

SUSTAINABLE EVENTS FOR

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS



Warmest Ubuntu greetings from Africa, particularly from sunny South Africa. “Ubuntu” means humanness - a comprehensive ancient African world view based on the values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family¹. And what an honour and a privilege it is to take on the role of 2019 Chair of the World Board of the IFEA family.

As I look back on my 40-year journey in event design and skills development, the memories that pop up are all events and what great experiences we have had. Twenty-five years ago, a young intern asked if we would do the décor for the 75th Birthday Party for a man who had just been released after 27 years in jail, which we did. One of my treasured keepsakes from that event, was the beautiful letter from Nelson Mandela, the then President of the ANC. He wrote: *“I was overwhelmed and highly appreciative of the success of the occasion, by the aesthetic excellence of the ballroom, and by the wonderful performance with which you honoured me and my guests.”* This was the start of my journey into a whole new world of local communities and as Donald Getz confirmed at the 2018 IFEA Convention, events help meet many social, economic, cultural and environmental roles and that most communities and destinations are already involved.

The next twenty years of my event career, was a quest towards a Professional Body for Events Management where I worked on EMBOK – Event Management Body of Knowledge² with Julia Rutherford Silvers, Bill O’Toole, CFEE (2018 IFEA Hall of Fame inductee) and other EMBOK founders, to support an event value chain with the skills, knowledge and experience required to be able to plan, prepare and produce events, specifically our interest in activities and events in local communities.

In 2007, with the help of IFEA President, Steve Schmader, CFEE, IFEA Africa was formed and based at Skills Village 2030. In addition to this, a major milestone for the event industry in South Africa, has been the formation of the Council of Event Professionals Africa (CEPA) which is currently in process with our South African Qualifications Authority for recognition as the professional body.

Skills Village 2030, located within twelve old character buildings on the edge of the Inner City of Johannesburg is a wonderful diverse space for young entrepreneurs entering into the wonderful world of events to plan, prepare and produce small low-key events. The model embraces design thinking, creating extended opportunities for failure - embracing learning by doing in a safe space.

The Village is part of the Makers Valley initiative on the eastern edge of the inner city which is set to receive a massive boost with a two-year, 2.1-million Rand (\$150,318 USD) grant from the US Consulate. The Makers Way is a placemaking implementation project that will develop 16 placemaking areas within six suburbs

collectively called the Makers Valley. The two-year grant will sponsor a range of engagements, skills development and making workshops.

We currently have over 100 young New Venture Creation entrepreneurs entering into the wonderful world of events with the implementation in 2019 of a Calendar of Events aligned to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2015, all United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development³, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is an urgent call for action by all countries, developed and developing, in a global partnership. The goals and targets challenge us to meet the targets over the next eleven years in areas that are so important for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

I am proud of the role that the myriad of events created by IFEA members around the world contribute towards ‘shared value’ – events that enhance competitive advantage and profitability whilst simultaneously advancing social and economic conditions in the communities in which it sells and operates. Shared Value, according to Michael Porter and Mark Kramer is not corporate social responsibility, philanthropy or even sustainability, but a new way to achieve economic success⁴. Shared value is a management strategy in which companies find business opportunities in social problems⁵

As IFEA World Board Chair, I am looking forward to 2019 as a year of sharing IFEA best practices, humbled by the knowledge that our association, and our industry can increase the socio-economic and environmental health and wealth of local communities. Collectively turning eventing know-how into a collective vehicle for sustainable social & economic development solutions. Designing unique eventing experiences, furthering the knowledge systems of the event industry for commercial profit, and offering concrete solutions to the socio-economic and socio-political needs of clients and partners. Delivering the best experiences, getting the job done right and making a difference in the lives empowered in the process – Sustainable Events for Sustainable Development.

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