

## WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION FORUM

# HOW DO WE RESPECTIVELY AND COLLECTIVELY RESPOND TO EPISODES OF VIOLENCE

31 October 2022  
Fifth Meeting

## The Violence Prevention Forum

Evidence | Collaboration | Trust



**'Makhelwane  
nawe M'zali , vuka!Qina!  
Umsebenzi wakho  
nowami sewuqalile'**

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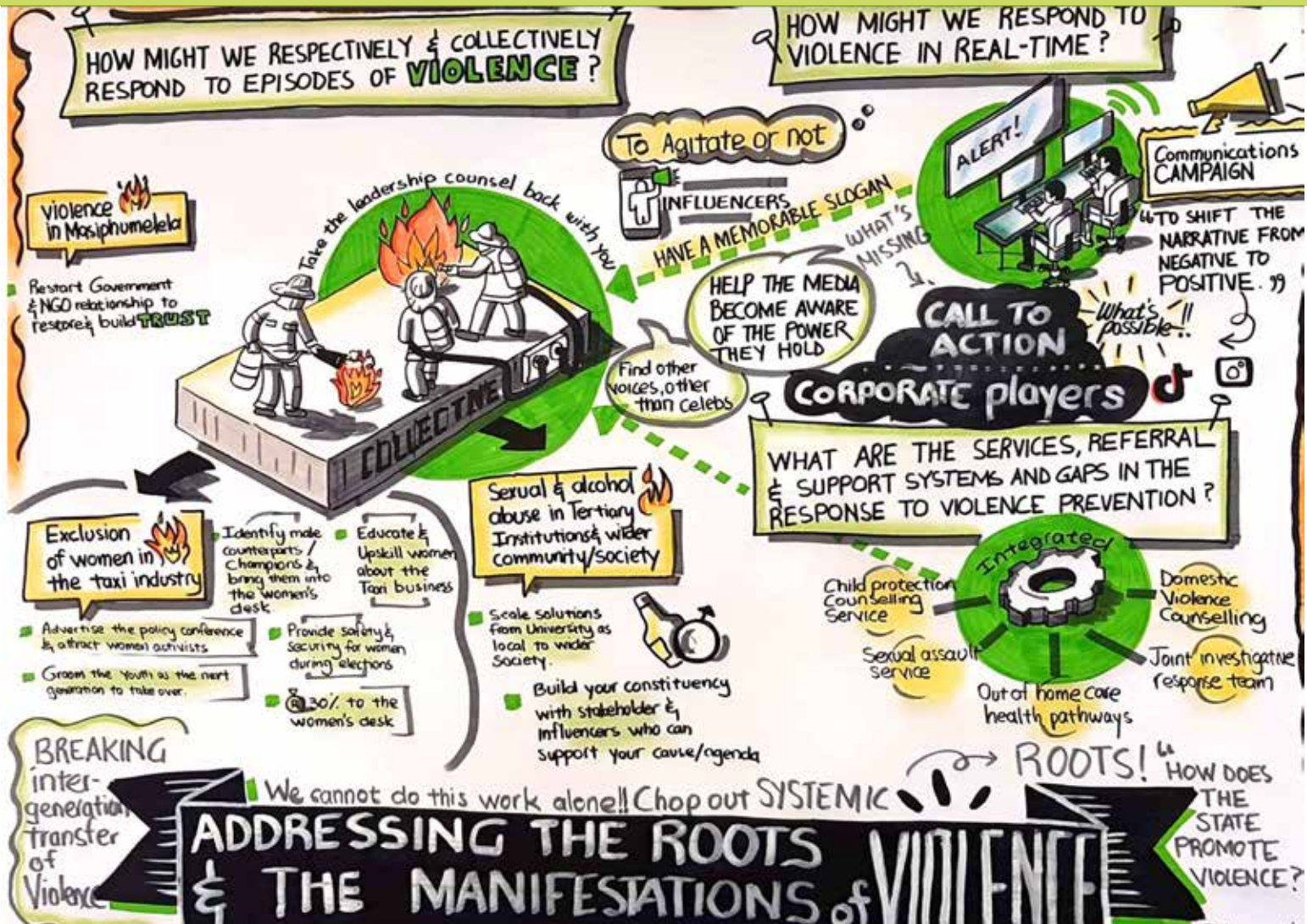
On 31 October 2022, a group of Western Cape violence prevention practitioners met at MOSAIC, in Wynberg, and we:

<b>Checked in with our hearts...</b>	<b>6</b>
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*I see the value add in having a provincial violence prevention forum...we are a province that takes the initiative!*

*– A participant*





# MEETING GRAPHIC BY DEON HANNS





## MEETING SUMMARY

On the beautiful sunny Monday morning of 31 October 2022, 27 Western Cape violence prevention practitioners representing government officials, policymakers, non-governmental organisations, research, academic institutions and the taxi industry, attended the 5th Western Cape Violence Prevention Forum (WC VPF) meeting.

The meeting built on discussions in previous WC VPF meetings and was informed by the needs of all sectors represented in the forum. When the WC VPF was established on 13 October 2020, the objectives were to enable stronger collaboration and partnerships between violence prevention practitioners in the province and to scale up evidence-based violence prevention programmes and interventions. To do this, we mapped out the present multisectoral structures in the province, explored the importance of partnerships and the value of evidence-based approaches, identified opportunities to collaborate and noted that trust is pivotal for successful partnerships. The WC VPF journey is mapped out in Appendix A.

Since our 4th meeting, horrific reports of violence have dominated the media, in the province and nationally. ‘How to respond to and address violence’ was the key question stakeholders wanted to answer. Therefore, the 5th meeting set out to explore how we respectively and collectively respond to episodes of violence in the Western Cape, and to identify the services, referral and support systems, as well as gaps, while continuing to build trusting and meaningful relationships between ourselves as violence prevention practitioners to enable collaboration.

Together we learned and agreed that:



Our work is not easy; it is heavy on the mind and heart. We need spaces like the WC VPF to pause, reflect, heal and recharge.



Through the birth-to-thirty study, we learned that high exposure to violence in early childhood (for the cohort) increased the likelihood of survivors experiencing or using violence later in life and had massive impacts on their development. It impacted their chances of completing schooling, finding employment and having healthy relationships.



Violence impacts our ability to meet our national development goals, as it undermines our efforts to reduce unemployment and inequality. The time to act is now. We need a national violence prevention communications campaign to show that it is possible to prevent violence, and that we all have a role to play.



We need to be cautious of quick fixes, given the scale and complexity of the problems we are trying to solve. We need to 'put out the fires' (short- and medium-term efforts) while also planting flowers and acorns (restoring the culture of love and care and being long-term focused).



Allies are essential in our individual and collective efforts to reduce violence, 'and trust is pivotal in being able to relate and work well with each other, especially in challenging situations' (also highlighted in meeting 4). We realised that restoring trust takes time, and therefore we must keep nurturing our relationships.



This was also the second anniversary of the forum; the first meeting was on 13 October 2020, and, in line with WC VPF tradition, we sang and danced.

Facilitated by Vuyo Koyana and Antonia Porter, and brought to life visually by graphic artist Deon Hanns,<sup>1</sup> we checked in with our hearts, revisited why violence prevention is critical in our country, and collectively unpacked three real challenges faced by our members. We also saw how our work and efforts link to the national VPF.

We left feeling connected after months of working from home, alone. We were *encouraged, inspired, filled with positive energy and renewed inside*. We *fell in love* with the meeting's *feminist approach* and left feeling *reflective, hopeful and with open hearts, full of gratitude*. We were *grateful for the healing, magic and personal growth that happened during our time together*.

<sup>1</sup> See the full-day graphic above.



## CHECKED IN WITH OUR HEARTS...

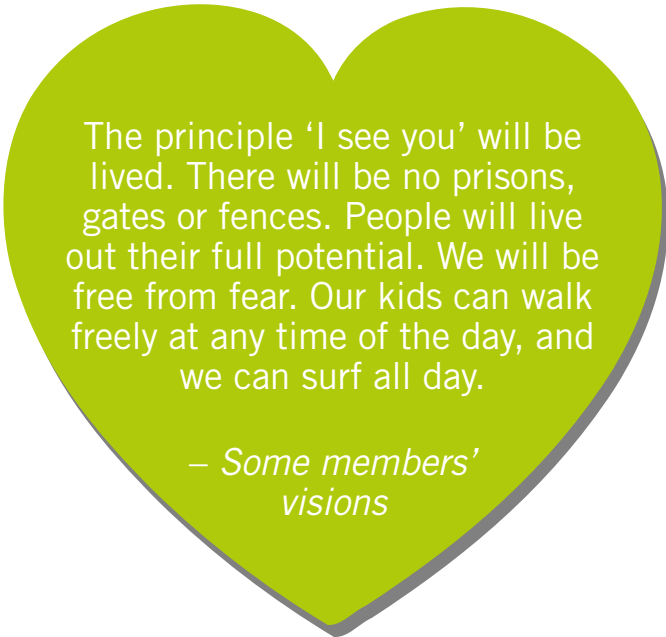
In WC VPF tradition, we started our meeting with a check-in. This enables us to see how we are coming into the forum and invites us to bring our full selves into the space, not just our professional selves.

We began our meeting by checking the four chambers of our hearts; the four-chambered heart comes from Angeles Arrien's book *The Four-Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. She speaks about her learnings from travelling and studying many cultures around the globe. She notes a native practice where it is believed that the heart is the bridge between our spiritual existence (or higher power) and the physical world; for those worlds to stay connected, all four chambers of the heart must be clear. In these cultures, people check their heart's chambers before beginning each day. In that tradition, we checked where our hearts are:

- Open (not closed; trusting and believing),
- Strong (not weak; full of courage),
- Clear (full of integrity),
- Full (fully committed; not half-hearted).

After we checked our four chambers in pairs, we painted our vision.

If we lived full-hearted in a violence-free Western Cape,  
this would look like...



The principle 'I see you' will be lived. There will be no prisons, gates or fences. People will live out their full potential. We will be free from fear. Our kids can walk freely at any time of the day, and we can surf all day.

– *Some members' visions*

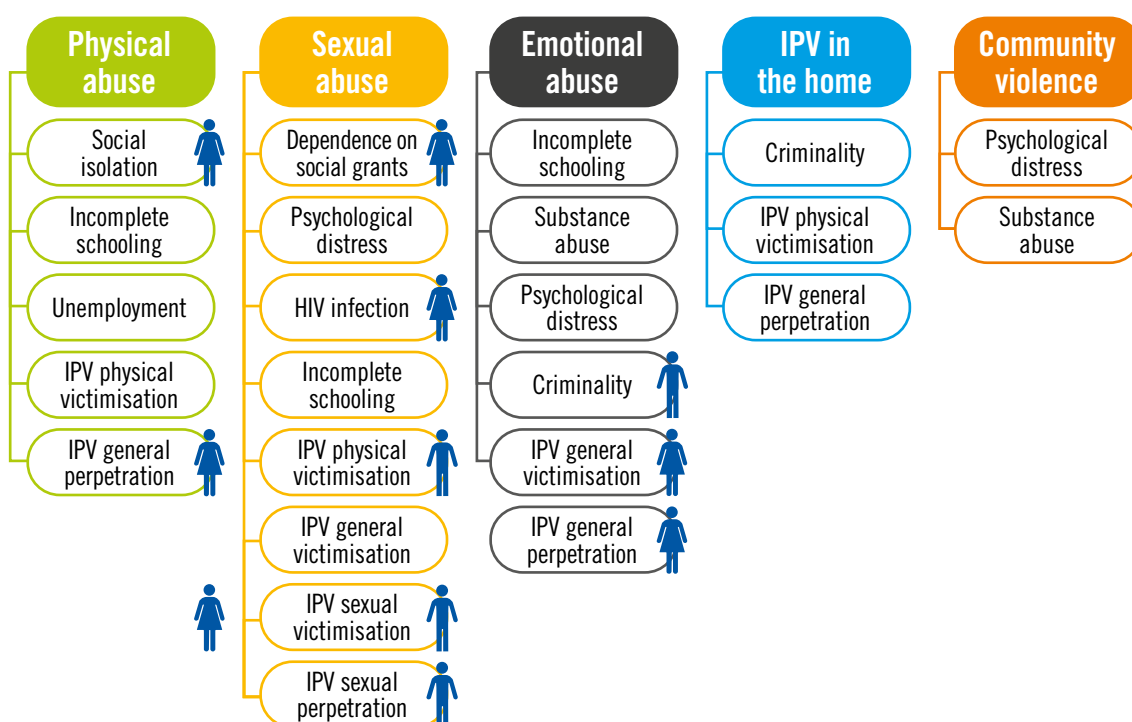
# DISCUSSED WHY VIOLENCE PREVENTION IS CRITICAL IN OUR COUNTRY

While it is essential to have a positive vision, the reality is that violence is a national pandemic, and exposure to violence in childhood increases the likelihood of becoming a victim and perpetrator. The consequences may even be dire. We learned this through research by Sara Naicker from the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Sara and her team have been tracking over 3 000 individuals born in 1990 in Soweto, Johannesburg. This is the most detailed longitudinal study on the continent, called the Birth to 30 study (*Bt30*); the participants are now over 30 years old.

Dr Chandré Gould presented the results of the study on behalf of Sara. She drew on a recently published policy brief titled '*How violence and adversity undermine human development*'. The study shows how pervasive experiences of violence are: 87% of the study cohort, boys and girls, were exposed to four or more forms of violence – such as physical, sexual, emotional, community and interpersonal – by the time they turned 18 years old. This exposure to violence increased the likelihood of experiencing not only other forms of violence but also unemployment, HIV infection and engaging in criminality. Specific sexes are more susceptible to certain impacts than others. For example, girls who are survivors of sexual violence are more likely than boys to be dependent on a social grant.

The study shows that high exposure to violence undermines our efforts to reduce unemployment and inequality, as it compromises our attempts to build capable human capital.



The Bt30 study has launched two books detailing its findings:

- *Mandela's Children: Growing Up in Post-Apartheid South Africa* – launched in 2001;
- *Birth to Thirty: A Study as Ambitious as the Country We Wanted to Create* – launched in 2022.

The WC VPF was excited to hear that the study continues, in the sense that researchers are still in contact with the participants and another round of data collection may be funded. Longitudinal studies are expensive to maintain. With luck, and given the contribution the study has made to South Africa, resources will be found to support it.

We are looking forward to a potential next round, and we are curious about the following:

- What can the study tell us about the outliers? If 87% of the cohort experienced violence, what do we know about the remaining 13%?
- Were there any interventions the cohort experienced? If yes, what were they and did they have any impact?

We agreed that, given what we know, preventing violence will take

*‘the whole of society, working deliberately and sustainably to remove sources of harm and inequality, and heal woundedness, by intentionally growing an ethic of mutual care, respect, inclusion and peace’*

– Violence Prevention Forum violence prevention definition





## HELD A LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

We then reflected on how we can respond to episodes of violence. To do this, we identified three real challenges faced by: the taxi industry; an NGO in Masiphumelele; and Stellenbosch University. These became the subject of a ‘leadership council’.<sup>2</sup> The three challenges were:

- the exclusion of women in the taxi industry,
- serious violence in Masiphumelele, and
- sexual and alcohol abuse at Stellenbosch University.

The council givers (individuals experiencing the challenge) shared their challenges passionately, and council members listened and asked for clarity before offering solutions or recommendations. It became clear that the issues we were trying to solve affect real people, and the risks are high – at times life-threatening. It also became evident that when trust has been broken between institutions or people, it takes time to mend it. Trust (re)building and collaboration happened LIVE! *For example, a council member offered his business card to a council giver for follow-up consultation on the violence in Masiphumelele, and another council member offered to march in solidarity with women in the taxi industry to raise awareness on the upcoming SANTACO annual general meeting.*

The three councils are unpacked in our Meeting Graphic by Deon Hanns, which is shown on page 2. Here are some reflections from the councils:

### Council givers

**‘I felt heard and held.’**

**‘I leave feeling seen; we have been crying and shouting about women issues in the taxi industry at what felt like a wall... thank you for listening.’**

### Council members

**‘I realised during our discussion that it is easy to jump into solutions not having listened.’**

**‘I realised the complexity of some of the problems we are trying to solve; listening to the struggles of women in the taxi industry, I felt speechless, dumb. There were no easy solution or fixes – even the recommendations we gave felt shallow.’**

**‘...communicating your issue, creating that awareness is step one of the solution, as it helps you to attract allies.’**



## TALKED ABOUT NATIONAL EFFORTS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

### A National Violence Prevention Communications Campaign

We then moved from violence prevention at a provincial level to national efforts.

We agreed that the problems we are trying to solve are massive and deeply rooted in our history, socio-economic issues and how we socialise. Therefore, we must start looking at violence prevention broadly. How can we shift perceptions that violence is not preventable and is an answer? How can we raise awareness that violence is preventable?

We will begin with the National Violence Prevention Communications Campaign. The national VPF is working on this campaign.

Through the media campaign, we will be able to:

- **Share evidence-based knowledge** with leaders, help deepen their understanding of violence prevention and offer practical solutions.
- **Drive a new public narrative** by telling stories and showcasing evidence in the media on what is possible/doable to break the cycles of violence.
- **Foster collective action through dialogues** held at national, provincial and community levels to refocus energy and encourage creative thinking about building peace and healing.

The WC VPF was excited about the campaign's potential to reach more South Africans. Through the campaign, we can reach more young people and allies. We noted that the campaign has to show what is possible and available – 'a picture of who I/we could be' as well as 'what the alternatives are and where I could go if I needed help'.

The campaign should be relatable to various audiences. We recommended that we get people from the communities to talk to their communities. We cautioned against using celebrities, as they may not be as influential and their fame might be controversial. 'We have to find other voices. Why can't children talk to children? We need to see people we see every day talking about violence prevention.' We cautioned against using violent language – for example, 'using "survivor" instead of a "victim" can shift the narrative, and empowers'. Finally, we noted that we should not neglect the private sector, especially those already running campaigns; for example, SPAR has a gender-based violence campaign. We recommended using all forms of art to get people excited about achieving this common goal – 'like how we all Waka Waka'd during the 2010 FIFA world cup, regardless of whether you were a soccer fan or not'.

## UPDATED EACH OTHER ON WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN OUR ECOSYSTEM

We ended our day with updates on events that have taken or will be taking place in our space, especially collaborations:

- Family strengthening programme (FSP) workshops are currently under way and championed by the Western Cape Department of the Premier. These workshops aim to develop guidelines for the FSP programmes in the province and a basket of services for FSP and family support programmes. This is the first time government departments and civil society are co-creating a programme. The last workshop took place on 1 November 2022.
- The Parent Centre recently trained social workers from Child Welfare stationed in rural areas; we are excited to hear more about the progress and impact.
- The South Africa Parenting Programme Implementers Network (**SAPPIN**) had its first **Families Indaba** on 26 and 27 October at Victoria Yards, Lorentzville, Johannesburg. Policymakers, civil society organisations, government, researchers, funders and businesses came together to explore *how we can prioritise responsive parenting in South Africa*. The Indaba was an epic success, and we look forward to the report and the next one.
- Clowns without Borders trained social workers from the Department of Social Development in the Western Cape. They will implement positive parenting programmes, working specifically with young parents. They have also co-developed a parents' **WhatsApp helpline**, which has support services for parents and holistic advice on parental services. The number is **087 813 4290**.
- Stellenbosch University has established its first gender-based violence monitoring committee, with around 14 members.
- We shared learning briefs on violence prevention produced in collaboration with the Institute for Security Studies, which can be found [here](#), on our **Violence Prevention Forum website**.





It would not be a WC VPF meeting  
if we did not sing.  
Our melody for the day was:

**Makhelwane nawe M'zali** (neighbour and parent)

**Vuka!** (wake up)

**Qina!** (be strong)

**Umsebenzi wami nowakho sewuqalile** (our job has begun)

**Mangithi two wen' uthi three** (when I say two, you say three)

**Singa lalelani sobay' two** (we are not listening to one another)

**Vuka!** (wake up)

**Qina!** (be strong)

**Umsebenzi wami nowakho sewuqalile** (our job has begun)





# HIGHLIGHTS



# APPENDIX A

## Journey of the Western Cape Violence Prevention Forum

Since 2020, the forum has held four meetings.



In meeting 1 on 13 October 2020 (which had 16 participants – look at how we have grown), we defined our forum objectives and agreed on our principles:

- We want this space, these meetings, to enable more robust and collaborative partnerships between governments, researchers and civil society.
- We want to use this space to scale up evidence-based programmes and interventions to prevent violence.
- To achieve this, we agreed on the values/principles that will hold us together. In the forum, we: *are open to conversation, we share honestly, we are fully present and engaged, we welcome and accept dissenting voices (these are voices that have **a strongly different opinion**), we are aware of power and rank and we manage these differences, we are humble, and we respect the process.*

In meeting 2 on 24 March 2021, we mapped the multisectoral structures that exist to address violence and safety.

In meeting 3 on 27 October 2021, we explored collaborative partnerships and the value of evidence-led approaches.

In meeting 4 on 29 April 2022, we focused on deepening relationships to enable collaboration and highlighted the need for more diverse representation.

# APPENDIX B

## The leadership council

1. Council giver: Share your challenge and the question you want help with
2. Council members: Round of clarifying questions
3. Council giver: Restate the question
4. Council members: A round of input, including any way you may see your organisation contributing to the solution (this could include practical collaborative acts or even just meeting up to think things through regularly, should this be an area of interest or foreseeable future collaboration)
5. Council giver: Freshest thoughts
6. Council members: Round of appreciation



# The Violence Prevention Forum

Evidence | Collaboration | Trust

## THEORY OF CHANGE

### ULTIMATE GOAL

Evidence informed interventions reduce and prevents interpersonal violence in South Africa

Policies and decision aimed at preventing violence are informed by evidence

Expansion of who is represented/ participates in policy discussions and other spaces of influence

Increased collaborations and information flow between individuals and organisations

A mutually supportive network of people who understand violence prevention is created and maintained

Participants are likely to use evidence in their work and promote the use of evidence in their organisations

Participants apply skills learned in the forum when engaged in difficult discussions on violence prevention, even with dissenting voices

Relationships are built between individuals in different sectors that allow information to flow between different sectors

Participants have confidence to communicate privately and publicly about violence and its prevention

Participants have evidence informed understanding of violence and its impact on society, and what it is needed to prevent it

Participants learn self mastery and skills to engage with dissenting voices in violence prevention

Multisectoral driver groups conduct regular situations analysis, ensures content and progress remains responsive to member needs and external context

Workshops offer experimental learning

Individuals get to know and trust each other

Sectoral differences are acknowledged and empathy is built

Participants engage in translation and collective sense making of the evidence

All awareness (emotions, experience, etc.) and voices acknowledged during forum discussions

Individuals invited to participate because of their expertise and skills, but attitude and openness to be challenged, and ability to influence change in their organisations

Facilitators are skilled and equally participate

Participants spend time in relationships building activities (dinner, introspection, sharing in pairs/threes, etc.)

Government, researchers, NGOs, etc. all share knowledge information and evidence

Evidence from programmes being tested and other evaluations presented in the forum

Meetings facilitated using deep democracy and AV principles

Convenor is competent and credible

Existing evidence and established relationship base to draw from

Relationship building pathway

Evidence generation, translation and brokering pathway

Strengthening the workforce pathway