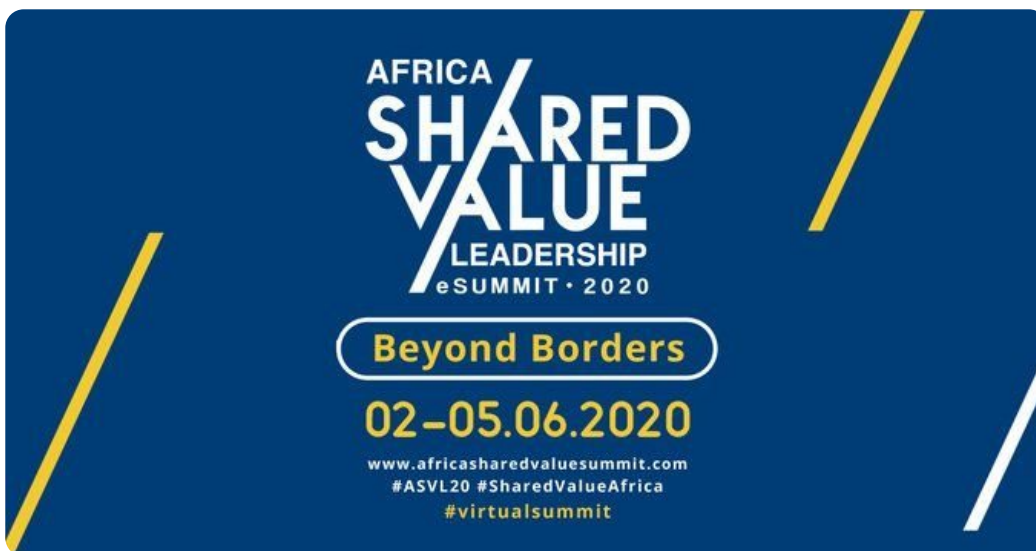


The Africa Shared Value Leadership eSummit - not to be missed

As Covid-19 exacerbates the poverty and deprivation that exists across much of Africa, the continent's private sector is playing a leading role in large-scale social relief efforts. These initiatives are targeted at employees, suppliers, customers and the broader community. With the healthcare sector driving medical relief, the financial sector working to keep small businesses afloat and all sectors innovating to remain open for customers, companies are facing unprecedented challenges.

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Given the need for accelerated efforts, social impact consultancy, Shift Impact Africa will convene the Africa Shared Value Leadership virtual summit from 2–5 June 2020 at which business leaders from across Africa will discuss their companies' responses, identify approaches that are working, and learn from peers and thought leaders how to create social impact in a time of crisis. Speakers will also share some Covid-19 initiatives that are already having a positive impact on our region. The format gives delegates the flexibility to select when to link into the virtual event.

"It is through businesses sharing what they are doing, the challenges they face and the solutions they are creating that the private sector will be able to grow its impact," says Shift Impact Africa and Shared Value Africa Initiative founder Tiekie Barnard. "Companies have generally built their businesses purely around financial returns. The aim of **Beyond Borders: 2020 Africa Shared Value Leadership eSummit** is for peer learning to assist purpose-led companies to grow the value they are creating for society."

The eSummit's webinar sessions start with the central question businesses are asking themselves as the turmoil unfolds: what is the best way to create social impact in a time of crisis? To address this question, the first day's session features a keynote address by Harvard Business School Professor and co-founder of the Shared Value Initiative, Mark Kramer, to provide guidance on the topic.

Kramer, with colleague Professor Michael Porter both of Harvard Business School, coined the term 'share value' to describe the ability of purpose-driven companies to generate financial returns by taking meaningful steps to tackle major social and environmental problems. In their 2011 seminal *Harvard Business*

Review article, "Creating Shared Value", they define shared value as "policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates."

Kramer's address will lead into a discussion between 10 high-profile business leaders from across the continent, who will talk about their challenges faced during Covid-19 as purpose-led leaders and share learning on addressing stakeholder needs during this pandemic. The needs are extensive, from taking care of employees and addressing supplier issues to communicating with investors. In the discussion, the CEC will exchange views on opportunities for economic recovery and examine what can be put in place now to better prepare for future turbulence.

While Covid-19 has caused massive hardship and economic slowdown, a collaboration between business, government and other sectors across geographies is showing what can be achieved where there is a common purpose, says Barnard.

In a discussion about financial inclusion after Covid-19, which is particularly impacting micro and small businesses (SMEs), panellists will explore ways to improve access to finance and to support vulnerable SMEs, individuals and households. How can financial institutions make better use of technology to bridge the gap between business and society? How does the African business community respond to ensure vulnerable households, SMEs and service providers are able to recover? How can governments, funders and financial institutions collectively assist?

This is an area in which eSummit sponsors Old Mutual and KCB Group have launched comprehensive responses during the pandemic. Of their many initiatives, for example, KCB Group has extended relief on the terms of client personal loans and in collaboration with Safaricom, contributed funds towards interventions to cushion citizens from the economic hardship brought by Covid-19. Old Mutual's set of initiatives includes assistance for business and individual clients, as well as work with partners to provide funding for healthcare workers.

Companies are operating within their sectors to provide meaningful contributions to reducing the crisis. The eSummit sponsor, healthcare business Abbott, has moved rapidly to launch several initiatives. Among them, Abbott acted quickly to launch a rapid test kit for the virus. The group is also providing front-line healthcare worker support, in partnership with the American Diabetes Association, donating 14-day sensors to hospitals and medical centres in outbreak hotspots to help accelerate access to technology.

In a panel discussion on healthcare transformation in Africa, panellists share insights on how the Covid-19 pandemic is reshaping healthcare in Africa. What have we learnt from the pandemic about the collaboration between the private, public sector and civil society that enhances social change? How can the private sector contribute to meeting regional health goals across Africa? What is needed for healthcare improvements in Africa over the next decade?

Many company leaders ask how they should take the first steps to purpose-driven leadership, says Barnard. "If ever there was a time for purpose-led leadership and a broader stakeholder focus, it is now. Organisations have to look at social impact, but there is no cookie-cutter approach to this. At the eSummit, we will highlight one of the most important business tools to be released this year, a playbook to assist businesses that provides a step by step guide for thinking through what doing good business looks like."

About Shift Impact Africa

Shift Impact Africa, the organisers of the eSummit, is a Shared Value advocacy, training and consultation firm assisting businesses to find the Shared Value strategy that works for them. Frequently, companies are not sure how to move from purely profit-focused to demonstrating their responsibility towards their environment and society. Shift Impact Africa assists clients to identify social challenges relevant to the business, and to implement the Shared Value enterprise where growth opportunities lie.

About Shared Value Africa Initiative

The Shared Value Africa Initiative (SVAI), is a pan-African organisation and the custodian of the global Shared Value movement on our continent. The SVAI is the regional partner of the global Shared Value Initiative, and the regional partner of the global Shared Value Initiative started by economists Professors Michael Porter and Mark Kramer of the Harvard Business School. The SVAI's objective is to create an ecosystem and orchestrate, convene, motivate, create collaborative private sector relationships that as a collective when working together can bring about change at scale.

Further information on the eSummit's programme and speakers is available at www.africasharedvaluesummit.com.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>