FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS

18th ANNUAL BEN-AFRICA CONFERENCE

7-8 November 2019

Mombasa, Kenya

The ethics of African development & the development of African ethics

The conference is an international platform for stakeholders from the private sector, the public sector, non-profit organisations and academia to come together to reflect, to discuss and to respond to the opportunities and challenges related to developmental interventions in Africa from a business ethics perspective, as well as to reflect on the development of an African business ethos, and its compatibility with typically Western notions of business ethics.

On the brink of greatness, Africa has soared in its economic endeavours, especially in the area of investment. The continent's wealth of natural resources makes Africa an attractive investment destination. But, in spite of continued investment, poverty remains a burning issue. The reasons for this, be they corruption, unethical investment or bribery, call for continued in-depth discourse and research. The objective of the 18th Annual BEN-Africa Conference is to provide a platform for continuing this discussion.

Added to an influx of financial investments is the continued development aid that Africa has received for decades. But questions need to be asked: How effective has the aid been? What are the true intentions and motivations of development agencies? Do they consider Africa's unique cultures? How do recipients of aid programs and funds experience development aid – Intrinsically motivated goodness on the part of the givers, or short-term 'hand-outs' to justify their existence? These are just some of the issues that we want to explore.

The second part of our Conference theme is concerned with the development of African ethics. The African worldview driving much of African values and social thinking is "Ubuntu". Ubuntu espouses a value system in seeming contradiction with current Western values. Western cultures are primarily founded on the political philosophy of Libertarianism, which places a strong emphasis on the rights of the individual in order to protect and empower them. On the other side of the spectrum resides the political philosophy of Communitarianism, which places an emphasis on the good of the community, and especially during ethical decisions the difference between the two sides becomes apparent. Business ethicists seem to have a preference for Western business ethics. But organisations on the continent often question the compatibility of a Western view with that of the African view. Whose ethics should be enforced to ensure good governance and a reduction in corruption? Does the West

have the right to force its business ethics standards on business on the African continent? These and other matters will be discussed.

Submissions

Scholars and other experts from around the world are invited to submit industry and academic papers and posters that address the theme of 'The ethics of African development & the development of African ethic' (please see below for suggested sub-themes). However, any papers dealing with business or organisational ethics in Africa will be considered.

The conference language is English. The abstract of the papers and posters will be reviewed for relevance and rigour. Abstract submissions should be sent electronically to Kevin Behrens at Kevin.Behrens@wits.ac.za

Timeline

- August 31, 2019: Deadline for abstract submissions (500-1,000 words) and for full papers for potential publication in the African Journal of Business Ethics*.
- September 30, 2019: Confirmation of acceptance to present at the Conference
- November 7-8, 2018: Conference. The presentation parallel sessions will take place on Day 1 of the conference - 7th November.
- December 9, 2019: Re-submission of revised, full papers for external review (single blind peer review)
- January 15 –March 15, 2020: Completion of external review, and feedback to authors
- Mid-May 2020: Publication of papers in the African Journal of Business Ethics

*Please note that abstract submissions are adequate if you only intend on presenting at the conference. If, however, you are interested in publishing your paper in the African Journal of Business Ethics, the above deadlines must please be adhered to. We are also pleased to announce the Aloe award for the best conference paper. The winner will be announced at the conference and will receive a signed copy of Rossouw and Van Vuuren's *Business Ethics* (6th edition). In order to be eligible for this award, your FULL paper must be submitted by 31 August 2019. BEN-Africa reserves the right not to make the award should an insufficient amount of full papers be received by the deadline.

Presenters are required to register and pay for the conference, the conference fee being $50 for presenters ($200 for other delegates) and to make the own way to the conference.

Details

For details on the preparation of full papers, please see the 'Author Guidelines' for the African Journal of Business Ethics, available online at:

http://ajobe.journals.ac.za/pub/about/submissions#onlineSubmissions.

Registration and Conference Website

To register for the conference and for information on accommodation, transport and the programme, please see: http://www.benafrica.org/conference-2019/

Sub-themes

The conference theme is 'The ethics of African development & the development of African ethic'. Any paper that addresses this theme, or the wider theme of business ethics in Africa, will be considered.

Suggested sub-themes include:

- What meaning is given to 'development' in the sense of progress, well-being or improvement?
- Which values underlie this meaning of 'development' and which values in practice determine the allocation of attention and the prioritizations made in development processes? Are values of human well-being, justice and human dignity adequately reflected in practice? How can attention to those values be supported?
- Who is gaining and who is losing in social change? Who bears the costs of 'development'? Is it fair?
- Why do unfair arrangements arise?
- How effective has development aid to Africa been?
- What are the true intentions and motivations of development agencies? Do they consider Africa's unique cultures?
- How do recipients of aid programs and funds experience development aid?
- How should we respond to the painful—sometimes 'cruel'—choices between different values and groups that can arise in development policy/programs/projects?
- How can one construct well-reasoned alternatives to prevailing practices that violate values of justice, well-being and dignity, in ways of thinking and in strategy, policy and practice?
- Who has responsibilities (and response-abilities) – to act, to desist, to compensate – in regard to violations of values of justice, human well-being and dignity?
- How can we apply indigenous African institutional models, cultural norms, and Ubuntu values to business ethics?
- Whose ethics should be enforced to ensure good governance and a reduction in corruption?
- Does the West have the right to force its business ethics standards on business on the African continent?
- How can African communitarianism enhance our ethical discourse?
- Are Ubuntu and free market capitalism incompatible?
- Is a relational ethic like Ubuntu better able to ground our ethical obligations than individualism?
- Can Ubuntu provide a strong basis for sustainability and environmental protection?

Wider themes

- Developments in business ethics teaching and practice.
- Defining the business ethics agenda for Africa: Contextual challenges and opportunities.
- Managing ethics in African companies and organisations.
- Poverty and sustainability: defining the challenges and the way forward.