



Bertha Centre for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Annual Report 2023

changing the way we're changing the world





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Director's note

Dr Solange Rosa

It's a truism to say that change is the only constant. However, with inequality and instability growing, and worsening climate change, the imperative to foster inclusive societies is more pressing than ever. We need new solutions and new systems for longstanding problems.

It is heartening that in the current global context, the voices of the Global South, including Africa, are becoming louder, stronger, and more potent. We believe it's critical to elevate these voices because we understand our own context best and, by bringing diverse perspectives to global issues, we can design better solutions. The Bertha Centre, Africa's first specialised centre dedicated to advancing social innovation and entrepreneurship, supports the development of local knowledge development.

Previously, experts would promote top-down recommendations for programmes developed in other contexts to be implemented in Africa. Now,

more and more, we can respond with what our needs are and co-create locally relevant solutions to our own challenges, with the support of funders who recognise our expertise and skills. We are continually investing in our own capacity and in those of others so that we generate context-specific solutions. We are appreciative of funders who are sensitive to this nuance.

In 2022, we adopted a new five-year vision and strategy to focus our work. We invest in training changemakers, transform the way resources are used for social good, work in collaboration with partners, and promote social justice. We are now halfway through this strategy, having focused on building capacity, mobilising private sector resources for social impact, and supporting philanthropy to be more impactful.

Over the past year, we have developed critical partnerships in Africa, especially in health and innovative finance. In Health Systems Innovation,

we have global partnerships with the World Economic Forum and Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI) to better understand support for community health. We are looking at how health innovations were implemented in Africa and Latin America during the COVID-19 pandemic and the lessons learned. We also work with the Mastercard Foundation on health innovation and entrepreneurship, receiving a multi-year funding grant last year to stimulate primary health care jobs for youth in South Africa and with other universities in Africa. This work will also see us partner with the University of Toronto, Canada.

Across all three partnerships, the aim is to stimulate different ideas for solving health challenges in local, contextual ways. Our Innovative Finance team was actively involved in raising awareness of impact investing, with several events during the year and significant partnerships. We worked with the Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia impact investing advisory boards to

co-host the Africa Impact Summit in Cape Town, and continue to promote impact investing across the continent in a powerful partnership with them.

The Systems Justice Innovation team has also built a good relationship with Jasiri and its programmes, funded by Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies and implemented in Rwanda. This is an initiative that supports social entrepreneurs with training and mentorship, increasing their competencies to identify local challenges and addressing them.

Being able to bring more capital into social impact, helping investors to see opportunities in social impact enterprises, just as our Innovative Finance team is doing, speaks to our strategic objective of transforming the way resources are used for social good.

We also secured rewarding opportunities to further systemic change with other partners such as the Collective Change Lab, the Ford

Foundation, and Jet Advisory Services. Going forward, we will be investing in our partnerships to build our networks so that we can move towards systemic impact.

We are continuing to support changemakers through several programmes and projects. Our Changemakers Programme at Philippi Village empowers young people in disadvantaged communities to identify and address local challenges. The Bertha Scholars programme provides scholarships for students in the MPhil in Inclusive Innovation and MBA programmes at the UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB). Our youth team has focused on creating an ecosystem with other youth organisations across the country, supporting individuals as they transition from education to employment. We also partnered with Douglas Knowledge Partners to offer the Youth Innovation Essay Prize, which supports young people to ideate solutions to social challenges. We aim to enable a systems perspective to changemakers so they can understand and



identify the problem, the stakeholders, and then potential solutions that could be implemented.

We once again offered our annual Systems Change and Social Innovation course, which was very successful. Our Impact Investing course has been very popular and will now be offered in Kenya in 2024, as well as South Africa, so that we hone capacity across the continent.

The Bertha Centre published several op-eds and reports during the year while continuing with our podcast series, *Just for a Change*. This focus on thought leadership in social innovation helps to stimulate more thinking around solutions to socioeconomic and environmental problems.

All this has only been possible with the help and support of our committed, passionate staff, who

have taken the initiative to set up partnerships, implement capacity-building and catalytic projects, and work together across portfolios.

Looking ahead, we are building out a new climate change portfolio. We have received funding from the World Economic Forum for a Hoffman Climate Change Fellow to focus on climate and innovation at a global level. The aim will be to uncover innovation that addresses both climate change and social justice, especially the impact on disadvantaged communities, their needs, and the obligations of more developed nations and more affluent communities. We want to build an understanding that equity must be part of climate action.

We have developed a strategy for revitalising the Education Innovation portfolio to connect

with innovators in this field, develop case studies, and consider how to embed systems thinking in education.

We understand that social innovators and entrepreneurs in Africa have a difficult journey. We will always focus on supporting our changemakers to the best extent we can – through mentorship, coaching, understanding, and partnership. In this way, we hope to create an equitable future for everyone.

Dr Solange Rosa

Bertha Centre Director



The voices of the Global South are becoming stronger. We can co-create relevant solutions to our own challenges.

– Dr Solange Rosa

Dr Phumlani Nkontwana – Catalysing stronger entrepreneur support systems

Bertha Steering Committee member

Entrepreneurs are only as strong as their support systems, which in turn depends on the environment they find themselves in, says Dr Phumlani Nkontwana. That's why he has made it his mission to nurture the entrepreneurial ecosystems that lead to social innovation and entrepreneurship-led sustainable development, in Africa and beyond.

"Entrepreneurship has the potential to be at the forefront of development in South Africa, if we can take a systems approach to tackling social issues. It's important to recognise that developmental challenges are often rooted in several interrelated problems," says Nkontwana.

For this reason, Nkontwana stresses the value of empowering entrepreneurs through interdisciplinary thinking that reimagines what we value and where we invest. "It's not enough to fund entrepreneurs," he explains. "We must fund the plurality of entrepreneurship if we want to see positive social change. Taking a systems view is

essential to avoid mono-entrepreneurship, where there's an obsession with digitally enabled firms that will not create sufficient jobs alone."

Even though entrepreneurship is commonly hailed as a public good, Nkontwana cautions against overlooking its moral hazards. "Cape Town has one of the best ecosystems in Africa, but entrepreneurs living in Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, and similar under-resourced environments don't always have access to the support structures they need. We're not thinking carefully enough about what type of entrepreneurship we want, whom to support, and for what cause." To overcome this, Nkontwana believes governments and philanthropies need to position their focus on incentivising responsible and productive entrepreneurship. "We need local public policy that articulates the type of entrepreneurial ecosystems for the Africa we want."

Nkontwana has clung fast to his vision throughout his career, working on his own entrepreneurial

endeavours, lecturing at the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University, and managing entrepreneurship funds for Multichoice, Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies (AGGP), Transnet, Philips, and JP Morgan, especially involved in providing entrepreneurship education and training within and outside of the formal education landscapes in Africa.

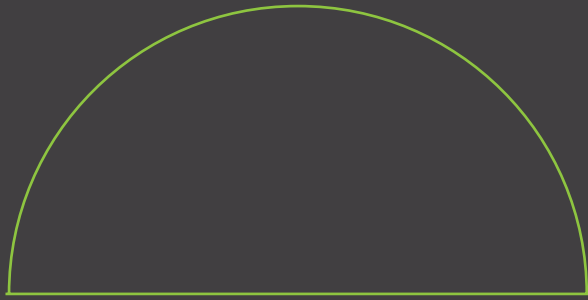
In 2009, he began bringing Fuata Africa to life, formally founding the company in 2013 as a business advisory, big data, and ecosystem services firm. Today, the organisation operates across Africa, Europe, and Latin America to support philanthropies, large organisations, governments, and enterprise support organisations (ESOs) – particularly those that directly support entrepreneurs with a focus on collaboration and thought leadership, like the Bertha Centre and AGGP. Fuata Africa prioritises impact through the lens of social change, ensuring that the work they do is palpable and beneficial to local people in Africa.

Knowledge sharing makes for ecosystem leadership

When it comes to fostering entrepreneurship, Nkontwana values ecosystem leadership. This prioritises knowledge sharing, networking, collaboration, and resource exchange to help entrepreneurs turn ideas into impactful ventures and transform the systems that have held them back from achieving shared prosperity.

“It’s hard to measure ecosystem leadership but that’s exactly what I love about the Bertha Centre and AGGP,” says Nkontwana. “AGGP and Bertha Centre know better than other ESOs that, even though they run direct (micro-level) programs and workshops, they also need to do the necessary scaffolding in their respective local entrepreneurial ecosystems. One way to scaffold well is to convene.”





Nkontwana supported the Bertha Centre's work, proposing four ecosystem solutions or pilots to the Western Cape Government ahead of implementing their 2023–2028 five-year strategy, where collaboration and convening were a central part of the process. "We need more institutions like the Bertha Centre and AGGP – 'commons' that are neither public nor private but have a reputation to convene us differently or productively."

Presently, Nkontwana is the founding director of the Allan Gray Centre for Africa Entrepreneurship (AGCAE) at Stellenbosch University, which forms part of the Economic and Management Sciences faculty. He held the position of senior lecturer in a Bertha Centre-funded position at the University of Cape Town GSB in 2022 and 2023 and continues to provide support and guidance on the Bertha Steering Committee. "My vision is for us to create an environment that enables high-impact entrepreneurship through pan-African intellectual collaboration," he says. "My contribution now

impacts about 10 African countries, among them, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, and Tanzania. While some of these countries have promising entrepreneurial ecosystems, others are a regulation hazard. There's value in putting these ecosystems in touch with each other to collaborate with one another, connect the dots, create bridges, and get people talking. Different countries have different strengths to bring to the table." While popular opinion and approaches have been to encourage domestic entrepreneurship policies, he says that Africa needs more translocal entrepreneurship policies.

Nkontwana has also remained an active friend of the Bertha Centre, participating in the Brown Bag Series, speaking at the Africa Impact Summit, and co-convening the Systems Change and Social Impact courses. He values the Bertha Centre's focus on offering young entrepreneurs opportunities for collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing, and he brings his academic and industry perspectives and knowledge of

the relationship between entrepreneurial ventures and social impact to everything he does. Going forward, he is eager to see the Bertha Centre's focus on knowledge co-production increase, sharing its tried and tested approaches to support young entrepreneurs with the rest of the world. "We can do more advocacy for the type of entrepreneurship we want. We need ecosystem leaders and places like the Bertha Centre and AGCAE to provide the leadership we need."

Dr Nkontwana is a development economist, researcher and entrepreneur. He is the founding academic director of the Allan Gray Centre for Africa Entrepreneurship at Stellenbosch University and founding CEO of Fuata Africa. He is a former senior lecturer at the Bertha Centre.



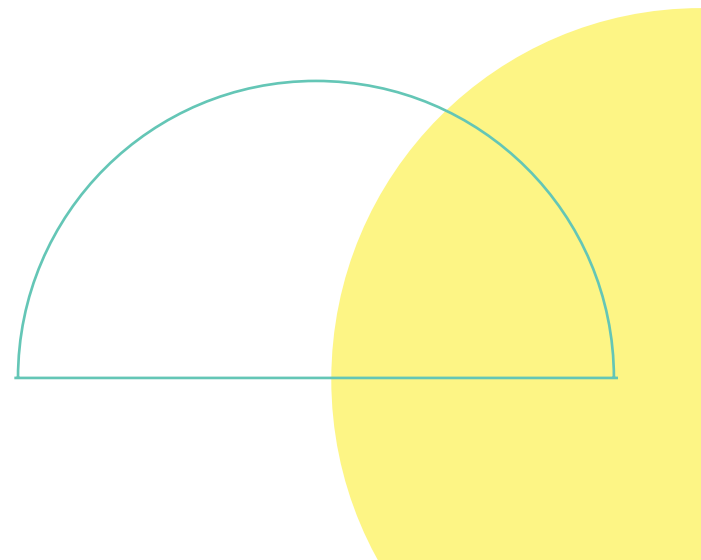
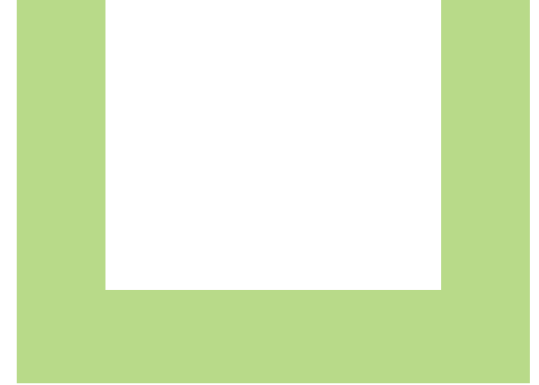
Overview

The Bertha Centre is the first academic centre in Africa dedicated to advancing social innovation and entrepreneurship. Founded in 2011 as a specialised facility at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (GSB) in partnership with the Bertha Foundation, we are a globally ranked centre of excellence with a mission to build capacity and knowledge. We work with inspiring leaders who are catalysts for social, environmental, and economic change and human rights.

Since inception, we have integrated social innovation into the business school curriculum, established a wide community of practitioners, and awarded over R14.7 million in scholarships to students from across the continent. Our

areas of advocacy and action span innovative finance, systems change, social entrepreneurship, education, youth development, climate change, and healthcare.

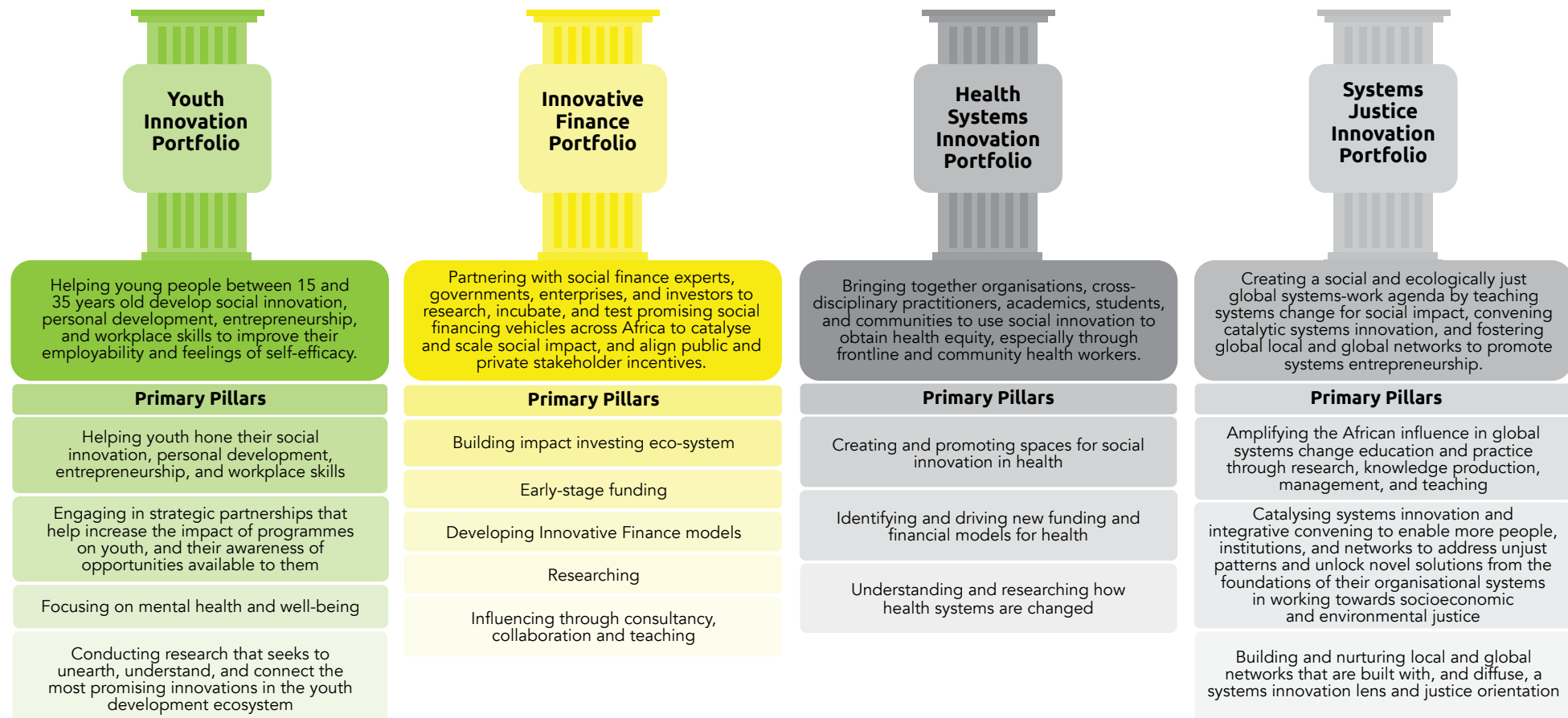
While we are proud of these achievements, we are also aware that the world around us is changing and shifting, and we must respond accordingly. The climate conversation has come to the fore, while geopolitical risk has worsened, with profound implications for developing regions, including Africa. At the same time, we see a new appreciation for expertise from the Global South, and we believe we should continue to invest in local insights and perspectives to empower changemakers from within communities.





Strategic Priorities: Four objectives to advance change

The Centre's work remains focused on researching, catalysing, educating, convening, and advocating across four principal portfolios. Our team is delivering on an ambitious work programme and is devoting significant energy to meeting our fundraising goals.

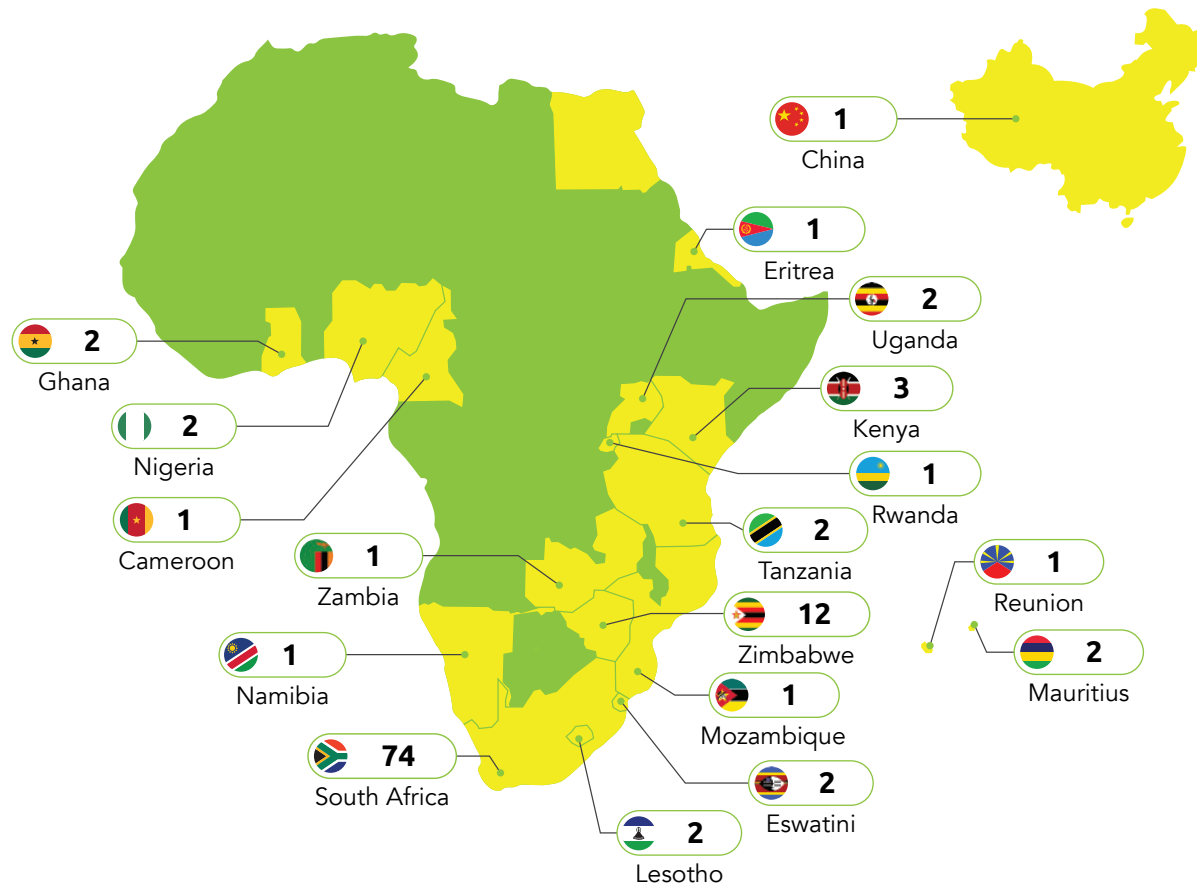




Strategic priority 1: Increase the number of changemakers having a systemic social impact

The Bertha Centre remains deeply committed to growing a diverse community of 5,000 changemakers creating a systemic impact across the African continent by 2026, with 1,278 changemakers supported in 2023. Our awareness that innovation and social change do not happen in isolation, but are interconnected, underpins this commitment. In addition, diversity enriches dialogue and produces powerful solutions. Over the past year, we have grown our Bertha Scholars programme, supported youth changemakers and entrepreneurs, and amplified the social innovation discourse through teaching.

Country of Origin of Bertha Scholars



Bertha Scholars in Numbers



50

Women



61

Men



45

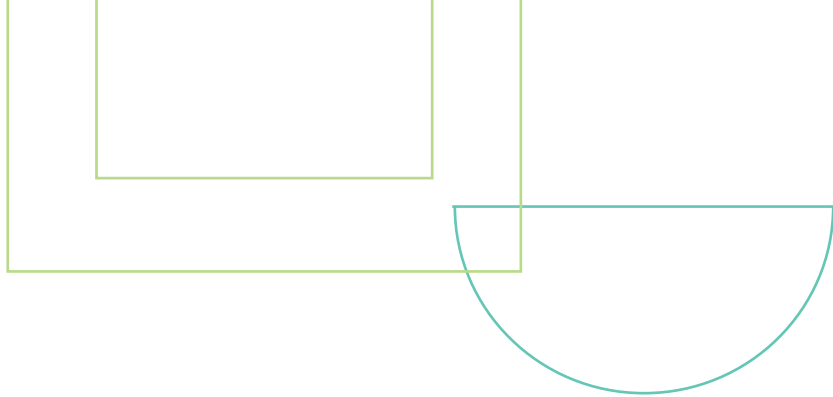
MBA



62

MPhil

*Some students selected alternative courses not shown here.



New Bertha Scholars join our changemaker community

The Bertha Scholars programme represents one of the foundations of our work, in which we grow the changemaker community and support a new generation of African leaders. This is offered to innovators, entrepreneurs, out-of-the-box thinkers, system entrepreneurs, changemakers, social activists, and cross-disciplinary candidates from any field – provided they are actively involved in the exploration of social, environmental, and/or economic justice using innovative approaches. Since 2011, we have grown our community to 111 scholars and alumni.

We award scholarships to individuals who want to use the programme and degree as a catalyst for impactful work with a socioeconomic and environmental justice lens, rather than solely focused on advancing their careers. We support scholars who might not have been able to study at the University of Cape Town (UCT) GSB and invest in their journey to increase their social impact as their career evolves.

As part of our initiatives for 2023, seven scholars were awarded Bertha Scholarships to expand their work in their respective fields.

1. Ashleigh Heese (MPhil)
2. Courtney Thorne-Roots (MBA)
3. Landisiwe Binza (MPhil)
4. Nakisani Liphadzi (MPhil)
5. Nothando Adu-Gyamfi (MBA)
6. Ralph Nyoni (MPhil)
7. Wenbo Zheng (MPhil)

[Read more about our 2023 cohort online.](#)

In 2023, we invited scholars from 2020 to 2023 to join us at the Bertha Scholar Retreat in Cape Town, providing an opportunity for connection while co-creating scholar-driven programming for alumni, current, and incoming scholars. Four primary focus areas were established, including venture building, an alumni network, academic enrichment, and scholar coaching and wellness – all supported by a steering committee.

“I appreciate the efforts by the Bertha Centre and staff to keep the scholars re-energised in their roles and the commitments to serve marginalised people and communities with novel ideas,” one Bertha Scholar said. Another highlighted the feeling of being part of a community whose members can connect and leverage off each other beyond the scholarship.

Wenbo Zheng – On the journey to finding purpose in the practical

Bertha Scholar

Initially driven by pragmatism and the realities of relocation, this changemaker has cultivated a passion for social development and equity.

Wenbo Zheng is a Master of Philosophy in Inclusive Innovation candidate, a Bertha Scholar, and a chartered accountant who aims to make the lives of mobile money platform users in South Africa easier. Zheng — whose thesis in progress focuses on financial inclusion, digitalisation, and interoperability — envisions her work as contributing to a shared value economy.

Her MPhil centres marginalised people by encouraging financial inclusion within the digital space. Those living in informal settlements are often unable to, or must pay a premium to send and receive funds on platforms, with few affordable alternatives.

“The environment is not regulated, so the providers are entitled – they can charge basically however much they want to, most of the time.” Zheng hopes her interviews with stakeholders

exploring financial technology will spark new ways of thinking, while remaining humble about the possible impact on residents of townships and informal settlements. Nevertheless, she proposes that collaborative conversations can result in solutions which create economic value while simultaneously addressing societal needs and challenges.

Recently, Zheng leveraged her years of experience in the financial sector and her connections at the Bertha Centre-led Africa Impact Summit – the continent’s first. She played a facilitating role as part of the Summit’s scholar support group.

“I found it interesting that people have amazing ideas and good business plans, but they do not know how to pitch them properly, especially to explain why they need money and how they’re going to spend the money. That sparked the idea of financial consulting, workshop facilitating, and mentorship. We did some of the sessions after the Summit for the start-ups, which I hope were helpful to these founders.”

Becoming a Bertha Scholar

Zheng’s acceptance into the MPhil in Inclusive Innovation programme as a Bertha Scholar comes after significant upheaval in her life. Her upbringing in China for eighteen years, a strong sense of care for her family, and the transition to living in South Africa have shaped her career path and journey into UCT’s Graduate School of Business.

The Zheng family’s migration from Harbin in northern China to Gqeberha hinged on her father’s desire to broaden his horizons. Although he had another destination in mind, a savvy tour operator convinced her father that South Africa was a prime country to relocate to, even though he did not speak English.

After a year, Zheng and her family relocated to Cape Town, where she attended UCT and qualified as a chartered accountant. Her choice of profession was deeply motivated by the financial precarity her family faced as they attempted to

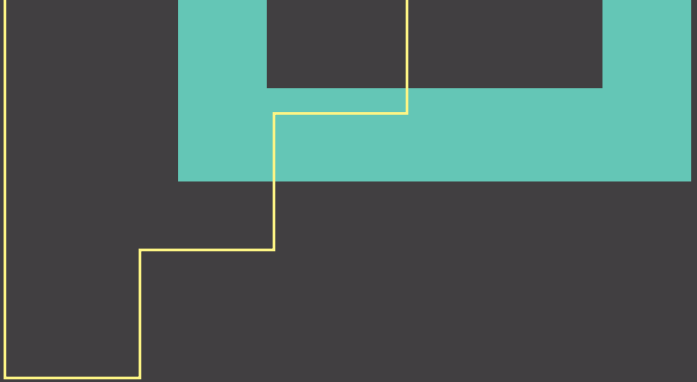
establish themselves in the restaurant industry, to deal with the linguistic barriers, and to cope with the difference in tertiary education systems in China and South Africa.

“When I had just arrived, I thought I needed to choose a subject with not too much English, and I can deal with numbers, so finance became an option. If I were still in China and hadn’t relocated, I would not have studied accounting, but I don’t regret my choice. It made sense at the time, and it makes sense in life.”

UCT demanded self-discipline and self-management, which she found paradoxically liberating, enabling her to assist her parents in setting up their own restaurant. This experience offered Zheng her first hands-on entrepreneurial experience.

Zheng’s subsequent career journey introduced her to the financial technology sector, with her eventually becoming a group financial manager at Flash, a technology subsidiary of Pepkor Holdings.





Ten years into her career, Zheng initially considered pursuing a specialist commerce master's degree, but yearned for an experience that would enhance both her personal and professional development. She decided to apply for the MPhil in Inclusive Innovation and Bertha Scholarship programme instead.

"So, my MPhil is more about the eye-opening and understanding of perspectives... I wanted to meet people and broaden my own knowledge and grow differently," she said.

"I think the nicest part of the MPhil, I would say – compared to other opportunities I could have chosen – is that people are from different background industries and they each have their own topic. There's more collaboration than competition."

Last year, Zheng served as the chair of the GSB's student entrepreneurship committee and organised the entrepreneurship conference, "From Seeds to Giants and Beyond", in November 2023, with the Bertha Centre as a sponsor. This forum explored the pathway to becoming a serial entrepreneur and cultivating a sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem.

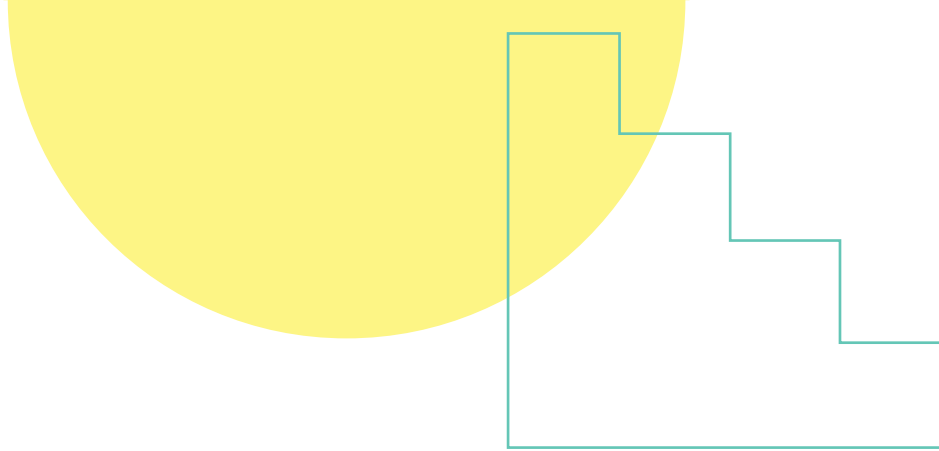
Looking ahead

Zheng hopes to continue connecting and inspiring leaders to collaborate in opening up the economies of scale for mobile money in South Africa and to improve the digital payment experience. She encourages other youth in Africa to become changemakers in the digital sphere.

"With the fourth industrial revolution always being the topic, and with us on the youngest continent, there are just a lot of opportunities and challenges for social innovation – particularly for the young generations to show up for themselves, be creative and innovative, use their talent responsibly and sustainably, and develop our country through entrepreneurship," she says.

Wenbo Zheng is a 2023 Bertha Centre Scholar in the MPhil Inclusive Innovation programme. She currently works as a regional financial controller at Dentsu Africa and assists Professor Harry Barkema from the London School of Economics and Political Science to map out social innovation business models in South Africa.





Supporting community-driven solutions through the Changemakers Programme

Our two-month Changemakers Programme is a youth development initiative that aims to bring social entrepreneurship skills into communities themselves. This is a two-month interactive social entrepreneurship programme for young people not in formal education, training, or employment, which promotes business ideas that also develop their communities. Participants ranged from 18 to 31 years old. Skills are built and developed through the delivery of three core modules: social entrepreneurship, sports for development, and mental health. Mental health and psychosocial support are key elements of the initiative. The

Changemakers Programme demonstrates our belief that if youth-focused skills' development programmes are to achieve their intended outcomes, they need to take meaningful account of the individual and their contexts. The programme is hosted with the UCT Graduate School of Business Solution Space at Philippi Village.

"The programme motivated me to keep pushing despite ups and downs and life's challenges. I gained confidence during the programme. Before, I used to have doubts about myself that I was hopeless and not worthy enough. The programme helped me to change those thoughts," said participant Lutho Mancengeza, 21.

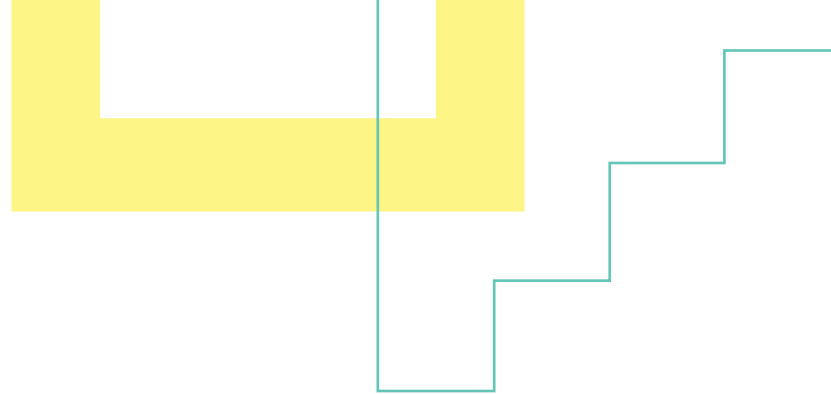
The programme was run for the second time last year with 27 changemakers graduating. We also awarded prizes to the top three most exciting and innovative social business ideas or models, supporting their creators with ongoing mentorship, marketing, and communications.

We aim for all graduates to proceed equipped with the skills and mindset needed to access further educational or employment opportunities.

Homing in on youth mental wellbeing

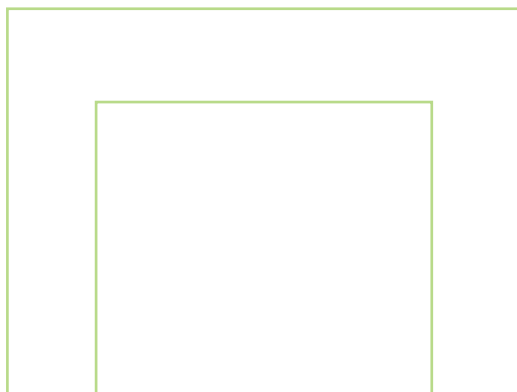
As part of the Youth Innovation portfolio commitment to better support the youth development ecosystem, the team prioritised efforts within the mental health space. As part of the project, the team hosted a series of events, including a full-day workshop, an in-person collective, as well as a webinar for practitioners in partnership with The Youth Development Collaboration Lab. This work was funded by the DG Murray Trust.

The first workshop was delivered in partnership with Community Keepers, an organisation focused on school learners' social and emotional



wellbeing, and EMpower, dedicated to enabling marginalised young people to transform their lives and communities. The workshop equipped practitioners to incorporate mental health into their already existing programmes.

This was followed by an in-person collective examining what young people themselves are doing to tackle mental health issues. Finally, there was a presentation on adolescent and youth mental health. All three events were keenly attended and received a high number of quality applications, highlighting the importance of this type of support across the youth development sector.



Enabling systems entrepreneurship with the Jasiri Talent Investor Programme

The Bertha Centre has continued to support social entrepreneurship programmes, including the Jasiri Talent Investor Programme, funded by Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies, which works with East African entrepreneurs from across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Rwanda. In 2023, we trained more than 90 Jasiri programme fellows (comprising 28 distinct ventures) in systems justice for market-creating innovation, along with industry and market research strategy and tactics.

The Jasiri initiative tackles poverty and inequality by investing in, nurturing, and empowering responsible entrepreneurs, early stage start-ups, and leaders who help to accelerate meaningful employment creation while embodying the values and behaviours of ethical leadership. With Jasiri's third cohort, the Bertha Centre applied systems thinking to understand and analyse complex socioeconomic systems and emerging markets by looking at their interrelated components and the relationships between them. By using systems mapping tools to develop a deeper understanding of problem areas, fellows honed their sensitivity to identifying levers of change and market opportunities for entrepreneurial activities to catalyse change.

The Bertha Centre also supported Jasiri's fourth cohort, with an introduction to fundamental systems thinking concepts, tools, and frameworks.



Strategic priority 2: Transform the way resources are used for social impact

Finance represents a key lever for positive change and sustainable development. Accordingly, the Bertha Centre equips people to navigate the landscape of impact investing: promoting collaboration between public and private sectors, encouraging innovative finance mechanisms, and exploring systems change in philanthropy.

Catalysing capital for social impact

The Bertha Centre recognises the power of catalytic capital to help reach development goals, as it accepts disproportionate risk or concessionary returns to expand funding and generate social impact. This funding helps fill current capital gaps left by mainstream capital. Our team collaborated with catalytic capital manager, Roots of Impact, supported by the Catalytic Capital Consortium (C3), to develop an instructors' training course. This was designed

for membership bodies supporting institutions, wealthy individuals, philanthropic organisations, and other capital allocators with the potential to deploy catalytic capital. Instructors completing this course will be able to train others to deploy catalytic capital effectively. With this course, we aim to transform the way current impact investing resources are deployed to further pursue social impact.

We hosted an online Bertha Centre Collective on 10 August on Impact investing in Africa: Driving impact by deploying catalytic capital on the African continent. The panel of guest speakers – Mokgadi Maunatlala, Monica Rossi, Janice Rudo Sambaza, and Jason Van Staden – shared their insights and expertise on how to explore different ways to deploy catalytic capital that will generate a positive impact on the continent.

Communicating impact standards for managing SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Impact Standards, developed by United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) SDG Impact, provide a universal framework and management approach for the advancement of sustainability and the SDGs among businesses and investors. To scale the roll-out and adoption of the SDG Impact Standards to businesses and investors, UNDP has partnered with seasoned convenors to deliver a training course for enterprises. Bertha Centre hosted this course at the UCT Graduate School of Business in partnership with the African Venture Philanthropy Alliance, impact management consultants Embedding Impact, and SusTrainability Development Global. Upon completion, participants received a license to deliver high-quality, consistent training and support on the SDG Impact Standards.



Promoting impact investing through education

The Bertha Centre once again hosted its annual Impact Investing in Africa course. Drawing on insights shared by industry luminaries and thought leaders, participants were equipped with practical knowledge to drive intentional impact within their organisations or to set up private equity funds with the intentional focus on measurable impact as a consequence of capital deployment. Feedback was positive, with delegates describing the course as inspiring, with knowledgeable facilitators and practical information – for example, about which platforms can support women fund managers in accessing funds. Others shared that the course gave them hope for tackling Africa’s social challenges while delivering financial returns. Participants felt challenged to look beyond

environmental, social, and governance (ESG) for impact opportunities that can secure buy-in from stakeholders.

Bertha Centre staff contributed to multiple programmes run by the Graduate School of Business, introducing impact-investing concepts and practices to students. These programmes included the Masters in International Management, PGDip Development Finance, MPhil Inclusive Innovation, and many other visiting international programmes such as the University of Oslo’s Social Entrepreneurship Internship South Africa.

Exploring what systems change means for African philanthropy

Along with the African Philanthropy Forum (APF) and the Collective Change Lab (CCL), we co-created a year-long process, What Systems Change Means in an African Context, for African philanthropists and social change leaders not only to contribute to, but also actively shape the global discourse on systems change, firmly anchored in African perspectives, African lived experiences, and African stories.

The initiative is being virtually convened from April 2023 to June 2024, with six joint sessions over the period. The aim is to increase the total amount of funding and the number of foundations and individual philanthropists who allocate grant funding to systems change efforts in Africa, and to amplify awareness and narrative change around systems change.



Strategic priority 3: Work with partners to apply social innovation in priority areas

Developing and supporting innovative solutions that drive positive social change was a central focus for the Bertha Centre over the year.

Innovating for healthy futures

The Health Systems Innovation (HSI) portfolio has had a successful partnership with the South African Medical Research Council's (SAMRC) Health Finance Strategy, continued collaborations with the Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI), and the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. It has also formed a new project with the Mastercard Foundation, which is funding the Healthy Futures South Africa project.

The HSI team have continued to engage with the SAMRC, supporting technical work and thought leadership in Invest4Health, a programme that addresses Africa's most pressing health and social

development challenges by promoting innovative finance mechanisms and outcomes-based contracting approaches. The team also conducted a study on the design of the Imagine Social Outcomes-Based Contract, a health financing mechanism, which was presented at the Public Health Association of South Africa conference. On 6 December, the Bertha Centre, in collaboration with the SAMRC, hosted a webinar on innovative finance for health. This shared early learnings and possibilities resulting from the Imagine Social Impact Bond for vulnerable, school-going adolescent girls and young women in South Africa and to build the market for future outcomes-based contracts in public health priorities.

The team helped expand work on inclusive health, originally developed by the Bayer Foundation and Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, to the Asia Pacific region and Latin America. We helped both foundations design and draft a report featuring interviews with key stakeholders and illustrating the intersections between health, agriculture, and climate change.

For the Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI), the team also worked on a white paper for the World Economic Forum, Bayer Foundation, and Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, titled *Inclusive Health Systems: Innovations towards Health Equity in Africa*. The white paper looked at the barriers, solutions, and enabling factors to create inclusive and equitable health systems and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on African health systems. In particular, it described how social innovators and entrepreneurs in Africa are working towards inclusive and equitable health systems and how the private and public sectors enable social entrepreneurship.

The contents of the report formed part of a panel session streamed during the 2023 World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos from 16 to 20 January and will further contribute to the work of the Global Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship. We hope this paper encourages innovative and radical partnerships that will foster more inclusivity and identify which solutions are scalable, with the most potential to advance health equity. Read more [here](#) and download the white paper [here](#).



Under the leadership of the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences, the HSI portfolio has partnered on the Healthy Futures South Africa project, which is funded by the Mastercard Foundation. This project forms part of the Africa Higher Education Health Collaborative, with UCT working with seven other African universities. This is a 10-year programme to support job creation for youth in the community and primary health care sector in Africa.

The HSI team has also represented the Bertha Centre at the World Economic Forum's Global Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship Summit in Geneva, the Africa Impact Summit, and the 2023 Southern African-Nordic Centre Conference.

At present, the HSI team is hard at work helping to develop and plan the Bertha Centre's *Just for a Change* podcast and discussing the potential for a health innovation publication, which will be a 10-year update to the 2014 Health Innovators Review.

Delivering ideas and solutions for youth development

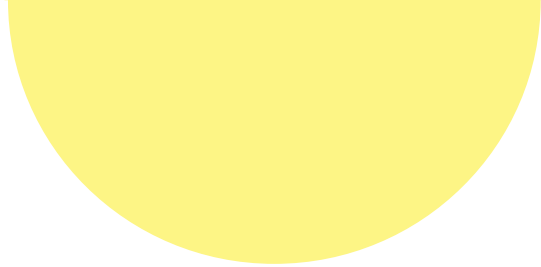
Bertha Centre's Youth Development Innovation team worked tirelessly during the year to support ideas and solutions in this critical sector, especially for young people to transition from education to employment. Initiatives included the Youth Innovation Essay Prize, support for social entrepreneurs, and networking and collaboration within the youth development sector.

We worked with Douglas Knowledge Partners consultancy on the third annual Youth Innovation Essay Prize. The theme for 2023 was "Innovations for Planetary Health", and the essay competition was once again open to youth between the ages of 18 and 30 who stood a chance to win prizes up to R20,000.

The winning entries, which explored an array of health, environmental, and social innovations, were the product of the Youth Innovation Essay Prize's collaborative mentorship programme and judgement of final submissions. Dr Caitlin Courtney took first place for her essay titled *Peecycling: The future of equitable sanitation and sustainable fertiliser production*.

In partnership with youth-run strategic consultancy company, Huruma Bantfu, the Bertha Centre hosted Pathways to Information twice in 2023, an event geared towards fostering young people's entrepreneurial projects and supporting their career development. The first iteration took place in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape and the second in Alexandra in Gauteng, providing career information to youth from informal settlements.

The Bertha Centre participated in and co-facilitated a series of events in Gauteng and Western Cape in partnership with the Youth Development Collaboration Lab (YD Co-Lab). This brought together professionals and



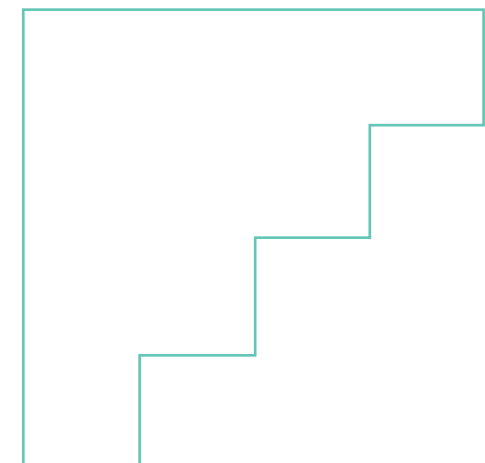
organisations to ignite collaborative initiatives and build meaningful connections within the youth development sector, with support from organisations Action Volunteers Africa (AVA), Amathuba Collective, Just Grace, and South African Conversations. We witnessed the beginning of inspired and impactful partnerships as attendees showcased the work their organisations were doing, shared what they needed most, garnered support, and learned from industry professionals. The event's success underscored the power of networking and partnership in driving impactful change.

Partnering to support more impactful teacher training

Education is a critical sector for South Africa, with teacher training possibly the most fundamental lever for systemic change. Bertha Centre's Systems Justice Innovation team was a key partner in implementing the Teacher Internship Collaboration South Africa (TICZA). Formally launched in 2021, TICZA is a multi-stakeholder partnership with support from government departments, trade unions, non-profits, universities, and implementers. It aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of extended student-teacher internships in initial teacher education. TICZA is funded by the Zenex Foundation and administered by JET Education Services.

In 2023, the Bertha Centre supported a collective impact process to coordinate the development and delivery of a common competency framework within the TICZA ecosystem. We delivered this framework to implementing partners, government departments, and independent professional

bodies, and received positive feedback, with participants expressing eagerness to continue this work while implementing existing frameworks and regulations. This common competency framework – aimed at encouraging sector-wide collaboration and innovation – results from a two-year engagement with TICZA. It aims to encourage partnership and innovation across the education sector to increase the pathways for professionalisation among teachers.





HEALTH
INITIATIVE

ATING 10 YEARS

SOCIAL
INNOVATION
HEALTH

INITIATIVE
10 YEARS

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LOUIS GABRIEL FURUHI

MICHAEL HAY

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Strategic priority 4: Be at the forefront of social innovation thought leadership for social justice

The Bertha Centre has undertaken various initiatives to contribute towards engaging with social innovation and advancing impactful leadership. From collaborative ventures with philanthropic organisations to thought-provoking presentations at various events and conferences, the Bertha Centre has been driving positive change through its thought leadership.

Engaging academic partnerships around the world

The systems Justice Innovation portfolio has continued to help drive UCT's participation in the Reach Alliance of top universities. We are partnered with the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy and the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences. Social justice innovation team members and Bertha Scholars attended the 2023 Annual Research Conference in

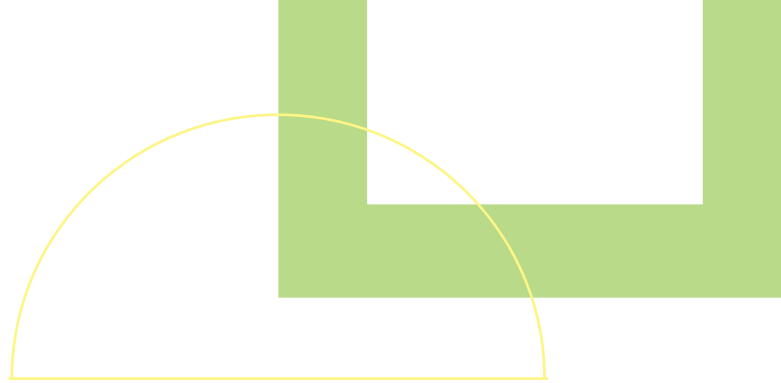
Monterrey, Mexico. Teams of students from various universities in the alliance at the conference had to develop a case study on how to reach the most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities to inform global policy, with a focus on health innovation.

In September 2023, Bertha Centre's Kirsten Amsterdam and Gillian Moodley visited the United States for a university exchange trip to learn more about social impact and social innovation centres in the United States. They met with New York University Wagner's Social Innovation and Investment Initiative and the NYU Grunin Center for Law and Social Entrepreneurship. They also visited Columbia Business School to meet the Tamer Center of Social Enterprise, as well as Steve Winshel from the Lang Entrepreneurship Center. In addition, they met with the Ballard Center for Social Impact and University Impact.

Katusha de Villiers and adjunct faculty Gayle Northrop presented at the 2023 Southern Africa-

Nordic Centre hosted at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Hamar in September. Their presentation was titled, *Social Innovation as an Education Intervention within Higher Education*, and their research on this topic continues.

Bertha Centre researchers Allan Kimaina and Cynthia Rayner attended the Comparative & International Education Society annual conference in Washington, DC, as part of the Centre's collaboration with the Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training's (NORRAG's) Innovative Finance for Education (IFE) research stream at the Geneva Graduate Institute. Allan presented a literature review on challenges and opportunities in tertiary education financing in Africa, while Cynthia presented a case study on the Impact Bond Innovation Fund, an early childhood funding mechanism in the Western Cape. This research project is an ongoing five-year initiative to understand the impact of innovative



financing mechanisms in the education sector. UCT Professor of Economics Justine Burns, and Phumlani Nkontwana are academic specialists supporting this project.

Driving systems thinking and business with purpose

Systems thinking continues to offer a powerful framing device for change. The Bertha Centre helped to amplify this framework in several initiatives conducted with our partners over the year. We delivered a successful workshop on systems thinking and social justice at the Ford Foundation's workshop marking the organisation's 30th anniversary. The session was well received and, as a result, the Bertha Centre is working with the Ford Foundation to develop a more in-depth workshop on the same themes in 2024. We also

met with Oxfam South Africa to look at future engagements on systems change.

Our interactive, lecture-based, and workshop-style Systems Change and Social Impact executive education course took place in March at the UCT Graduate School of Business, guiding social purpose organisations, leaders, and funders to deepen their social impact through tools and frameworks, including investing principles, strategies, and practices. The course aimed to equip participants with the tools and framework to navigate complexity, strengthen their capacity for transformative leadership and collaboration, and promote local and global networking among changemakers.

We also supported healthcare teaching. Our team contributed to the second Executive Leadership in Global Surgery course, aimed at enabling innovation and leadership in surgical health systems, in partnership with the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences and Harvard University.

The Bertha Centre also ran the regional leg of Map the System and supported winners to compete globally. Map the System is a global competition that encourages university students to utilise systems thinking to address current social, economic, and environmental challenges. Systems thinking is introduced as a valuable methodology because it allows the participants to recognise the complexity of the issues they are dealing with and to grapple with structural and social factors. Table Mountain Revival, the regional Map the System competition winners of 2023, aimed to reduce youth at risk in the Western Cape, South Africa, through their project *Harnessing the Power of Indigenous Khoi and San Culture*. Their research integrated indigenous knowledge systems, bartering, indigenous medicine, and land access to address the issue of supporting at-risk youth in the Western Cape. Team members Aleya Ramparsad Banwari, Delicia Govender, Andre Jochems, Kirstyn Liang, Pauli Searle, and Nyaniso Tutu-Burris represented the Bertha Centre and UCT at the global semi-finals.



Ahead of their Leadership Conference, which took place in February 2023, the Bertha Centre partnered with Investec in producing pre-learning materials – such as podcasts, videos, learning briefs, and webinars – for their 400 leaders around the theme “Business for Purpose”. Our aim was to assist the Investec leaders in thinking about their social impact and purpose in relation to four themes: public education; public health; climate and environment; and income, poverty, and unemployment. The corresponding titles of the learning briefs developed were: *Education in South Africa: Challenges and Opportunities*; *Social Innovation in Health: The South African Landscape*; *Towards a Private Sector Climate Justice Agenda*; and *South Africa’s Complex Dimensions of Poverty*. The Centre also hosted live webinars on aligning values, strategy, and purpose, along with systems change and social impact.

Sibongile Khumalo, Executive Director of The Learning Trust, emphasised the role of purpose

and responsibility in driving socially impactful work. “As adults, we have a sacred duty to young people and those who come after us to create a world that is better than [the one] we found,” she remarked.

Access the pre-learning materials [here](#).

Growing the Bertha Centre’s influence

This year, our media coverage has been widespread, and the Bertha Centre was featured in some of South Africa’s top publications, including Business Day, Citywire, Daily Maverick, and Mail and Guardian, further establishing our role as thought leaders in the social innovation and entrepreneurship space.

The Centre’s team penned a diverse range of articles highlighting critical challenges, such

as Fergus Turner’s Daily Maverick piece on the financial fragility of South Africa’s cultural and creative industry, especially in light of its potential to unlock lasting positive change. Ashleigh Hesse, a Bertha Scholar, emphasised the importance of addressing the mental health treatment gap in low- and middle-income countries in her Mail and Guardian article, *Turning the Tide on Youth Mental Health in South Africa*. Financial inclusion as essential to development and a number of the United Nations’ SDGs was the focus of Bertha Scholar Prince Nwadeyi’s commentary on lending to the informal economy in Business Day. Additionally, the director of the Bertha Centre, Solange Rosa, was featured on CNN’s Inside Africa to speak on growing a business as a woman social entrepreneur. Rosa also delivered a presentation at the Africa Impact Summit on tackling poverty and inequality in Africa, and on social innovation in the philanthropy sector at the Annual Innovation for Philanthropy in South Africa conference.

Read the above articles and more [here](#).



Raising the profile of impact investing in Africa

The Bertha Centre collaborated with National Advisory Boards for Impact Investing across the continent (who together make up the Africa Impact Investing Group, or AIIG) and the Global Steering Group for Impact Investment (GSG) to host the inaugural Africa Impact Summit in July 2023. The Summit's headline strategic partners were the Motsepe Foundation and Sanlam, and a multitude of stakeholders were involved in the planning and execution of the Summit – ensuring that the outcomes were both far-reaching and relevant for improving the conditions for impact investing across the entire continent.

The Summit, dedicated to unleashing African potential through Impact Investing, brought together leaders and industry experts from

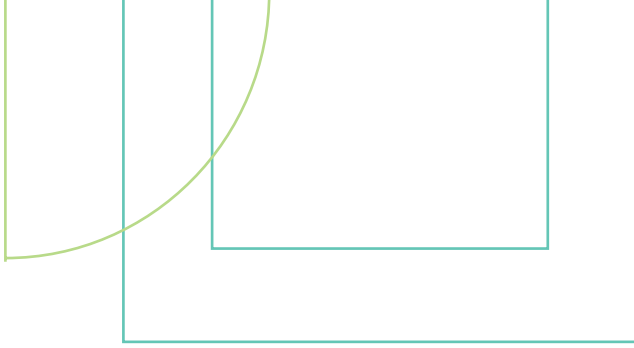
across Africa and around the world to discuss the potential of impact investing to offer solutions, showcase pipeline opportunities and market-building efforts, and reflect on the challenges the continent still faces. The programme was packed with presentations, panel discussions, and dynamic breakaway sessions. Topics included investing in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups; Africa's progress towards the SDGs; the future of impact investing in Africa; Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem; and the role of frontier technologies in enabling impact investing. In particular, the Summit explored collaborations between public institutions, such as development banks, and private sector actors, such as impact investors and impact entrepreneurs, to ensure that more capital can flow towards the achievement of the SDGs and beyond.

The Africa Impact Summit was well attended, attracting 500 delegates representing a wide spectrum of professionals from the financial services sector including asset managers, social

enterprises, institutional investors, impact measurement and management practitioners, and many more. The diversity reflected the growing recognition that impact investing offers far-reaching potential solutions to close the financing gap for Africa's sustainable development objectives.

“Personally, I am most passionate about empowering women and supporting opportunities for our youth; the enthusiasm I felt in the room proves that momentum is building. There is always more to be done, but our inaugural Summit met its objective to put impact investing on the African map,” Solange Rosa said.

Read the Africa Impact Summit Report [here](#) and watch the video [here](#).



Maintaining the focus on impact investing

The Innovative Finance team continued to contribute to impact investing conversations and finance events. Wendy McCallum (Senior Project Manager, Innovative Finance) presented the Financial Technologies & Innovative Finance course at the Stellenbosch Business School. The course covers technological innovations that enable broader access to finance, with a specific focus on facilitating development in Africa.

Our team also attended the Global Steering Group's (GSG) Global Impact Summit in Spain last year. Jason Van Staden, project manager of the Innovative Finance team, was on the African and Middle East Regional panel. He also presented at the Building Bridges "Aligning finance with sustainability" conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

Much attention in impact finance has been focused on the suppliers of capital, examining what drives them and which approaches work best. However, impact can't be prioritised separately from the recipients of capital. A new report, *What's in it for the Entrepreneur? An Entrepreneurial Perspective of Catalytic Capital and Blended Finance*, shifts attention to the entrepreneurial journey. The Bertha Centre collaborated with the Initiative for Blended Finance at the University of Zurich and Roots of Impact to produce the report, which was funded by the C3 and released in December 2022. In 2023, authors Jed Emerson and Bjoern Struwer provided additional insight into the report's findings in two published articles: [When catalytic capital is critical](#) shows how impact entrepreneurs use grants, while [Just Useful ... Or Truly Catalytic?](#) describes how entrepreneurs view catalytic capital.

Bertha Centre produced a research report on the role of Development Finance Institutions (DFI) in delivering the global climate agenda for Fair

Finance Southern Africa. Focusing on the role of these institutions in supporting climate objectives and a just transition, the research study profiled selected African DFIs and a public pension fund to chart their institutional evolution, functioning, funding activities, and key strengths and weaknesses. The work presented opportunities and recommendations for improving the climate impact of DFIs. Access the report and findings [here](#).

Supporting ecosystems for entrepreneurship and youth development

The Bertha Centre participated in the Entrepreneurship Organisations' "Business as a Force for Good" roundtable discussion held at the

Graduate School of Business's conference centre in April. This provided an opportunity to engage with entrepreneurs from around the world and discuss challenges and key learnings. Speakers included Naspers Labs, Lumkani founder Francois Petousis (Bertha Scholar), and Kirsten Amsterdam from the Bertha Centre's Innovative Finance team, and was moderated by Nwabisa Mayema (Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship).

The YD Co-lab initiated the Youth Development Ecosystem Mapping project. This aims to foster greater transparency among youth development stakeholders and ultimately enhance collective impact. Currently, youth employment initiatives are not well-coordinated, and mapping these activities is an important component of a functional youth development environment, since documenting who is currently operating in the space is one step closer to understanding it. Bertha Centre is proud to have collaborated on this report, available [here](#).



Marketing and communications overview and highlights

The Marketing and Communications team has worked hard to fulfill the Bertha Centre's mission promoting social innovation, building capacity, and pioneering practices for more justice and inclusion across Africa and the Global South. Our inaugural Bertha Centre Annual Report for 2022 was published early last year and a new video brought the Bertha Centre's mission and projects to life.

We continued to host both online and in-person events. Our events are well attended and are a promising means of establishing us as thought leaders on a range of topics in the social impact space. They represent an opportunity to engage with different stakeholders, showcase our work, and remain at the forefront of what matters to our communities. We also supported or organised many of the events described elsewhere in this report.

Growing our online presence remains one of our Marketing and Communications team's core efforts. Our website's traffic increased significantly during the Africa Impact Summit, indicating the value that events have in expanding our reach. Social media has been successful so far, especially on Facebook and LinkedIn. As a result, we saw an incredible jump in our performance on both platforms, especially from other African countries with targeted campaigns for the Africa Impact Summit. As we are newer to Instagram, its numbers remain lower, so our intention going forward is to post videos and strong visuals more regularly and grow our presence on the platform.

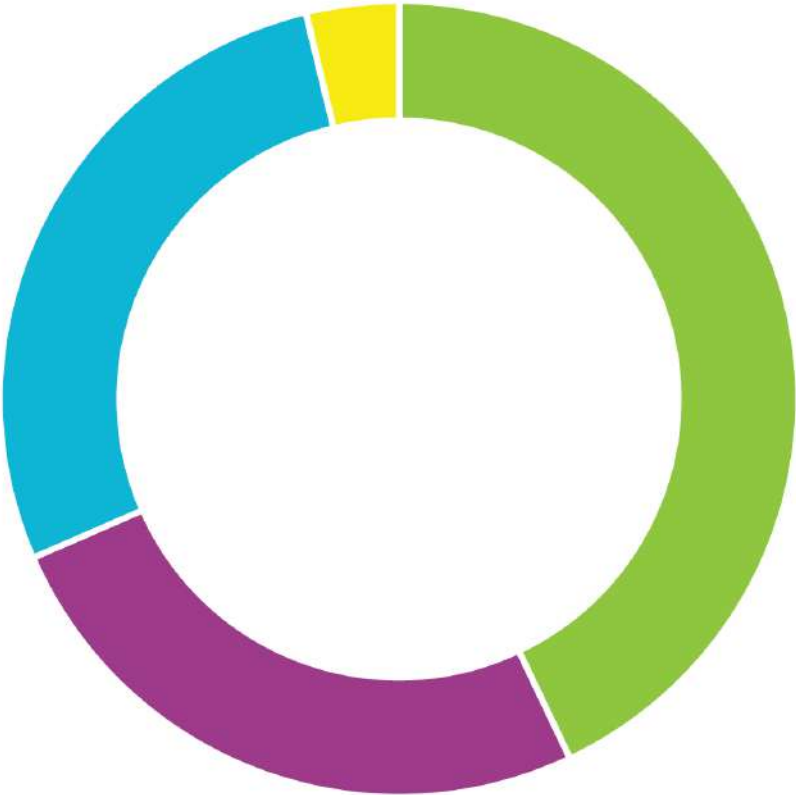
We wrapped up Season 3 of our *Just for a Change* podcast series this year, hosted by Ntombini Marrengane, our Senior Manager. The theme for this season was "Conversations with Changemakers" and our top episodes explored

innovation for gender equality and land rights, building more just cities, climate justice, and changemaking. To continue growing our podcast, we intend to boost past episodes and reach more people while sharing preview audiograms on Instagram. We also continue to share regular newsletters showcasing our work and opportunities.

We are looking forward to more collaboration around social impact, social innovation, and systems justice, ideally partnering with organisations in Africa that are doing similar work. To establish ourselves even more firmly through thought leadership for positive social change, we'll continue to use our social media posts to drive up website engagement and increase the Centre's visibility via our events, workshops, podcasts, and newsletters.


Funding overview


Bertha Centre Funding in 2023



 **Philanthropy**
43%

 **Teaching**
4%

 **Advisory**
25%

 **Research**
28%

We thank our partners





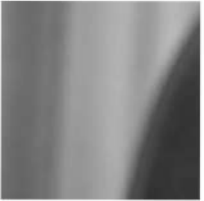
COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE STATE OF THE WORLD





MARIAM
OTMANI DEL BARRIO

• espíritu de colaboración / cooperación
• espíritu de respeto
• espíritu de participación
• espíritu de innovación
• espíritu de compromiso
• espíritu de responsabilidad



A view of the future

The Bertha Centre will continue its tradition of excellence in advancing social innovation and entrepreneurship for social justice – our founding mission. We value our role as part of the UCT Graduate School of Business, where we contribute to knowledge production and teaching that makes for a more inclusive economy, and we will continue to seek out like-minded partners and deepen our relationships with them. By working together, we can share information and experiences, exchange expertise, and amplify our impact.

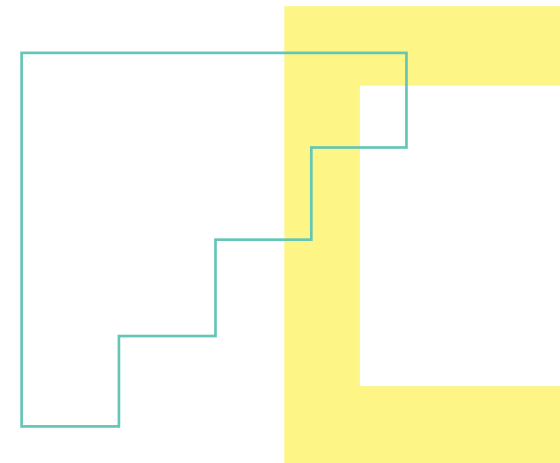
We will continue to deliver on our strategy, with a focus on systems thinking, until 2026. This emphasis guides our allocation of resources and our partnerships. In 2024, we will build on the existing partnerships we have created so that we can together move into action and implementation, for example, through our new Hoffman Fellowship for Climate Change.

The Centre recognises the growing urgency of climate justice, which can no longer be ignored or delayed. We are prioritising climate justice in our thinking and the work we do, across all our portfolios. It is encouraging that we are starting to see climate awareness taking root across multiple dimensions, with our practitioners and partners considering equity, human rights, and the environment in their work.

Our Hoffman Climate Change Fellow will focus on climate change and innovation, both in their own research and in the links they help us create within the social innovation sector. This research will bring disadvantaged communities – which suffer the worst impacts of climate change while being least responsible – to the fore. We want to better understand their needs, while considering the obligations of more affluent communities so that equity remains part of climate change action.









Additionally, we will be rebuilding our education innovation portfolio and executing a new strategy for connecting innovators in this sector, supporting knowledge development, and embedding systems thinking.

We are excited to work with current and new partners and our enthusiastic, dedicated team to engage ever more deeply with the central challenges of our society. We thank them for their ongoing support.



Connect with us

Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship

-  Website: <https://gsbberthacentre.uct.ac.za/>
-  Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BerthaCentre>
-  Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BerthaCentre>
-  LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/3304193/>
-  Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/theberthacentre/>
-  YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeoaeKI96RGx77CF-loM32Q>
-  Just for a Change Podcast: <https://open.spotify.com/show/3UQvUj2Fmdk9OrzRWnAJIV?si=2fb28d2ea7d14660>
-  Email: berthacentre.gsb@uct.ac.za

