

Ubambiswano: Unlocking the collective power of collective impact for our schools

Issued by [UCT Graduate School of Business](#)

15 Feb 2019

Can schools, on their own, see to the cognitive and psycho-social development of all our children?

Building strong networks of support around the education of children and young people is a necessity in South Africa. To drive this agenda, the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, in partnership with [Dr Alistair Witten](#) and the Western Cape Government's After School Game Changer Initiative, is running a Leading Innovative Partnerships in Extended Education course kicking off in March at the UCT Graduate School of Business.

"A critical mechanism to enable positive change – in our schools - is the building of strong networks of support around the education of children and young people. These networks should comprise a range of actors across the public, private and civil society sectors joined in common purpose to enhance the quality and equity of schooling in South Africa," believes [Dr Alistair Witten](#), UCT Graduate School of Business Adjunct Faculty and Course Convenor on the [Leading Innovative Partnerships in Extended Education](#) (LIPEE) course. The course works to strengthen the capacity of schools, social purpose organisations and governments, to lead and sustain the partnerships that form these networks.

Many low and no-fee public schools in South Africa are vulnerable to the challenges of relatively poor resourcing and educating children whose development is affected by hunger, poverty, ill-health, malnutrition, violence, abuse, and neglect. Schools, on their own, will not be able to provide learners with quality education if these systemic challenges are not addressed. Given that some of these challenges are societal, i.e. they arise out of the structural arrangements of the country, a collective effort to address them is required.

Within the South African educational sector there are already many social purpose organisations such as Shine Literacy, Ikamva Youth and See Saw Do carrying out important and impactful work in and around schools to support the holistic development of learners in the face of these challenges. Their contributions, though important and necessary, often sit on the periphery of the school's activities and are not integrated into its core operational plans or that of the educational district. In situations like these, the effects of programmatic interventions become diluted, and the sustainability of the work is affected negatively.

Through the Leading Innovative Partnerships in Extended Education course, the Bertha Centre is bringing stakeholders together to strengthen capacity for those in the education ecosystem to partner in creating a network of school support, recognising that there are tangible lessons from our social innovation and systems change work that we can also share with practitioners. This course asks: how can we innovatively partner for the greatest impact, create mutual accountability and interrogate the power dynamics that determine the flow of information?

"In order to improve the quality and impact of these interventions it is imperative that high-quality innovative and collaborative partnerships between schools and organisations are led well and sustained to provide a system of support for schools," says Dr Witten.

In many instances, the leadership and management of schools are eager to develop the technical capacity required to effectively understand and embrace the contributions of organisations that have demonstrated a positive impact.

The course has been designed for NGOs and social enterprises working with schools across the extended school day (during and after existing school hours), government officials (district and circuit level) and no and low-fee school principals/management team members accompanied by one entry-level teacher from the same school. The opportunity for

the creation of strong networks of support, through innovation and collaboration, will focus on the holistic education of the learner across the extended school day.

About the Leading Innovative Partnerships in Extended Education course:

The course will run on the first three Saturdays in March, starting on the 2nd of March 2019, with two follow-up days in April and May respectively, for social purpose organisations working with schools across the extended school day, government officials (district and circuit level) and no and low-fee school principals/ senior management team members accompanied by one entry-level teacher from the same school. This course is co-designed and presented by the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the UCT Graduate School of Business and [Dr Alistair Witten](#), founding director of the Centre for the Community School at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, in partnership with the Western Cape Government's After School Game Changer Initiative.

The cost is R2,750pp and limited scholarships are available for schools. Applications close 23 February, click [here](#) to apply.

For more information, contact educationinnovation@gsb.uct.ac.za.

About the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship:

The Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship is a specialised unit at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (GSB). Established in 2011 in partnership with the Bertha Foundation, a family foundation that works with inspiring leaders who are catalysts for social and economic change and human rights, the Centre has become a leading academic centre in Africa. Its mission is to build capacity and pioneering practice in Africa, with partners, practitioners and students to advance the discourse and systemic impact of social innovation. In collaboration with the GSB, the Centre has integrated social innovation into the business school curriculum, established a wide community of practitioners and awarded over R7 million in scholarships to students from across Africa. The Bertha Centre offers scholarships to UCT GSB applicants who would like to complete either the UCT GSB MBA or MPhil in Inclusive Innovation, for more information on this please visit their [website](#).

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