

3 NPOs share how they're leveraging tech to make a difference

Local non-profit organisations (NPOs) are leveraging technology in exciting ways to make a difference in under-resourced communities. At the recent Trialogue Business in Society Conference 2019, representatives of Abalobi, the Black Sash, and Zito shared how their IT innovations are changing lives.



Image source: [Abalobi/Instagram](#)

Trialogue Partnership Pitch shortlist

Abalobi: Close to 100 fishermen and women are already linked to the Abalobi mobile app suite and programme, enabling local fishers to supply baskets of fish directly to many of South Africa's top restaurants in a fairer, more ecologically sustainable way – “from hook to cook”.

With full rollout, the app suite has the potential to address social justice and poverty alleviation in the small-scale fisheries chain, transform how knowledge is generated, improve stewardship of marine resources, and build resilience in the face of climate change, said project coordinator Daniel Smith.

The Black Sash - Making all voices count: For the first time, the Black Sash has used technology (working in partnership with Code4SA, now known as Open Up) to develop a web-based platform to gather, analyse and store data for access by community-based organisations (CBOs), government and academia. Black Sash national director Lynette Maart explained how the project aims to empower CBOs to own and actively take part in citizen-based monitoring of selected government services in 20 facility sites in South Africa. It also aims to facilitate open, willing engagement by government departments and facilities managers in response to feedback from citizens and CBOs. This could improve public perceptions and engagement, and service quality.

Zito by RLabs: This award-winning digital platform for youth empowerment leverages digital and blockchain technology to increase and track positive user behaviour. It enables youth to build up a ledger of work experience that can be leveraged

for positive outcomes and to show potential employers. Youth have access to an incentives marketplace and vendor partners can engage with the users via the platform.

Feedback from seasoned professionals

The speakers not only raised awareness of their projects among the audience of several hundred leading development sector professionals, but also received valuable feedback from a panel of seasoned industry professionals on how to leverage and grow their offerings. The panel consisted of Rudi Matjokana, Vodacom Business managing executive for public enterprise; Jak Koseff, chief director leading the Programme Management Office for Tshepo 1 Million – the Gauteng provincial government's youth empowerment programme; and Samantha Barnard, deputy director of the Phambano Technology Development Centre.

Allan van der Meulen from Mitchells Plain in Cape Town, ambassador for the Zito project at RLabs, gathered the most support when the audience voted for the project they would like to hear more about. Trialogue will feature Zito in the 2019 edition of its annual Business in Society Handbook, and will co-ordinate introductions and networking opportunities.

"It was an incredible opportunity to be flown to the conference and have the chance to talk about the project on such a platform," said Van der Meulen, who has already been named an Ashoka Changemaker and a Seedstars 2017 runner-up. "It was great for Zito brand awareness and to make new contacts that we want to leverage. We also got valuable feedback from the evaluation panel and plan to build on this."

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