South African Co-operations in Africa: Friend or Foe?

South Africa’s leadership role in Africa has been growing since the black-led government of Nelson Mandela and now Thabo Mbeki. Much of the leadership has been in the form of strengthening democracy and development in the region through mediation efforts and initiatives such as the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (Nepad). Riding on this wave has been the growing influence of South Africa’s economic expansion into the rest of Africa. The question is: Are South Africa’s businesses the answer to Africa’s underdevelopment? Secondly, do South African companies bring a better way of doing business than, for example, China and other European investors?

South African Reserve Bank figures indicate that the country’s investment into the continent grew from R8 billion in 1996 to R26 billion in 2001. Business Map shows that South African companies invested an average of $455-million a year in Southern Africa between 1994 and 2003. Some of the investors mentioned include Shoprite Checkers, Nando’s, Steers, Engen, Woolworths and Game (Judi Hudson, quoted from Special Report: South Africa in Africa: July 2007).

The growth into the rest of the continent is informed and influenced by various factors. Chief amongst these is accessibility and proximity. Again, the stabilized domestic economy has allowed South African companies to expand. Those that have not been able to list internationally have found opportunities at regional level. Moreover, the stabilized political environment and leadership role in continental affairs has given South African businesses the moral legitimacy to operate in Africa. This is informed by the understanding that a prosperous South Africa cannot be operating as an island.

Skeptic argues, however, that untransformed South African businesses cannot be different from global multi-national companies that have plundered African resources with no adequately-sustained positive contribution to local economies. Questions have also been raised regarding the historical baggage of predominantly white-managed companies championing the cause of development given that a white minority government previously destabilized the region and contributed to its underdevelopment. South Africa’s economy was built on migrant labour sustained by regional migrant workers that worked on farms and in the mines for almost nothing. This was followed by military destruction across the borders of South Africa as the apartheid regime clamped down on support to banned political movements. In monetary terms, such damages are estimated at about $300-billion (Adekeyo Adebajo: 2007).

I, however, want to assert that South African companies are better positioned to play the role of credible champions on development and economic growth. However, to achieve this, local companies need to do a lot of introspection. Chief amongst these is the need to be fully representative of the demographics of the country. Overall transformation will give confidence to targeted new markets - that South Africa’s economic expansion is not an excuse to transmit economic apartheid to an otherwise unsuspecting market.

Secondly, the political transition in South Africa was achieved through the promotion of consensus and consultation - what is often referred to in the country as due process. Accommodated with other business principles, nation-building, reconciliation, and practices learned and cultivated during the negotiation phase, South African companies can have an edge over international competitors. In this way, doing business with empathy and Ubuntu can become an alternative.

Ubuntu has its origins in the African conception of being. Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu - i.e. I am because of you. The principle of Ubuntu, as known and lived by most people in Southern Africa, can be applied effectively by business to win the confidence and trust of people without undermining their minds. It will enable South African companies to do business in Africa harmoniously. Understanding that business is for the maximization of profit, South African businesses have an opportunity to promote greater interaction and reach decisions by better understanding communities in the region. This will promote sustainability, achieving a win-win situation for both business and the continent at large.

In conclusion, South Africa’s political engagement with the region after 1994 has been informed by the principles of constructive engagement. Avoiding previous tendencies of bullying its neighbors, democratic South Africa has sought to promote multilateralism. In turn, this has given confidence to an otherwise skeptical but expectant region - that a comparatively economic and political stronger South Africa will not act the role of big brother and act as the America of Africa. In order to achieve this, best practices in political leadership, when working with the rest of the continent, will need to be transferred and inculcated to business leaders operating and wanting to expand to new markets in the region. If not, perceptions of an African Superpower plundering weaker states for selfish gains will derail South Africa’s gains at a political level.
A one-day conference, Ethical Leadership in and through Business, was held at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) Great Hall 1, on 26 June 2007. The objective of the conference was to investigate the contributions of existing business practices and initiatives in business for a morally renewed society, and to analyse the challenges confronting business with respect to ethical leadership.

Approximately 250 representatives attended the conference, predominantly from the various business sectors, trade unions and advocacy groups dealing with issues relating to ethical leadership in and through business.

The ever-smiling ELP Chairperson, Ms. Pramilla Vassen, welcomed all to the conference, emphasizing the importance of discussing critical issues relating to ethical leadership in and through business, before introducing the first opening speaker.

The opening address, entitled Ethical Leadership In And Through Business, was delivered by the charming and eloquent Dr. Clint Le Bruyns (ELP board member). Dr. Le Bruyns focused on the pivotal role the world of economics fulfils in life today.

He contended that human dignity and economic dignity are intimately linked. Dr. Le Bruyns went on to state that ethical leadership, in context, has to do with responsibility - responsibility not confined to oneself, but responsibility that includes the common good, that can address social issues like poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, globalisation, social capital, etc.

A panel discussion followed, starting with the camouflage-clad (BAWSI’s colours) Mr. Nasey Pieterse (ReinInvestment Ltd; Black Association of the Wine and Spirits Industry; South African Wine Industry Council, Phetoogo Investments) who focused on the issues that confront today’s working class. He further reflected on commonly-held perceptions about ethical and unethical business, and their respective engagement with these issues. He held that business ethics cannot be separated from ethics in general and that we must deal with corporate problems on the basis of fundamental ethical standards.

Pieterse quoted proponent of Situation Ethics, J.W. Montgomery, who said: “No action is good or right of itself. It depends on whether it hurts or helps people.” He contextualized situation ethics with reference to the severe plight of farm workers and the unethical conduct of some farmers and companies.

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The pragmatic Ms. Janine Myburgh (President, Cape Chamber of Commerce) asserted that the Chamber of Commerce is the gatekeeper of the ethical norms of Business and Industry and that through Corporate Social Investment can take many forms it is firstly an investment in employees and secondly, the community in which a business operates. She indicated, using Pick ‘n’ Pay as an example, that investment in employees leads to economic growth and a better environment for business which inevitably leads to improvements of social capital. Ms. Myburgh concluded by saying that it is often as simple as just doing the right thing (even though that can be tough at times).

Dr. Lionel Louw (Chief of Staff, Premier’s Office; Ethical Leadership Project) discussed the roles of business enterprises as corporate citizens, contending that each business is an integral part of our society. As a corporate citizen, business is subject to the same pressures and aspirations as the rest of society. Dr Louw claimed that the concerns of individual citizens should also be the concerns of corporate citizens. He talked about the triple bottom line - Profit, People and Environment - and the imperative that the corporate citizen adhere to it. He urged corporate citizens to look beyond short-term gains and to take a long-term view on South Africa and to make investments on that basis.

The next panel discussion focused on the theme Beyond the bottom line: Business success through social investment and corporate governance.

Ms. Vassen then invited the delegates to share their experiences in business, leading to an insightful and sometimes downright bizarre session as several delegates shared stories of their joys and challenges in the business world.
The Q&A session that followed was rich in the diversity of the issues it touched upon, for instance: social capital investment; youth business opportunities; white collar crime; business training manuals; small business growth initiatives; and the government’s role when dealing with companies not delivering on social responsibility - to name just a few.

Another panel discussion, listed on the programme as BEE: Social impact, expectations and limitations, followed:

The confident and inspiring Patrick Parring (Exel Projects and Events, Granbuild Construction, Marib Holdings, Cape Lime, Cape Peninsula University of Technology Council) focused on South Africa’s ten years of democracy and whether or not it delivered real social and economic changes, seriously questioning whether 300 years of wrong could be corrected in so short a time. To paraphrase: the reality is such that, if we are unable to speed up the process for fundamental change and transformation (as expected in “a better life for all”), we may be confronted with another reality - one where people will, once again, feel that they have nothing to lose. He acknowledged BEE as the foundation to correct the imbalances in the economy - he also alluded to the tendencies of white-owned business to operate in a closed-door economy. He called on all stakeholders, social partners, business and government to make a conscious decision to embrace transformation based on integrity and morality, and concluded, “The opportunity of a lifetime is to make a real investment and to leave a legacy behind.”

Mr. Roger Ronnie (SAMWU) passionately expounded on his view that BEE has not had the desired social impact. He argued that the concept of broad-based black economic empowerment puts undue emphasis on black ownership - reducing the creation of quality jobs and failing to meet the needs of the poor. He highlighted several international examples where privatisation of state assets worsened levels of service to the poor. Mr. Ronnie listed a number of steps that a strong interventionist state could make to bring about a large-scale reduction in poverty and create quality jobs.

Prof. Oliver Williams (Centre for Ethics and Religious Values in Business, Univ. of Notre Dame, USA; University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business) was next to the podium, with his excellent presentation, entitled Peace through Business: Responsible Corporate Citizenship and the

This new responsible corporate citizenship in the light of the globalization of the economy. He highlighted how good corporate governance can offer guidance on how this new political role of the firm can be implemented while preserving the democratic nature of society. [Read more about this in our interview section - beginning on page 4]

The final Q & A session comprised of many searching questions around government’s BEE policies - a topic explored with interest by delegates and panelists alike.

The conference was perceived as being productive, informative and successful. It created a platform for thought-provoking discussions and proved that there is a need for constructive and educative dialogue in the business sector. The event also helped to foster an awareness of the ethical principles and practices that should be an integral dimension of any organisation, government, business stakeholder and individual. The general consensus among the delegates was that Ethical Leadership in and through Business had focused on important issues and had helped to contribute to a morally transformed society.
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Our
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managers we are role models for the community, and
lead by example. As business owners and business
Holdings):
NANA MAGOMOLA (Thamaga Investment
practice, corporate governance; and we have a Code
of Conduct for all our members that serve on the
council - I mean, I can carry on ad nauseam, but it is a
responsibility that we have to continuously address.
NANA MAGOMOLA (Thamaga Investment
Holdings): I think business has a responsibility to
lead by example. As business owners and business
managers we are role models for the community, and
how we conduct ourselves in our business life, (and
private lives) will have an impact. What we say
and what we do has to be aligned - if not, we will lose
credibility with the young people and the communities
that look up to us. Secondly, if, as a business owner,
you act in a way that is not complimentary to the
society’s value system, the people who make up that
society will not want to do business with you. Honesty
is the best policy and if in conducting your business
you do something devious - well, as the saying goes,
you can fool some of the people some of the time,
but not all the people all the time - it will catch up with
you.
You know, as a country we are in a transforming
environment and it’s incumbent on business to
have a company that looks transformed (in terms
of the people who own the company, the people in
leadership in the company and all the way down).
We cannot do business the way that we have
always done it - where we focus on a certain sector
of the community and neglect other sectors of the
community. First of all it doesn’t even make business
sense, because if you look at the numbers, it just
makes sense that you should actually encompass
the broader community. I agree, we still have a larger
percentage of our population at the lower scales of
the economy, but even with that, there are ways that
business can make itself effective. On corporate social
responsibility - many businesses try to be effective
in that regard, but how they go about it is a problem,
because they tend to confuse it with philanthropy.
Philanthropy is where you go out and buy blankets for
a community, or for a nursing home - that is not social
responsibility. Social responsibility involves doing
those things that help to transform the society in which
you live. In other words: Instead of giving the people
fish, teach them how to fish so that they can become
independent. Also, those kinds of contributions
become sustainable, it’s actually empowering.
Nosey Pieterse (Black Association of the Wine
& Spirits Industry): As far as ethical practices are
concerned, I am of the opinion that the image of
business is tarnished. The South African workforce
was exposed to a ruthless form of capitalism - a
our oppression and our exploitation. And because of
this, business cannot be the facilitator of ethical best
practices for the development of a morally renewed
society. Even the Church, to a certain extent, had its
image tainted during the days of the struggle. So I
am of the opinion that no single entity can take this
responsibility - it must be a collective initiative of
labour, civil society, government and business.

Patrick Parring (Exel): I think that, when we use
the term ‘Business’, obviously (and particularly in the
South African context) the term is broad: you’ve got
Big Business, you’ve got Small Business, you’ve got
White Business, you’ve got Black Business. I think
that the whole concept of ‘an ethical contribution
to change’ is very difficult for established
business/historically advantaged businesses, and
the reason for that is very simple: coming from the
political dispensation that we had in the past -
given that economics and business goes together -
and given our political past, we obviously operated in a
very closed economy. And what a closed economy
does, because you’ve been isolated, is make it almost
second nature to have a corrupt relationship within
that [sic]. So that’s a challenge for big businesses...
When we talk about business, ethical or otherwise,
the whole issue revolves, first and foremost, around
survival: When you’re in a position focused on survival
(when it’s about winning or losing) then it becomes
a big challenge [to be socially responsible]. I think,
therefore, what one needs is what I would term
‘instruments of change’. I believe that business, by
itself, will not do it...I think government, together with
business, in a partnership, would probably, in our
case, be the best way to do it. But then
government has its own challenges...

Roger Ronnie (SAMWU): Our organisation, the one I
work for, would approach the issue of business and
ethics, etc. with respect to how it best
advances the interests of the workers or the
employees of a particular company -
given that I am obviously involved with
the trade unions. So we would facilitate
ethical best practices to the extent that
we would want to see business relate
to its staff in an ethical way. [Ethical
best practices in our context] relates
to the creation of a workplace which is
safe, where workers work under healthy
conditions, where the workplace itself,
the work and the way it is organised
actually respects the environment -
where any negative environmental impacts on
the work process are eliminated. I think
it’s also important in respect to issues
like decent terms and conditions of
employment and a payment of a salary
that reflects and values the work that
has been done. It also allows for no
discrimination on a gender or race basis.
It can be argued that to discriminate on
the basis of race and gender is outlawed
in this country, but you still find in many places
that there’s a complete disregard for that kind of thing.
I think an important thing regarding BEE is that
many of the projects, particularly in the sector that
my union organises in, have been characterised by
extremely poor terms and conditions of employment.
For example, the union has managed to secure
a minimum wage of over R3000 in the sector - a project
Of course, if you’re talking about large
business and here’s what we stand for’.

And our fourth responsibility is to our shareholders
we have our companies, where we sell our products.

And our fourth responsibility is to our workers - taking care of their
advancement, giving them a chance to be empowered,
to be all they can be. Our third responsibility is to the
people have a plastic card in their pocket that says
they work for J&J. The credo basically says: “Our
people have a plastic card in their pocket that says
we just think that in

A good leader is somebody who will take the lead
in something, whether it’s an employee or a
worker, with those who they influence. It’s key to have
someone who can inspire and motivate people to
work together towards a common goal.

On the other hand, a bad leader may be someone
who is dismissive of their team’s ideas and
rather focuses on their own agenda. This can lead
to a lack of motivation and decreased productivity.

In conclusion, leadership is crucial for the success
of any organization. A leader who understands
how to inspire and motivate their team, while
taking the time to listen and learn from the
people around them, will be better equipped
to guide their team towards success.

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the problem with their own union: Who is the union and what are the problems? And then inform the union that their members have approached your office with XYZ problem and that if they don’t address it they will leave you with no alternative but to recruit them.

So, while challenging business out there, while challenging government on these moral and ethical issues, we also make sure that at least, within our own ranks, morality and ethics remain.

What we found was that historically disadvantaged businesses are all small businesses (they’ve either been artisans or they’re good at a particular thing), and that once they grow to a level where they have to apply management skills they fail or remain small - so management training was needed also and WECBOF endeavoured to empower people in this area. If you can manage your business well, you’ve got a greater chance of success.

The second thing we focused on was [to provide] a network, access to opportunities - now that’s not easy; it’s about who you know - and we came up with two things: by organising these businesses in a particular home, where they are together (you know, we defeated apartheid by having the numbers as well), we believed, by organising ourselves as a collective, that we could use as leverage when we engage. At that time it also served another purpose - there was this notion that “we want to help Black Business, but where are they?” And it’s true, because we were never allowed to be in the mainstream of business, [it was hard to get noticed], so, in a way, it helped to appeal to the big corporates, parastatals, to come and speak to the collective - it made their job easier and, also, in the process, the organisation facilitated training and additional support. Now, unless you’re in the loop, it’s very difficult to get access to opportunities - especially when the owners of capital (even in today’s economy) are 95% or more white business. And that was a challenge because white people in general feel like they’ve lost the political power so they’re holding on to the economic power. We’ve made some very good progress with the first and second points we chose to focus on.

The third thing we focused on was to try to provide access to finance. Access to finance is a challenge to any small business (black or white), it’s just the nature of business and how economies work - it’s universally known that the failure-rate, particularly of small start-up businesses, is very high. So access, by the very nature of financial institutions, is difficult - to be black and inexperienced makes it even more difficult. What we’ve tried to do, in partnership with a US organisation, is to say: “How can we be a part of an organisation that could establish what we call a socially responsible local venture capital fund?” I’ve personally been working on that from 1995 till now, and we’re still unable to establish the fund - and for no other reason than (because of the past) that institutions have a difficulty with financing small businesses and that the concept is unknown in South Africa (it is a US concept that they have explored elsewhere in the world - including Zimbabwe, by the way), so the institutional investors (whether it’s the Old Mutuals or the Sanlams or even government bodies) appetite has been very small... So that’s a huge challenge and will remain a huge challenge for a long time.

So I think that may be, in short, what WECBOF has been doing and will continue to do. What is nice is that when you look back you see success stories where people have done very well in business - and we don’t claim solely to be responsible, but it’s nice to see that the organisation has, in some way, contributed to that success.

ROGER RONNIE (SAMWU): In the same way that we would seek to substantially improve the situation of the worker in the workplace, we also seek to improve their situation outside of work. So, as a union, we will also take up a number of issues which go beyond the traditional employee-employer relationship. For example, we will mount campaigns about workers having access to adequate amounts of free water and electricity, to prevent these services being cut off when people cannot afford to pay. This extends not only to the people we represent but to the societies and communities from which they are drawn as well... it isn’t a conventional enterprise, there was always a sense that it was made up of political activists, so the kinds of standards that we would set in a traditional workplace often didn’t apply in the organisation.

I think, over time that has started to change, and unions, through starting to introduce proper training programmes, issues of study loans, integrating the full-time staff into the decision-making processes, I think, are making an attempt - but I must concede that I think there is a lot more that unions can do in terms of how the owners of an organisation deal with the people they employ, to assist them and service them on a full-time basis. I think there are certain gaps there.

PROF. OLIVER WILLIAMS (Centre for Ethics & Religious Values in Business, Univ. of Notre Dame; UCT): Well, I think that the smartest organisations see that it’s in everyone’s interests to develop their people - to enable and to empower them. But look, businesses are like people - there are some scoundrels and there are some wonderful people with noble ideals. And let’s be naïve about it, you can certainly, without too much trouble, find the scoundrels - the ones that abuse their people, that are just not taking care of them, not giving them opportunities to develop, who are in fact just trying to use them. But I think that there are good examples of companies who are very interested in people - they have a corporate culture, if you will, that instills in everybody that taking care of people is important - not just about the workplace often didn’t apply in the organisation.

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QUESTION THREE
What contribution does the best practice of mutual relationship building with all stakeholders of Business provide? What are the tangible results of this best practice?

JANINE MYBURGH (Cape Chamber of Commerce): I think we’re accountable to our various stakeholders in business, and it’s important for us to give feedback and to be aware that we should be transparent in everything that we do, because the Chamber of Commerce is regarded as the guard dog of, for example, best practices.

NANA MAGOMOLA (Thamaga Investment Holdings): We’ve been very vocal, as a company, about this whole area of private health care funding. Do you know that in this country of 45 million people, only 7 million are covered by medical aid schemes? So the rest of the population has to care for themselves. And long before it became fashionable to look at areas and open up schemes to accommodate those low income earners, our company (as way back as 1990) was already talking about it. But it’s good to know now that other companies are following suit, as well as government, who are now also looking at it.

NOSEY PIETERSE (Black Association of the Wine & Spirits Industry): The benefit of mutual relationship building, for me, is that it results in a greater understanding, openness, and honesty. It’s also a win-win relationship that is beneficial to all parties. That is how I see the whole process of mutual relationship building. But this is only possible where there exists a level of maturity - the maturity to agree to disagree with each other, to understand that we have different world views; to regard conflict as a means of making progress, that conflict is not necessarily bad in itself but that it also leads to change, and there has to be an appreciation for each other’s views.

PATTERSON PARRYING (Exxaro): I think that partnerships are the way forward - not just between government and business, but also labour, because small businesses are more on the receiving end, e.g. if labour responds in the form of strikes, etc. and we know the political scene - small businesses are the most sensitive. So partnerships are absolutely critical. I think that there are huge mind-shifts that have to take place. I think that the dialogue tends to happen more horizontally than vertically between government and business, and I think that that is one thing that needs to be looked at: How can there be an interaction, not just between government (as a main stakeholder) and business, but also between business and business? I was at a National Conference last month where the issue of the “lack of skills” was made quite clearly - now, when somebody from a multi-national corporate makes that statement, and I’m sitting there, thinking of how many small businesses I know, that are there, that can provide good services, good products, and can’t get in - it’s very frustrating. That’s why vertical dialogue is so important - unless there is that vertical dialogue, you will not know what is there and what isn’t in terms of skills or the lack thereof. So, I think the whole issue of partnership needs to be encouraged, and these kinds of initiatives (referring to the Ethical Leadership Project’s business conference) are good to encourage that kind of dialogue.

ROGER RONNIE (SAMWU): We operate in a sector which is responsible for the delivery of public services, so we have a much better opportunity than unions with workers in the private sector, where there is often a contestation between how the wealth that is generated in that company is distributed between the shareholders or the workers. That issue doesn’t confront us, what we are confronted with is public funds and how best to ensure the service, so what we try and do, collectively with the employers in local government for example, is to try and build a common approach to key issues of service delivery - trying to seek agreement with them on what we consider to be acceptable standards of service delivery. We have this motto: we’ve got to find a balance between affordable basic services and a living wage for the workers who are actually providing the services. So to that extent we convened a local government sector summit in 2005, which was the first real attempt by stakeholders in the local government sector to get together and try to map out a path for the sector. We reached agreement on a number of issues, for example, that we consider to be the components of a quality job: it must have a long duration, it must have a living wage and it must have healthy and safe conditions. So those were things we agreed upon. There was an agreement that we shouldn’t perpetuate a system of casualisation because it only leads to instability as far as people’s job security is concerned. A number of things that were agreed on have not been followed through consistently. Where we stumbled was on issues regarding: how we could possibly improve and increase the size of the pie that is actually available for the delivery of services; and the extent to which the stake-holders in the local government could influence the secondary and the primary sphere of government (i.e. provincial and central government) to basically ensure a more equitable share… There’s an acknowledgement by the stakeholders about the extent and nature of the problem but there’s currently a disagreement about how best to find the resources necessary to deal with this problem. And I think there will be another problem when we do find these resources in terms of how best to allocate these resources between services and conditions of employment for workers and local government.

PROF. OLIVER WILLIAMS (Centre for Ethics & Religious Values in Business, Univ. of Notre Dame; UCT): Well, nobody’s perfect - no individual is perfect, no company is perfect. But I always try to have a small stable of good companies that I can talk about in class, companies that I can set up as role models - because I also have a small stable of terrible companies. In this country, Leisurenet is a good example of a company that was run by a couple of scoundrels who basically stole all of their people’s money. Fidentia is another one that has been in the press a lot. Today those are the scoundrels, and so it’s important to go through and see what those leaders did that was wrong, and why they brought such serious harm to - in Fidentia’s case - widows and orphans! I mean it couldn’t be more harmful, it seems to me. On the other hand, there are companies in South Africa that are quite concerned about their stakeholders, and understand their corporate citizenship responsibilities. I mean, I look at this ‘citizenship’ notion on the model of an individual, i.e. an individual has two sets of responsibilities: one is their set of ‘role’ responsibilities as ‘father’, ‘mother’, ‘teacher’, ‘businessperson’, ‘lawyer’ - that’s their role; but they also have a set of ‘citizenship’ responsibilities, and that is to their community, first of all by paying taxes, but also by giving some of their resources (maybe by joining a neighbourhood watch or coaching soccer or visiting the elderly - people do different things to be good citizens). I think businesses are somewhat analogous: they have a ‘role’ responsibility, which is to produce a good service and to return on their investment if they don’t do that, they’re history, they’re not going to survive; but that isn’t enough, they also have a ‘citizenship’ responsibility, as a corporate citizen and here I think they have to step in and, depending on their resources, try to meet some of the problems in the wider society. And I think you’re seeing a growing number of South African companies doing that - the Black Economic Empowerment, the Employment Equity, is circumscribed by law, but, as we know, law isn’t enough - there are some companies that have risen to that and have done very well, and other companies are being dragged along kicking - but there are many who are role models here.

I was just at the World Economic Forum two weeks ago, here in Cape Town, and a big discussion amongst many of the business leaders is “What can we do to enhance bringing business skills to the younger people who don’t have those more marketable skills - people who are not even in the market?” What can business do to team up with NGOs or government? Because right now it seems to be dead in the water - there isn’t a lot of a lot happening.” Business has the resources - and the key resource that business has is not money, it’s skills, it’s management skills. I mean, they know how to get something done, and that’s why we admire them.
QUESTION FOUR
How does Business engage in the ethical best practice of transforming socio-economic conditions and practices in disadvantaged communities through ethical leadership?

JANINE MYBURGH (Cape Chamber of Commerce): The Chamber had a strategic session about 3, 4 years ago and BEE and empowerment was amongst the first criteria addressed - and we do that continuously, when we do the election of our officers, when we do all the funds that I addressed, there is an emphasis on] empowerment and the previously disadvantaged - we try and concentrate on black women especially.

NANA MACOBALO (Tamagha Investment Holdings): One of the ethical imperatives that I think we have is a responsibility to assist in is the area of improving the skills of our people. And secondly, as business, we have to find ways to facilitate experiential learning in our graduates. It's a shame that in South Africa our universities are churning out so many graduates who are just walking the streets. The other day our deputy president was talking about how serious this is because the longer these young women and men are unemployed the more likely it is that we are going to find forty year olds with no experience! That is the recipe for, what in those days they called a lost generation. Now we have a generation of people who have gone through university but are not able to find employment. What also worries me about this aspect is that these are not the children of an average parent like myself who is a manager at an organisation, where I am able to educate my kids, and (because of who I am) able to help them find employment. These are children of parents who are, in the first place, poor. They take the last penny that they have to put these kids to school, to educate my kids, and (because of who I am) able to help them. What worries me about this aspect is that these are not the children of an average parent like myself who is a manager at an organisation, where I am able to educate my kids, and (because of who I am) able to help them find employment. These are children of parents who are, in the first place, poor. They take the last penny that they have to put these kids to school.

PATRICK PARRING (Exel): How can you create something if you don't have it - if you don't even know it? That's the reality, that's the challenge. If I look at the founding of WECBOF, and the Fund - I always say that when I go out there, it's not about me, it's about a constituency, it's about correcting the past - my experience was that I, as a victim of that system, was prepared to make that sacrifice, to engage in dialogue and serve an organisation, and actually be confronted with people who, in a very direct way, were part of what we found ourselves in - and that's an unfortunate part of business, it's very selfish in nature (to varying degrees, obviously, depending on the business and its own value systems) - I found that you need a concerted effort to get the message through. I think that people think that apartheid is gone and therefore everything's okay and can be normal - that needs to be addressed because it's not, you see. Unless we can find ways and means of dealing with that, I think it's going to be quite an uphill challenge.

What we've done (and do), as black business, is organise ourselves reasonably well. We really try to encourage people to do good business - to register as a company, for example. Remember, we come from the past, there was no country, so we did everything - not to pay taxes, for instance - and it's not even to do with morals, no it's a culture, it's where we come from: "it wasn't ours then, why should we now?" It's become a behavioural thing. And that's what we're trying to do now within the organisation - to cultivate a culture of taking responsibility. Therefore the challenge to big business is: How can we all just take responsibility with what we have now - including the way in which we do business? ...It goes back to needing instruments - some very simple messages - e.g. doing good is good business and - I think that we need to promote and find instruments to do that... It's a huge challenge, and that's why I think we need some serious drive behind engaging with business - big business in particular - to do the research, to really understand, to not forget our past, but to bring it into today, to see how our past impacts on how people do business now. From my personal experience - I did business during the apartheid days - I knew who I was up against, and I find it sometimes more difficult now, because I don't always know who I'm up against (because of fronting, et cetera) - but it's a challenge, and I don't think it's something that we cannot address.

ROGER RONNIE (SAMWU): Look, we've always been at the forefront of the campaign for affordable basic services. What we've said is: services should be delivered on the basis of everybody receiving a certain amount of services, with nobody ever dropping below this minimum - where your access to these services, like water and electricity, refuse collection, is not determined by your level of income or your ability to pay, to the extent that if you consume more, you pay according to a rising block-tariff (so you can have a system of cross-subsidisation). Our approach to addressing this problem is universal access, cross-subsidisation, rising block-tariffs, (so that people who have swimming pools, or large lawns, who consume a lot of water, would pay more for
their water than people who don’t) and determining what the basic levels should be, taking into account people’s health and safety needs, the different needs between men and women, etc. So we’ve always been at the forefront of that kind of campaigning as a union. We’ve also seen and learnt from experiences internationally where the delivery of these services has been handed over to the private sector and delivered for profit bases, and generally the people suffer because they don’t have the means to pay. So we’ve taken up campaigns against that, and also against pre-paid water meters in our country, given that pre-paid meters mean that if you can’t afford to buy a voucher, you’re not going to get water. So those kinds of things - where people are actually cut off because of their economic situation - are the kinds of things we’re trying to actively take up and reverse.

PROF. OLIVER WILLIAMS (Centre for Ethics & Religious Values in Business, Univ. of Notre Dame; UCT): I think the easy work has been done in South Africa - that is, you’ve developed (rather quickly - in 10 years) a black middle class that you didn’t have before. This was helped by the fact that you had a number of blacks that were relatively well educated - for one reason or another they got into Europe and the United States, or they got in through some assistance. The very difficult challenge is that of people who have no marketable skills - and there is no quick fix: it’s getting a culture of education, getting a culture of incentives, its enhancing family life, and that’s going to take a couple of generations. So what can business do? I think business has to partner with NGOs and government, and listen. I think, whoever they are, they have to listen to what informed NGOs (who maybe know more about it than they do) suggest they should try to do, for example, to cultivate business skills or to cultivate just skills so people can get into the market. You know, if you’re in the mining business, you can train young miners; you can try to bring more people into that field. If you’re in the computers business, that’s a little different, that’s more complex because you need math, you need physics - remedial programmes for that sort of science and technology are more difficult - but there are businesses that are trying to work on that. I think it depends on the nature of the problem and it depends on the kind of advice and the suggestions you are getting from the local communities - I think business has to listen, and be attentive to what others think the best way to meet those needs are.

QUESTION FIVE

Describe a situation that demonstrates an ethical best practice of your leadership or the leadership in your organization. Elaborate if such a situation did not demonstrate a suitable best practice.

JANINE MYBURGH (Cape Chamber of Commerce): This is my second term as the President, I’m the first woman in 203 years - and I would think that social responsibility has come out... [The reply] was always “we are not a charity organisation” when we were asked to assist a school with soccer uniforms or things like that, and I’ve been able to [change that]. The members of the Chamber of Commerce have been very giving - when I’ve asked for sponsorship I’ve never received a negative response - so it’s been inculcated, and I think that in terms of the norms that we are expected to have with social responsibility, the people have come to the fore - where we did just concentrate on business, and the ethical norms of business, I would like to think I have been instrumental in bringing our social responsibility out, to have it not be regarded as charity but to be regarded as a duty that we have to perform. I regard it as: if you hold a position, you have a duty to give back...

NANA MAGOMOLA (Thamaga Investment Holdings): My example is from a previous company I worked for: We had a contract where we needed skilled people to come in and assist us. In business we are looking for people who can perform, and perform quickly, but at the same time I have just spoken about people who need the opportunity. At that point in time, we could have used that opportunity to not only get people who are qualified and can do the job, but, (because it was quite a sizeable contract), we could have used that opportunity to bring in these young graduates I was talking about. Obviously we would not put them in positions where they would jeopardize the delivery of the project, but we could have put them in a semi-skilled environment - by the time someone comes out of university it is easier to teach them new skills. I think we missed out on an opportunity, and I hope that if another opportunity like that comes along, I will not forget my other responsibility - getting these youngsters off the street. You know as a person, and a leader, one of my guiding lights is to be principled in how I make my decisions, and sometimes one gets challenged by situations or environments that create an ethical dilemma. But instead of making headstrong decisions, and not thinking things through, I will take time off from making that decision to be alone with myself where I can internalize and decide which way to go on with this matter. We all have a sixth sense, an inner sense, a conscience, that says that even though this deal look glorious now, it is not going to give you the dividends. And it’s not going to give you another long-term, sustainable results, but a decision that you can accept and not have sleepless nights over.

NOSEY PIETERSE (Black Association of the Wine & Spirits Industry): All the work that BAWISI does is pursuing morality and ethical behaviour - all the work that we are doing. Our calling, in fact, is to eliminate all that is unethical - so everything that we do is to ensure that ethical behaviour or conduct would prevail. If you want me to single out something that we have been doing... One particular thing is how my organisation, BAWISI has been pursuing investment opportunities - and it is not for self-enrichment, as such, it is to execute our mandate to serve the people through training and development, through representing and defending them - whether in courts or whatever - empowering them. So that is what we have done. We are busy with selling shares that we acquired - I don’t know if you’ve read about it in the papers - and we will be making a handsome forty-five million rand profit soon. In a few weeks or months’ time, we will be laying our hands on that sort of money. But it’s not for me, although I have been driving this thing, it’s for the Trust to do what we have been doing. And the only thing I would be doing, and the rest of the people in BAWISI, those who work full time, will be doing the salary. And many of us have worked voluntarily, although we have always thought we were working full-time, we were working voluntarily - and the majority of the people who work in BAWISI are voluntary, they are doing this for the sake of the people.

PATRICK PARRING (Exel): Let me use the example that’s maybe not the best one, but one that has more of an historical context: I started to work for a business (Nedsteel) as an artisan. I left the business to do my own thing. I employed young people who didn’t leave me, who stuck with me. I then bought the business that I had worked for for seventeen and a half years - so I owned Nedsteel, with some of the staff that worked for me. And two years ago I could do a management buy-out - so they now own not only the business, but the property, they’re the owners of it. Now, I think maybe, that when you talk about empowerment, it’s important to demonstrate how far (you have to go) - and that took quite a bit. I remember that it was not just empowering them in-house - the big test was when I wasn’t there, so we actually had to plan that - I had to tell them. Now obviously, when you tell them that they’re going to own the business, people don’t really believe you - because business was always regarded with distrust, and you have to deal with this trust issue: “can this be real that we’re going to own this someday?” So you have to deal with that, and the process from there is “do I really want the work of owning a business?” So you have to work through all of that. And I had to plan it in a way where I actually withdrew from the business in increments,
We've tried to strongly give ownership - was done in such a way that they derive no benefits at all from any activities of the municipality. In similar fashion employees in the sector should not derive any benefits other than benefits that are due to them by law. For example, having connections to large corporations that might be delivered for goods and services consumed by the municipality - we've strongly advocated against that kind of thing. In a similar fashion, in the organisation, we've said to employees of the union that there's really no problem with you, as a member of a political party running for office, but if you are elected you would need to resign from the union because we would consider that to be a conflict of interest. We'd like to think that those kinds of things - where there are potential conflict situations, whether it be of an economic nature or political nature - have been identified both within the union, and then within the sector, and that we have tried to deal with them.

ROGER RONNIE (SAMWU): We've tried to strongly support (both within our organisation and within the sector) a situation that says that councillors should derive no benefits at all from any activities of the municipality. In similar fashion employees in the sector should not derive any benefits other than benefits that are due to them by law. For example, having connections to large corporations that might be delivered for goods and services consumed by the municipality - we've strongly advocated against that kind of thing. In a similar fashion, in the organisation, we've said to employees of the union that there's really no problem with you, as a member of a political party running for office, but if you are elected you would need to resign from the union because we would consider that to be a conflict of interest. We'd like to think that those kinds of things - where there are potential conflict situations, whether it be of an economic nature or political nature - have been identified both within the union, and then within the sector, and that we have tried to deal with them.

PROF. OLIVER WILLIAMS (Centre for Ethics & Religious Values in Business, Univ. of Notre Dame; UCT): Well, I would say, about 12, 15 years ago, several of the big pharmaceutical companies who have HIV/AIDS came to me (and a number of others - I was not their only advisor) and said: “Look, we’re under a lot of pressure to do something about the 25 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa who have HIV and who have no money, and there are certain groups who are saying that we should take care of this problem. There are probably about 7 or 8 companies that make drugs that can contain HIV/AIDS – as we know, there is no cure, but you can live a normal life with anti-retrovirals. So, what is our moral responsibility for the 25 million people?” And the first thing they did was say: “Let’s run the numbers. Let’s say that the 7 big companies are going to take care of the 25 million people who have HIV – tomorrow we’d all be bankrupt. In other words, you have to take this medicine for the rest of your life, and you can’t just take medicine - you have to have the expensive equipment that measures the T-cells so you know the right amount of drug to take - and it has to be monitored. So you’re going about a rather expensive process. So - what is our moral obligation?”

Well, we played around with this for quite a while and it was clear that their moral obligation was not to give it to 25 million people - but it was to do something. What would that something be? Each of the companies went back to their shops and worked it out. One that I watched closely - Merck, the pharmaceutical company - said: “We want to adopt one country, and we will provide a certain cash influx and free medicines for one country. We need a politically stable country because we can’t start the medicines and then stop them, because then you get worse problems - if you get variations of the drug, if you stop taking the drug, mutations are very dangerous in such situations. So we need a politically stable country - we need a Government that will cooperate with us, that are interested in us coming.” So they shopped around (and of course, I was pushing for this country, but there was no opening here for it) - Botswana was dying to get it: 35% prevalence rate with HIV. Merck looked around and said: “Okay, we can give free drugs for everybody and we can give 50 million dollars - but that’s not gonna cover it, you need to build that infrastructure. So they talked the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation into giving 50 million dollars, renewable after 5 years. So that’s what they did - everyone who gets tested positive gets guaranteed free medicine and care with this resource. And it’s interesting what Bill Gates said (which shows why he’s so rich - ‘cause he’s so smart) was: ‘I won’t renew this in 5 years unless you can show me that the management skills of the people of Botswana have been enhanced because of our presence. If we’ve just bringing in people from Harvard or wherever and then when they leave they haven’t learned; if there aren’t people who we’re leaving there who can do it – then we have failed. Because what they need is not our money, it’s our management skills.” Which is extremely insightful, it’s clearly the truth - it’s what the colonisers never really understood. So Gates did renew it - he went back and checked to make sure that management skills were being passed along. So they’re on their second 5 years in Botswana - and the number of people on anti-retrovirals, as a percentage of their country, is perhaps the highest in the world. So that’s the best example, it seems to me, of a partnership - where a big company realised that it had something but it didn’t have everything, the third partner, with Bill & Melinda Gates and Merck, is the Botswana Government, and they said, I mean, everybody felt, and I certainly advised: “It’s immoral to be giving medicines away without giving education about how you get this disease - see what kind of behaviour changes we need so we can cut the prevalence rate down.” And that is what the Botswana Government has done - it’s educated a lot of people, and paramedicals and helped develop clinics. So it’s a great partnership - it seems to me. Merck is not taking all the credit - it’s giving credit where it’s deserved. largely, the people who have stood back and allowed the government to really manage this - by now they’re in their 6th or 7th year of this programme. So that’s a great example of the kind of thing that we’d like to see more of - I would, at least: A partnership between NGO - the public-private NGO... and that has the best hope for solving these very intractable problems - the diligent quick fixes. There are so many examples that don’t work, and without getting specific to names - when a company is simply out to get PR and to buy themselves a good name, when they just want to come in and write a cheque and aren’t interested in developing the skills of the people who are paying for it, just to have the CEO take a photograph giving the cheque (which is unfortunately all too common)... Money is not the answer, writing a cheque is not the answer.
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like a record that’s stuck, but I think it’s important to remember the point I made earlier, that is: We can’t even start contemplating moral transformation in the absence of transforming conditions for the poor. We need to know that, and we need to understand, as I pointed out earlier, that most of our moral values is a function of our situation. So that needs to be addressed.

You know, you hear many a time this thing of the white people saying[ing] in the country: ‘Hulle het nou wat hulle wou hé. Hoekom gaan hulle nog so as? [Translation: ‘Why do they keep carrying on like this?'] You know, you hear that. But then I ask myself the question: ‘Who says we got what we wanted? Does a vote equal a job? Does a vote equal money in the bank? Does a vote equal a house?’

You see, I understand that, and we need to understand, as I pointed out earlier, that most of our moral values is a function of our situation. So that needs to be addressed.

If one looks at what is required, in terms of skills, values and knowledge, I think for me, the very first thing is that inter-personal skills are required - how to help keeping others as an equal, irrespective of their race, their colour, their sex or their creed. You see, there is still a lot that we need to learn about that, and I cannot emphasize the need for diversity management enough - not these fly-by-night things that have been put together, I’m talking real diversity management that we learned from each other.

I have learned, through my experience, that by learning from each other, we start to trust each other. We have senior white leaders in the wine industry who we consult with and confide in when we are discussing sensitive issues about the wine industry, and this is because we have learned, we have engaged each other over a long period, and in difficult situations, without trying to be apologetic about who we are and what we are, and then going forward in terms of recognising who you are irrespective of what you are and who you represent.

But we also need to develop other skills - such as conflict management, because we are very poor when it comes to conflict management. A classical example is the strike we just had - a protracted strike which [would have been] totally unnecessary if people knew how to manage that conflict situation: where one wants more to give less. Then there is the issue of anger management - many of us are still very angry. Many of us are still bitter, we feel betrayed. We need to [develop] anger management, which is coupled with healing. I also think it is important to have a consideration for the needs of others - a genuine consideration. And lastly, the principles of situational ethics should be learned. We have become so legalistic... and that is sad - if we put rules and codes above the interests of the people. You know, the Bible taught me that when the rules of the land are in conflict with the rules of God, we have to be obedient unto God.

PATRICK PARRING (Exel): Well, I think a fundamental value is honesty. It doesn’t matter how bad the situation is, I think you’ve got a far better chance over any obstacle if you can be honest - it doesn’t matter how tough a call you’re facing - promote honesty. I think that is fundamental. I think that, if you want to impact on a greater number of leaders, you don’t need to look for new leaders, you don’t need to make new laws - look at the ones that are there, otherwise you’re just making the challenge bigger. You need to see how you can identify existing leaders - whether they’re in business, in labour, wherever they are - and once you identify them, bring one message back to them (and that has stuck in my head): [the message of] the cause we fought for - to make South Africa a better place for all - this means that, if you are a real leader, you need to make a conscious decision to commit to the cause, and that’s a challenge sometimes. If you can’t commit to the cause, then rather don’t do it... I think that’s maybe the problem - there are too many people that serve, but serve themselves more than they serve the cause. And again, because of the environment, and coming from a corrupt background and all of that stuff, it’s so easy. You find it in all spheres, but particularly in government, and the lack of action to address this problem exacerbates the situation. So one of the key issue is to get people to say yes and if they say yes, say yes to the cause. That’s the success of WECBF - when you commit there, it’s not for yourself, it’s for others. I said the other day to somebody: “I have been asked to get involved in an established white business, and I don’t want ownership. I don’t want to be a part of welfarism, respect for one another, which the system imposes on them. You can’t change the person and not change the system, and you can’t change the system and not change the person - everything has got to be so interconnected. I’m basically a phoenix person, you’ve got to break it down and build it up new. You’re not going to find the answers and correct the situation within the current system. That may sound obscure, but my experiences have taught me that the best intentions of human nature founder on the rocks of the current system.

PROF. OLIVER WILLIAMS (Centre for Ethics & Religious Values in Business, Univ. of Notre Dame; UCT): Well, I think, on the positive side, I would say this: Drawing on the strengths of African Culture - the notion of Ubuntu is awfully rich in moral renewal, it seems to me. In the King Report, corporate governance certainly accentuates this - that the notion of Ubuntu brings out the notion that we are interconnected, that Business does not stand alone, that it is a part of the wider society, has to take some responsibility for the wider society, that individuals are interconnected and they have to take some responsibility for each other. You know, in the traditional, religious terms, “we are our brother and sister’s keeper”, is what the notion of Ubuntu is trying to say. The King Report makes the point that it would be a shame if young Africans, being educated to be business leaders, want to put aside some of the richness of their tradition - and I teach a lot of the brightest and broadest young Africans here in Cape Town and I always put something in my final tests about Ubuntu, to let them know that (and I quote that King Report) it would be terrible if you forgot about the richness of your own philosophy in the great quest for the BMW, or whatever. So I think emphasizing your own tradition here in Africa is important - in fact, I would go so far as to argue that it’s a good corrective for capitalism around the world, I mean, I think capitalism has many strengths, but it has an over-emphasis on self-interest and individualism, and I think Ubuntu is a communitarian philosophy - which focuses on the community having to take precedence over the individual at times. So I think you could see a brand of capitalism coming out of Africa that could be a good corrective for the overly individualistic notion. Similar remarks I would say about China as well, they have a very communalistic communitarian kind of ethos.

- they also have a lot of other problems, which are for another day...

The second thing I sometimes worry about is: The notion of Ubuntu - taking care of my friends - that’s a beautiful notion, the extended family notion, but you also have to think about justice - you can not take care of your friends at the expense of the community. I see Trevor Manuel had some interesting comments in a talk he gave which I’ve quoted several times - that municipalities must make sure that tenders don’t go to their friends, they should go to people who can do the job best for the people - and he points out that, in this case, trumps Ubuntu - you can’t provide the best services to the people if you’re in an elected position. So I think corruption - and that’s what the West would call this - corruption has a serious history in Africa, it’s not that bad in South Africa, [in my view] as an outsider. But it’s terrible, for example, in Nigeria, if you’ve done business there, or Kenya - I don’t know everybody says ‘dude’. I think it’s the task of a project like this to start, in a sense, the belief that people’s economic well being, etc. is dependent on the economic well being of everybody else. I think this is an important issue. If the project can deliver that, I think it’s good. But I must confess, having worked in my field for so many years, I’m a bit of a cynic. I will continue to espouse these values but I do think that I’ve seen nothing positive. I’ve seen people with the best democratic positive intentions going into business, or into government, and becoming completely individualistic as a result of the pressures, which the system imposes on them. You can’t change the person and not change the system, and you can’t change the system and not change the person - everythings has got to be so interconnected. I think it’s a bit of a paradox - I’m a bit of a cynic.
Ethical Leadership in & Through Labour

On the 29th of July 2007, the ELP held a workshop - Ethical Leadership in and through Labour, for members of BAWSI, COSATU, FAWU, and other labour-related organisations in Saldanha Bay on the West Coast. Over 100 people gathered at the Saldanha Protea Hotel, eager to learn and participate in the day’s proceedings.

Following introductions led by the facilitator, ELP board member Dr. Clint Le Bruyns and ELP Project Co-Ordinator Ms. Sue Mcwatts, Dr. Le Bruyns started with three quotes from former President Nelson Mandela, who accentuated the following aspects as descriptions of the moral challenge in South Africa: the nation’s moral fibre; the RDP of the Soul; materialism and instant gratification; and rebirth of the sense of human solidarity. Mandela’s concern was that: “The values of human solidarity that once drove our quest for a humane society seem to be replaced, or are being threatened.”

To illustrate the importance of the relationship between the world of work and the worker, Dr. Le Bruyns focused on three different extracts from the Report of the Secretary General of the ILO at the 89th Session of the ILO, Geneva, June 2001:

Reducing the decent work deficit - a global challenge.

Then Dr. Le Bruyns divided the room into three groups to do a Story Wall exercise, with Dr. Le Bruyns, Ms. Mcwatts and Dr. Gordon Dames as group facilitators. Each story wall consisted of four columns: THEN, NOW; LIFE-GIVING and LIFE-THIEVING. Dr. Le Bruyns took the group through a reflective exercise, focusing on their personal experiences of what had happened THEN and to reflect on how they felt when they were first employed, and what they are experiencing NOW regarding their employment experience. They also had to focus on what they had gained, and what they had lost in this time. The groups were all very lively and a number of interesting issues were raised.

The next activity was a puzzle exercise that illustrated the difference between hierarchical, positional and functional leadership. The puzzle exercise proved most entertaining as each groups received a number of shapes and an image they had to recreate using all pieces.

Dr. Le Bruyns presented a theoretical framework on leadership and moral transformation, understanding ethical leadership and knowledge, skills and values in ethical leadership. Dr. Le Bruyns said that communities define leaders’ identities. Ethical leadership therefore is about change or transformation management with the purpose of instilling mutual and common good in, for and through society.

Dr. Le Bruyns requested participants to do a practical and labour relevant exercise by seeking answers on the question: What knowledge, skills and values do leaders need to be empowered with in fostering moral transformation in the workplace?

An interview with COSATU’s Tony Ehrenreich from the ELP Labour Conference served as an example and source from which participants could find said answers.

After lunch, Dr. Le Bruyns continued with his presentation on the following themes: Ethical leadership in context; Change management; Conflict transformation; and application. This session highlighted the responsibility of leaders for the vision, embodiment and realisation of the common good in life - with and for others. Change leads to conflict and needs an appropriate response.

Ms. Mcwatts closed the workshop by thanking the ELP staff and Dr. Le Bruyns, and, most importantly, the participants for their respective contributions.