WINTER EDITION | JUNE 2025

MATTER™



VOVO NGCWABE

CSI MANAGER OF THE YEAR


Welcome to our
Winter
Edition





MEET THE CSI MANAGER OF THE YEAR



THE INAUGURAL CSI LEGACY CONFERENCE



THE REALPOLITIK OF TRANSFORMATION

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THE PODCAST

LET'S BE FRANK

THE UNVARNISHED TRUTH

Welcome to the podcast where you can pick up the mic and be truly frank about the CSI sector. We'll name the pressing issues, critically evaluate current practices, and collaboratively shape a more impactful future. It's time for honest, open dialogue.



"No fluff. No filters. Just CSI South Africa's unvarnished truth.

EDITOR'S NOTE



As the seasons shift, so too does the landscape of civil society — both globally and here at home. With this edition, I find myself reflecting on the clarity I've gained in recent months regarding the role I wish to play within South Africa's CSI space. I'm energised by a renewed focus: to critically examine how we, as CSI practitioners, do the work we do — and how we must evolve to truly deliver transformative impact in our communities.

This moment in time is a turning point. Globally, philanthropic leadership is undergoing a quiet revolution. Bill Gates has announced the eventual winding down of his foundation.

Warren Buffett is stepping away by year's end. Ford Foundation CEO Darren Walker will also be exiting. Closer to home, we've seen leadership changes at the Nelson Mandela Foundation and Standard Bank's Tutuwa Foundation. These transitions are not just symbolic; they mark a profound opportunity for introspection and recalibration.

As we chart a path for the next 30 years of CSI, we must ask the tough questions. In this issue, we tackle one head-on: Has CSI in South Africa truly empowered Black business within its ecosystem? This is no accident — this edition is intentional, bold, and unapologetically centred around Black voices, Black leadership, and Black excellence.

On the cover, we proudly feature Vovo Ngcwabe, CSI Manager of the Year and a recipient of the 2024 CSI Legacy Award. Inside, we reflect on Darren Walker's legacy, revisit Trevor Noah's rousing call to action at the Skoll Conference, and unveil two new initiatives born from our own journey: Driven and Let's Be Friend.

This sixth issue is both a celebration and a call to consciousness. As the world changes — as AI such as ChatGPT brings us closer together — let us not be caught flat-footed. As the former CEO of Nokia once said, "We did nothing wrong, but somehow, we lost." We owe it to our sector, and to the communities we serve, to never stop evolving. So, pull on your winter woollies, settle in, and journey with us through this powerful edition of CSI Matter. Thank you for reading.

SOW, GROW & THRIVE TOGETHER

Empowering Communities. Thriving Together.

We are committed to enriching the lives of our people, the planet and our communities. Through strategic investments, we focus on creating economic opportunities that enable the reduction of poverty and inequality. We collaborate with our implementing partners and support their initiatives that don't just address systemic challenges but also create meaningful impact and empower communities.

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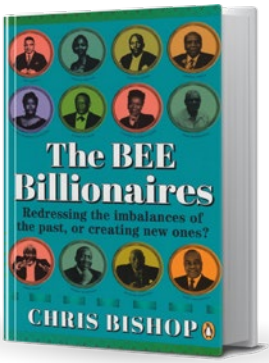
Editor's Book Review



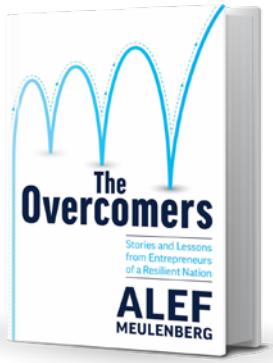
The BEE Billionaires

BY CHRIS BISHOP

Chris Bishop's "The BEE Billionaires: Redressing the Imbalances of the Past, or Creating New Ones?" offers a timely and insightful critique of South Africa's Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy. Through detailed profiles of some of the country's most prominent BEE beneficiaries—such as Sandile Zungu, Tshepo Mahloele, and Ipeleng Mkhari—Bishop examines how the policy has shaped economic transformation over the past two decades.

The book navigates the complex realities behind the headline successes of BEE, questioning whether it has truly fostered broad-based empowerment or primarily created a wealthy elite. Bishop critically addresses issues such as "fronting" (where companies present a facade of Black ownership without substantive control) and highlights the concentration of wealth among a select few, challenging the narrative that BEE has been an unequivocal success.

What sets this book apart is its balanced approach. Bishop neither dismisses BEE outright nor blindly celebrates it. Instead, he presents a nuanced view that acknowledges both the progress made and the shortcomings still to be addressed. His journalistic style makes the book accessible, while the thorough research lends credibility. "The BEE Billionaires" is essential reading for anyone interested in understanding South Africa's ongoing struggle with economic inequality and transformation.



The Overcomers

BY ALEF MEULENBERG

Alef Meulenberg's "The Overcomers" is a powerful and uplifting collection that chronicles the journeys of 10 South African entrepreneurs who faced extraordinary adversity during the country's 2021 civil unrest and the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and floods. Through vivid storytelling, Meulenberg captures how these resilient business owners, hailing from townships and rural areas, rebuilt their dreams after devastating losses.

More than just personal narratives, the book highlights the role of the #RevivingTownshipEconomies initiative, which offered critical support in mentorship, funding, and skills development—key factors in the entrepreneurs' remarkable comebacks. Meulenberg's writing is both empathetic and insightful, emphasising themes of community strength, innovation, and perseverance.

"The Overcomers" is an essential read for anyone interested in the intersection of entrepreneurship and social transformation. It offers practical lessons on resilience and adaptability while shining a light on the often overlooked backbone of South Africa's economy—the township entrepreneur.

This inspiring collection serves as a testament to the power of determination and hope amid adversity.

Continue reading...

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2025 WINTER EDITION

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Our Spring Edition 2025/6

From Intention to Infrastructure: Designing the New Future of CSI

As we close this edition of "CSI Matter Magazine", we invite you to cast your gaze forward—not merely to the next quarter, but also to the next quarter-century. Our upcoming Spring Summer 2025/6 issue will explore The Future of Impact: Infrastructure, Innovation and Inclusion to 2050.

This curated discussion will examine the social infrastructure we must begin building today, the innovation we need to scale with perseverance, and the forms of inclusion that will define a just and sustainable South Africa. It will also tackle the policy shifts, climate priorities, and power dynamics that will shape the trajectory of CSI over the next 25 years. This forthcoming issue is not just a publication—it's a provocation.

A space to rethink assumptions, challenge conventions, and ignite a deeper commitment to transformative impact. Alongside insights from the quarter, we will feature bold essays, future-focused forecasts, and profiles of changemakers already leading the way. If your organisation is thinking beyond compliance—investing in ethical innovation, inclusive development, and long-term impact—this is the edition to engage with.

We are looking forward to sharing it with you. To express interest, contribute, or explore collaboration opportunities for this landmark issue, please get in touch—we'd love to hear from you.



To advertise or contribute in the upcoming Spring Summer Edition

Contact:

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