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Crowdsourcing for South Africa's future

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Authors and contributors



Michael Prinsloo



Anne Cabot-
Alletzhauer

Where does this all take us? Grappling with the conflicts and contradictions that may lie ahead

In this last section, we address some of the hard decisions that may lie ahead. The financial services industry has to deal with the incredible complexity of the challenges and changing needs of individuals. The easy choice is to provide solutions that are increasingly individualised and targeted to very specific needs. By that logic, the financial services industry could well go the route of providing the type of portable, individualised ‘financial aid schemes’ that are currently on offer with medical aid schemes. But do we clearly understand what we would sacrifice in terms of creating a transformed and cohesive society if we do that? At the other end of the spectrum would be a focus on national solutions to societal problems. A national health scheme or more universal social security looms large in that narrative. And therein lies the challenge.

We need solutions and we need them fast. We need to achieve near miracles in relation to job creation, skills development, wealth creation and preservation, and social protection with a very limited wallet size. What better point in South Africa’s evolution to redefine the compact between government, business (or the employer) and South Africans themselves to achieve that end? To address many of these issues we will need to turn to all of you for answers. To that end we announce the launch of **BENEFITS^{ALL} BAROMETER** as a crowdsourcing platform to allow all of us to participate in future debates to address that quest for solutions. As a teaser, we introduce seven ‘puzzlers’ – questions that we believe need our immediate attention if we are going take these conversations forward.

All of these factors are going to have to be understood if we are genuinely going to be able to shift our focus as an economy from pursuing growth at any cost to developing South Africa and its people to deal with the challenges of the future from a collective position of collaboration rather than one of contest and strife.