



## Opinion editorial

### Beyond the final whistle: sports as a catalyst for change

*As South Africa's unemployment rate hits a 13-year high, government and the private sector remain hard-pressed to stimulate growth in our fragile economy. While the creation of "traditional" jobs remains in the spotlight, sporting partnerships – especially in the development space – are proving a viable means of supporting communities across the continent. This has much to do with the enabling power of sport beyond the actual sporting code itself. With the COSAFA U20 tournament coming to an exciting end this week, PPC Managing Director of International Operations Njombo Lekula maintains that while South Africa has demonstrated its ability to host key sporting events, more needs to be done to ensure legacy impact beyond the final whistle. Each event needs to be understood as a potential business opportunity and leveraged with the community – from ongoing sports development (and job creation through this) to tourism and hospitality, among others.*

Given that sport is a "language" that speaks across cultures and borders, it provides a framework for action and a starting point for economic and social inclusion. "This has been our overwhelming finding across the continent – from Riebeeck West in the Western Cape through to Bugarama in Rwanda," says Lekula. "By creating sporting events with the community in mind, one is able to leverage them with a view to empowering and enabling both individuals and businesses in the area."

He notes that hosting – and promoting – popular events in communities can have significant knock-on effects for the local economy, boosting tourism and trade in the build-up to, during and after the event. "In the case of our PPC Riebeeck Bergmarathon here in South Africa for example, we've seen the event become a highlight on the local calendar over the past 30 years. With over 2 000 race participants, their families and friends travelling to and staying in the area, local tourism, accommodation and trade across the region gear-up specifically for that weekend period, and it is seen as a key catalyst for the local economy."

Understanding different priorities and drivers in specific communities is necessary to ensure success however. "Our PPC Kgale Hill run in Botswana for example, has seen us help to challenge the stigma of running being a predominantly male-oriented sport, create female role models and address gender stereotyping. The 15km race, which was started in 1998, now has a 'king' and 'queen' of the hill winner with all proceeds going directly to a local charity."

One has to create the right enabling environment for this type of partnership though – and be clear as to what "impact" looks like. "Given that one can address important social issues through sport including development and transformation, these need to be identified from the outset, and measured as the event grows."

Lekula notes that the objectives can similarly be very practical. "We've been able to use our CIMERUN in Rwanda to promote road safety directly – with the race route including the road that CIMERWA, PPC's subsidiary in that country, and Government had partnered to build for the local community. In this way, participants and race supporters are reminded to be safety conscious whenever they travel this route in a vehicle or on foot. This is critical given that



many of them walk this road daily, and that it's becoming an increasingly busy route as more trucks drive to and from the plant.”

For sport to drive real *and* sustained change, partnerships remain critical. “As we've seen with our current sponsorship of COSAFA U20, single events can unlock and realise impact and objectives across countries and borders – *if* one partners with community and government appropriately. From taking stakeholders on tours of the area and supporting traditional restaurants, to running competitions and activations in community hotspots, to supporting coaching clinics at schools and local venues, events must be used as a means to support and enable beyond that final whistle or finish line. This is the only way they can have meaningful legacy impact,” he concludes.

Ends.

### **About PPC Ltd**

A leading supplier of cement and related products in southern Africa, PPC Ltd has nine cement factories in South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. In 2016 PPC commissioned its fifth milling depot, located in Harare, Zimbabwe, bringing PPC's current capacity to around nine million tons of cement products each year. As part of its strategy and long-term vision, PPC is expanding its operations in South Africa, and extending its footprint into the DRC and Ethiopia.

PPC's Materials business, comprising Safika Cement, Pronto Readymix (including Ulula Ash) and, the recently acquired 3Q Mahuma Concrete, forms part of the company's channel management strategy for southern Africa. As a result of these acquisitions PPC's footprint has grown to include 26 readymix batching plants across South Africa and Mozambique and the capacity to produce half a million tons of fly ash.

PPC also produces aggregates with its Mooiplaas aggregates quarry in Gauteng having the largest aggregate production capacity in South Africa. PPC Lime, one of the largest lime producers in the southern hemisphere, produces metallurgical-grade lime, burnt dolomite and limestone.

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