

WHY EVENTS FOR AFRICA?



“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
Nelson Mandela



Volunteers gaining workplace experience



Youth from the local neighbourhood @ The Library

On the 11th of February, 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison. I was in Cape Town on that miraculous day to see and be a part of history happening in our time. In 1993, I had a young intern working with me for workplace experience and he asked whether I would do the décor for a man who had been in prison and had never had a Birthday Party – I said of course and on the 17th of July, 1993 my company and I were privileged to be the event decorators for Mr. Mandela’s 75th Birthday. I have treasured the signed thank you letter he wrote, and it was wonderful to see his leadership in action towards the acceleration in education in our country. Events can play a big role in respect of education – from a Design Thinking Methodology/problem solving, small low-key events create extended opportunities for ‘failure’ in a safe environment.

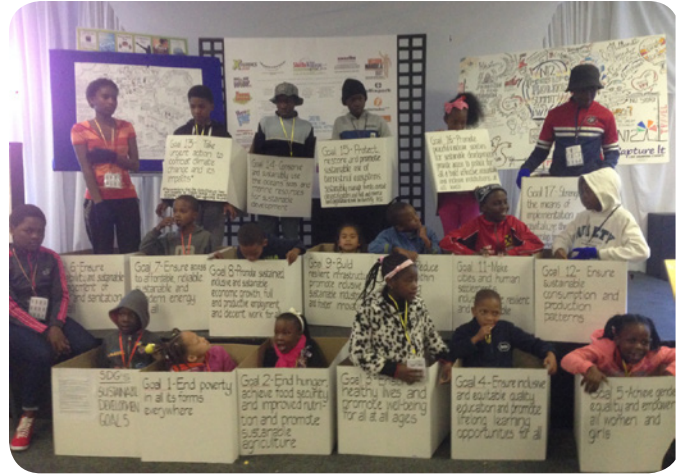
Fast forward to 2001 and the launch of the National Skills Development Strategy with an emphasis on equality and the need to cultivate lifelong learning in a workplace environment. The event industry in South Africa was the first out the block with the registration of a qualification for Event Support as an entry level into this amazing, life-changing industry using the International EMBOK. (Event Management Body of Knowledge www.juliasilvers.com aligned to the IFEA’s CFEE.)

In April of 2001, a soccer disaster at Ellis Park where 39 people died, triggered the introduction of the Safety at Events Act and the industry was then under pressure to ensure that not only would it have standards in place to ensure safe events but it would be necessary to work towards a Professional Body for events. IFEA President & CEO, Steve Schmader, CFEE, joined us in South Africa in 2007 and supported us all the way in our industry’s move towards professionalization. We are pleased to say that the event associations SAACI (South African Associations for the Conference Industry), EXSA (Exhibitions and Events Association of Southern Africa) and IFEA Africa finally have the registration of the CEPA (Council of Event Professionals Africa), with our South African Qualifications Authority aligned to the EMICS (Event Management International Competency Standard). There is still a long journey ahead, but essential in the professionalization of our industry for safe, compliant events.

Over the last year we have been working with 120 new young entrants into the Events Industry, on a New Venture Creation learnership, working with the standards with small, low profile events. In July we will host the IFEA Africa Unconventional CONvention at Skills Village in Johannesburg, South Africa and these new youth enterprises will be our suppliers as they move towards creating events in their local communities, getting the



Singing sweepers



Local community and the SDG's



Singing sweepers



Africa Day Art

job done and making a difference in the lives empowered in the process.

During the UNconvention CONvention, we will be showcasing a new generation of youth in the event value chain from across Africa. The event is set for a wonderful mix of African food, music and fashion as this new generation of youth and local residents of the valley plan, prepare and produce the Unconventional CONvention, as well as, share best practices with event industry professionals from Africa.

According to Stats SA, South Africa's unemployment rate is high for both youth and adults; however, the unemployment rate among young people aged 15–34 was 38,2%. This means that more than one in every three young people in the labour force did not have a job in the first quarter of 2018. We're on a mission to work with Government, Business and Civil Society to plan, prepare and produce events that will showcase the power of

events aligned to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and at the same time look to create a circular economy. IFEA Africa is based at Skills Village 2030 on the Eastern edge of the Inner City of Johannesburg. The Village model has a wonderful cross-cutting portfolio of 'makers' crafters, artisans, props, décor, craft beer making, bead working, sewing, printing, artisans, plumbing and good food. Events create a perfect platform to bring buyers and sellers together and Africa has a wonderful opportunity to realise the demographic dividend.

Janet Landy, CSEP

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