practice, but it will never work in theory Conveners: Priyanka Brunese / Darian Stibbe This engaging session will explore (1) where are the mismatches in theory and practice of CSPs (2) what are the causes for those mismatches? (3) what can we do to bridge theory and practice going forward? Using round table discussions and hands-on activities the goal will be to identify ways to promote evidence-based practice and practice-based theory.

16:00 – 16:30	Coffee / Tea in Conference Centre
16:30 – 18:00 Closing Plenary	Interactive Plenary Session Speakers: Monicah Mbiba and Andrew Borraine Moderator: Nicole Banister Integrating insights from the learning journeys, conference sessions, and open interactive space to generate ideas for the way forward and recommendations for research and practice Closing remarks



85 responses

85 responses



118 responses

118 responses



What are your key takeaways from this conference?

Change

When power shifts it is at its most dangerous

The need to use this community for action.

voluntary sharing of advice to junior academics.

Uncomfortable conversations

We are ready to have difficult conversations.

That my work is important.

There is hope for a better world



What are your key takeaways from this conference?

Connected

Power, as it fits with EDIJ and decolonization

Focus more on market power

More stakeholders around the table

Partnering

There are more alignments and possibilities for partnership than we can imagine.

Achievements are better when shared!

Network



What are your key takeaways from this conference?

Change is uncomfortable, but it is necessary for transformation.	Call out misuse of power	Trust that there are amazing people in the room. Unsure how to make the conference useful for those not in the room.	Power without love is reckless and abusive.
Still much work to be done in bridging academia and practice!	List of follow-up actions	Connecting the dots to shape new ideas	The importance of being uncomfortable



What are your key takeaways from this conference?

Stakeholder engagement	How much complexity can partnerships work with? But ignoring this complexity doesn't help either...	We need to hold space for uncomfortable conversations	Being uncomfortable is productive.
Academia needs to change drastically from publishing to societal impact.	Relating with others is built on relating heart and mind.	How to become activist academics	Pay forward the generosity some people showed during this conference by talking to me



What are your key takeaways from this conference?

Justice is important.

Appreciation for contexts

Decolonising academia

We need to take partnership messages from this forum to the "outside" world

Difference between uncomfortable and unsafe.

Responsibility to ensure research is context based to prevent harm

We need Informed agitation so that no one is left behind. A theory of change for partnership requires this notion as the foundation.

AND love without power is sentimental and anemic. Which is a risk of putting COMMUNITY at the heart in an unreflexive way



What are your key takeaways from this conference?

Complexity of cssi work
So much to be done
Fail forward

clarity on concepts

Embrace and use my power where I see it

Transdisciplinary research is difficult but necessary. We need to start our research from outside the conventional academic processes.

There are structural barriers within academia preventing it from prioritising impact or collaboration with practitioners

There is a tendency to overcomplicate; what would CPS be able to do if there was more simplification in the pursuit of truly inclusive partnership?

Does the very CSP construct deny whole personhood within intact communities?

Academic needs to reflect on its own self focus



What are your key takeaways from this conference?

There is more work needed to connect academia to practice

there is more need for inner work in academia

Power is not necessary bad, unless uses as a force for positive change

We need to be more critical of what we define as "development" — and the powerful assumptions underpinning that.

A need to increase the crossover discussion opportunities between social, environmental and economic communities of practice

Perhaps de-centre problematic macro intermediaries (that deal with Gov and private sector) and who still feel self entitled into making decisions regarding transformation on behalf of communities.

Writing

Not sure - but I think we need to find a way to make what we have generated here accessible to more people and communities - both academic and practitioners



So what's next?

Cssi 2026

Listen, Reflect, write, attend CSSI in Udaipur!

Sleep. Zzzzzzz

ACTION

Ralph

Keep contact and share knowledge.

Zzzzzzz

I don't know...



So what's next?

Sarita

Keep in touch

We have to do what we say we are going to do. Follow up where we said we would. We have to model trust and accountability.

Share within organisation

Nicole, come to India

Gather reflection tools and apply ideas (carefully)

Raise -Awareness of CSSI work

Read more poems



So what's next?

Network and practice

Deepen conversations with people I met; conference chatter is always too brief and light

Sustain the positive energy!!!!

Insights and relationships gained here will percolate over weeks, months, years... Reconvene in 2026!

Digesting all the input and following up on the interactions

Let's collaborate on a paper.

Keeping up with the networks made to continue the conversation that will hopefully become meaningful work

Take CCSI to UN Global Compact and make partnerships a topic to reckon with



So what's next?

Support eachother

Continue to build on connections and collaboration opportunities between practitioner and researcher

Deepen connections I made here - create together

Bring thoughts about power, and what we do about it, in the corporate world.

not sure - but I think we need to find a way to make what we have generated and talked about accessible to others

Structured process to bring academic findings as evidence-base, integrate with practitioner guidance.

Keep talking

Disagree with the idea of commodifying this initiative, by 'structuring' and professionalising this before the recommendations and reflections have been considered.



So what's next?

Reflect and incorporate new practices in my work and life

Have a digital network we can use to stay in touch between now and 2026 (WhatsApp?)

Share CSSI with your networks

For those staying the night can we meet at reception and walk to waterfront ?

Synthesise what I have learnt and present that insight to those at my organisation to improve our work.

Acting in a more sensitive way about others reality and context!

Incorporate what I have learned

Let's get together and write a paper about the learnings from this conference.



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