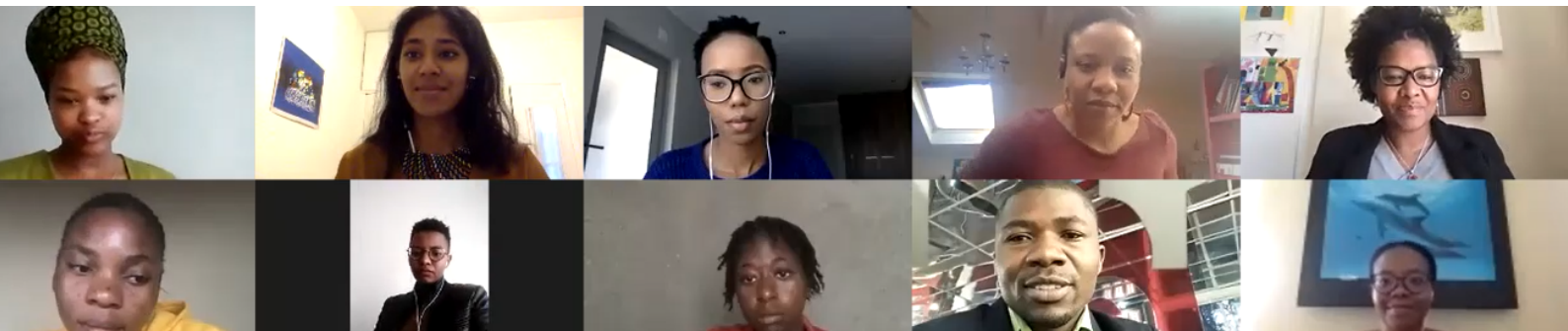


BRIDGING LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS WITHIN YOUTH-LED & STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS



Within the youth and student leadership space, there is a need for increased trust building, collaboration and empowerment. The event brought together various youth institutions and organizations, and a key government body to reflect and engage with one another. The objective of the event was to foster partnerships and collaboration between organizations, as a practice in Bridging Leadership. Alongside this, it was to educate participants on the importance of embedding practices of Social Connectedness and Bridging Leadership in their work, as well as in strengthening leaders.

"WHEN WE ENABLE AN ENVIRONMENT OF BELONGING AND SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS - YOUTH ARE BETTER ABLE TO ROOT THEMSELVES IN THESE ENVIRONMENTS. THIS MAKES THEM MORE RESILIENT AND EMPOWERED TO EFFECT CHANGE."

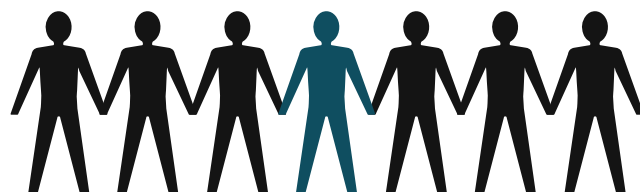
- CELINE THOMAS

The beneficiaries of the event included various student based and youth organizations – with a particular focus on: Organizations focusing on food insecurity and poverty alleviation; Organizations focusing on education, mentorship, literacy, and tutoring of disadvantaged students; Organizations focusing on gendered inequities: period poverty, gender-based violence, and women empowerment; Organisations focusing on rights and recognition of marginalized students, LGBTQIA* students, Students with physical and mental disabilities, as well as mental health organizations

"WHAT CAME OUT FOR US WAS THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTING YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES: WHETHER ITS IN THE RUNNING OF THE ORGANIZATION OR A BROAD LEVEL ... AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RELEVANCE OF SOLUTIONS YOU COME UP WITH AS AN ORGANIZATION TO ANSWER TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHALLENGES."

- SIBONGILE KHUMALO

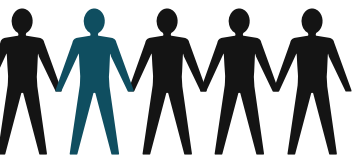
The format of the event was a panel discussion, with breakout sessions and was facilitated through Zoom. This format was appropriate given the need to have a live discussion in order to foster deepened connection and collaboration, whilst taking into consideration the Lockdown level 3 restrictions, and cost considerations. The event took place on the 05 August between 13:30-15:30, and intends to catalyze further dialogue and collaboration into the future.



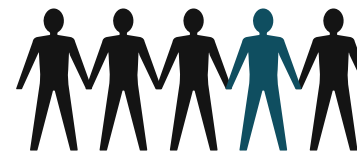
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The Roundtable panel discussion consisted of speakers from various organizations including: The National Youth Development Agency; The Learning Trust; Democracy Works Foundation; Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator; as well as Ikamva Youth. The speakers contributed towards discussion of the programme's which they are currently running that potentially built Social Connectedness within their organizations as well as beneficiaries. Furthermore the speakers also reflected on some of the persistent challenges facing the nations youth; the importance of youth leadership development; as well as fostering Social Connectedness and Bridging Leadership within youth spaces



"EVEN IF YOU ARE AN OLDER LEADER WHO HAS BEEN THROUGH A JOURNEY ... A LOT OF THE WORK WE [ULTIMATELY] HAVE TO DO IS AROUND OURSELVES."
— MARLENE OGAWA



Some of the notable learnings from the event was seeing how easily adaptable principles of Social Connectedness and Bridging Leadership could be applicable to many youth organizations, and demonstrating a strong case for collaboration for the Social Connectedness Programme with these organizations. A notable success was the panel participants who participated, as the panel consisted of all the major organizations within the youth space in South Africa. Another notable learning is how the event significantly contributed towards many of the policy recommendations for the research report. Another success is that the event facilitated and encouraged reported collaborations between some of the participating organizations.

The impact which the event had on the community is firstly, giving the participating organizations a more deepened understanding of the importance of Social Connectedness, building institutions of belonging and Bridging Leadership. Furthermore, it served the community in strengthening leadership institutions and cultivating collaborations which can potentially be instrumental in uniting efforts to eradicate urgent issues within youth, and student communities. As the breakout sessions were focused on building connection and community through reflections on individual journeys – the event also acted as a space of healing, resilience building, and reflection for participants. The individuals impacted by the event were approximately 30 leaders of youth and student-based organizations.



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SYNERGOS

**"Bridging Leadership and Social Connectedness
within
Youth-led & Student Organisations"**



Speakers:

