

# Learning to leave a legacy: corporate social responsibility in South African business event tourism curricula

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to understand how industry practitioners perceive corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the business event tourism sector and to explore how university educators and industry stakeholders can form mutually beneficial partnerships in an effort to embed CSR in business event tourism curricula for vocational qualifications in South Africa. The study utilised qualitative methodology that gained in-depth information from key informant interviews with 18 business event tourism practitioners involved with CSR engagement at various levels and representing several business event environments. The sample represented experienced practitioners affiliated with the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) and also qualified practitioners with a university diploma or degree in event management. Industry participants acknowledged that CSR has become an important part of the corporate agenda and revealed that CSR leads to increased staff morale, public image and business benefits for companies. Five strategic themes were identified to enhance CSR benefits of which the analysis of community needs were highlighted as vital. University-industry partnerships and student engagement with real projects, such as fundraising and greening initiatives, were reiterated as to develop and engender CSR knowledge and skills amongst graduates of vocational business event tourism qualifications. The paper provides new insights into how business event tourism practitioners perceive CSR and underpins the need for enhanced university-business collaboration. In addition, the paper presents a practical framework for CSR curricula embedment that will be of interest to both academics and practitioners in the business event tourism sector.

**Key words:** Business event tourism, corporate social responsibility, industry-academia partnership, curricula

## Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), according to Supanti, Butcher and Fredline (2015), is of fundamental interest to the academic world and the corporate sector alike and therefore features as an important item on many corporate and academic agendas. CSR takes the fundamental premise that businesses, rather than merely pursuing economic gain, have to be of service to the community in which they operate and have to justify their existence as good corporate citizens (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008). Although companies are publicly committed to CSR in response to societal demands (Moratis, 2013), there has been an increased need for the further exploration of CSR undertakings in an effort to better understand and implement initiatives that will positively impact on society (Jones, Hillier & Comfort, 2014).

There is a substantiated need for CSR in developing countries that experience the continuous growth of international tourism as it is considered one of the main service industries in the world which impacts on the society in which it operates (Martinez, Perez & Del Bosque, 2013). Events have been well established as a theme within tourism research (Getz & Page, 2016), with

progressive interest in terms of the value of business events such as meetings, conventions, and exhibitions to destinations. The events sector has also received increased attention as a dynamic segment of tourism generating significant socio-cultural and economic benefits to host destinations (Lee, Lee & Kim, 2008). The business event sector is particularly well positioned to be assured of sustained demand due to the need of businesses worldwide to innovate, collaborate and share ideas by means of meetings, conventions and other events (Rogers & Davidson, 2016). However, as the sector progresses the inevitable link between business event tourism companies and the social environment in which they operate, may impact negatively on sustainability in the absence of sound CSR practices (Kasim, 2006). In the South African context, the increase in business events has fueled the development of university qualifications related to business event tourism which have to reflect relevant content to satisfy educators, students and industry alike (Lee *et al.* 2008). Dima, Vasilache, Ghinea and Agoston (2013) highlight the importance of university-business cooperation, or academic-industry partnerships, as a critical aspect towards the advancement of social responsibility at universities. Under these circumstances it has become more important to consider co-creation and greater collaboration with the business event industry to ensure effective CSR skills development when embedding CSR as part of the contemporary curriculum for business event tourism qualifications. This is underpinned when considering that current and future graduates from the so-called millennial generation group, recognised to have been born within the range of 1979 to 2002 (McGloane, Spain & McGloane, 2011), are typically considered a civic-minded generation wanting to work for companies that contribute to society (Cone-AMP, 2006). Although event tourism has become a legitimate research topic, research on university education for event tourism careers is underdeveloped (Getz & Page, 2016). The paper therefore aims to contribute to the business event tourism body of knowledge from an educational perspective. Firstly, it seeks to understand CSR business event tourism as perceived in the South African world of work and, secondly, explores how university-business cooperation can be mutually beneficial for business event students and companies as a mechanism towards CSR curricula embedment.

## Literature review

Companies have become increasingly conscious of how they impact on society (Porter & Kramer, 2006) and today CSR is widely accepted as part of the world of business (Supanti *et al.*, 2015). CSR promotes ethical relationships between companies and their stakeholders and drives business goals to be aligned to the sustainable development of society. It assists in the preservation of cultural diversity and environmental resources and the reduction of social problems (Filho, Wanderly, Gomez & Farache, 2010). Accordingly, this study views CSR as a corporate response to social, cultural and environmental concerns inclusive of activities and practices that demonstrate socio-cultural, ethical, legal and environmental upliftment for the good of the wider community (Sheldon & Park, 2011; Sampaio, Thomas & Font, 2012). CSR and sustainable development are recognised by the corporate world as a global megatrend in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, resulting in profound implications for the way businesses interact with social institutions and the environment (Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler [KPMG], 2012). It is widely accepted that CSR has ascended the corporate agenda due to an increased demand from society and that companies should act responsibly, driving the need for established CSR practices within companies (Cornelius, Wallace & Tassabehji, 2007). Likewise, there is continued emphasis on sustainable business practices within the tourism sector (Sheldon & Park, 2011). Business event tourism is often referred to as MICE tourism (meetings, incentive travel, conventions, and exhibitions or events). The acronym relates tourism activities generated from this collective business events cluster (Schlenrich, 2008). Business events is a diverse and complex sub-sector of tourism that plays a vital role in tourist visitation for major destinations and

has led to substantial development investments to provide infrastructure related to such increased demand (Mair & Jago, 2010). Business events are of considerable economic value to destinations as Dwyer (2002) reveals that these international business event delegates typically spend more and travel with companies, yielding greater economic benefit than general travelers. According to Getz and Page (2016), this can be partly ascribed to the development of convention facilities and bureaus in global cities with a mandate to secure large groups of international delegates through event bidding (Booh, Koh & Jones, 2008). According to McCabe (2008), business events will continue to be recognised by national tourism agencies and governments across the world as an economically lucrative sector of the tourism and hospitality industry. In its global business survey, the International Special Events Society (ISES) reported strong growth across all sectors of the events industry, including in Africa, and indicated increased global demand for event products and services across all sectors of the industry (ISES, 2014).

In South Africa, the South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB) was formed in 2012 and mandated to increase and oversee business event tourism to South Africa (SANCB, 2016), in an effort to tap into the expanding market. South Africa maintains an extensive track record of hosting major international business events, such as the World Economic Forum 2015 in Cape Town, and consequently business event tourism companies have been required to meet international business practice standards such as CSR. The South African government is committed to the sustainable development of business event tourism as a national priority and regards business events as a major force in the tourism sector's 9.5% contribution to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), translating to more than 1.4-million jobs in the country (Hanekom, 2015). In 2011, the government also approved an action plan for 2011-2014, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD1) to address issues of sustainability in South Africa in partnership with academia, the business sector and other key role players (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016). The NSSD1 (2011-2014) was developed to inform the NSSD2 (2015-2017), highlighting the government's continued commitment to green practices and reinforcing the business sector's drive to prioritise CSR. Therefore, the contribution to the green economy, in terms of initiatives such as CSR, remains a key sustainability and developmental issue for managers in the business event tourism sector. Business event tourism acts as a catalyst capable of creating long-term legacy through socio-economic development initiatives and while bringing socio-economic benefits to destinations, tourism can also have undesirable socio-economic and environmental impacts (Cowper-Smith & Grosbois, 2010). Consequently, Mair and Jago (2010) note that the business event sector is susceptible to public opinion as related to climate change and green business event tourism practices and CSR can play an important role in managing this opinion. More attention is being paid to how the industry, inclusive of the business events tourism sector, should adjust business practices to improve operational, social and environmental sustainability towards a greener economy. In support of this view, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) offers an international platform as a business event association to honour outstanding sustainable development and CSR practices in the industry (Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, 2016). In 2016, no less than two South African business events companies were represented out of six global companies as best practice examples, namely Synergy Business Events for Meetings Africa 2015 and the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) (Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, 2016). This highlights the fact that South African business events tourism companies have not only embraced CSR, but also recognise the value of such practices to remain globally competitive. There can be little doubt that there exists general public expectation for big companies operating in the tourism industry to mention their CSR efforts in their annual reports, indicating their efforts towards assisting society and the implementation of sustainability practices (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008). Similarly there is an increased expectation for academic institutions to align their institutional goals to address the

social needs and play a leading role in the social upliftment (Vallaey, 2016) which could be of especial significance to developing countries like South Africa.

Universities can play an important role in social responsibility development among graduates and create educational impact through the preparation of students to participate actively and contribute to the development of society. However, of concern according to McGloane, Spain and McGloane (2011) is how universities can meet the educational needs of these millennial students who place an increasingly higher value on CSR. Nicholson and DeMoss (2009) note that non-traditional activities structured outside the classroom may be more effective than traditional lectures on social responsibility while Tucker (2006) concurs that these millennials actually want to be involved with real situations and deal with real issues. University educators and industry stakeholders can therefore play an important role in the advancement of CSR education in business event tourism curriculum through collaboration and non-traditional engagements external to the classroom. Doh and Tashman (2012) argue for the integration of CSR best practices in curricula where paramount insights and knowledge can be shared with students. In the business event tourism sectors, industry partners are ideally positioned to assist with best practice initiatives and mutually beneficial strategies towards improved CSR teaching approaches and student involvement. Furthermore, South Africa's drive towards a green economy is built on the premise that economic progress, social protection and environmental preservation are interdependent in sustainable development. Cornelius *et al.* (2007) note that ethics education is often integrated across undergraduate curricula but remains unsupported by real conviction or action within academic institutions. A further question is posed as to whether a business curriculum really provides graduates with the knowledge and skills "to stimulate socially and ethically grounded corporate activities and programmes" (Cornelius *et al.*, 2007). Nicholson and DeMoss (2009) argue that there is little understanding as to how CSR can be incorporated in order for students to get the most relevant exposure to their future context. CSR issues should be integrated in undergraduate curriculum (Persons, 2012) as CSR will continue to play a definitive role in future business strategy worldwide. CSR initiatives often have to contend with accusations of "greenwashing" (Marquis, Toffel & Zhou, 2015) and questions raised about companies' true motives and ethics when adopting CSR practices. The rise of CSR policy adoptions within international companies also holds true for the tourism industry (Bhodanowicz & Zientara, 2008) and such CSR initiatives should introduce genuine change. Undergraduate students often find it difficult to make sense of complex business strategies related to CSR and sustainable development and grapple to understand CSR implications across the business sector (Brumagim & Cann, 2012). This also holds true for the business event tourism sector where there are ongoing international developments towards the recognition of event management as an emerging profession (Formandi & Raffai, 2009).

As academic institutions have become increasingly involved in event management curriculum, including business events, as a specialist field in the tourism discipline (Fletcher, Dunn & Prince, 2009), a need has emerged for university-business partnerships. This is highlighted by the fact that vocational business event management programmes are, by their very nature, closely aligned with the world of work. Nelson and Silvers (2009) affirm that collaboration between business event tourism stakeholders is required to ensure the continued advancement of professional qualifications in this field. The business event tourism industry has received increased attention worldwide as a dynamic and vibrant sector generating significant socio-cultural and economic benefits to host destinations (Lee *et al.*, 2008). From an industry perspective, a business event tourism curriculum ought to mirror global business trends and best practice, such as CSR developments, and provide a balance of technical and soft skills to equip students for daily business event operations and interpersonal workplace skills as noted by Silvers (2010). It has

therefore become important to consider co-creation and greater collaboration with business event practitioners through CSR knowledge-sharing and partnerships. As social and financial challenges play a continuous role in the transformation of global business event practices, graduates require the ability to adapt with ethical acumen. As the goal of MICE education is to produce well-educated and qualified professionals for the event industry, academic curriculum developers should strive to integrate theory with practice in order to prepare graduates for the sector adequately (Zeng & Yang, 2011). Lozano, Arenas and Sauquet (2006) suggest that CSR curricula require learning practices that allow for critical evaluation and analysis of companies in relation to society. Gomez and Crowther (2009) similarly recommend minimised subject content in CSR with a more humanistic management education approach allowing for learning outside of the classroom. Knowledge, skills and attitudes are considered to be three vital components for sustainable education (Chalkey, 2006; Rands, 2009). Accordingly, Shephard (2008) states that students should reflect knowledge about sustainability, have personal attributes that will lead to sustainable behaviour and possess the ability to act sustainably. Stubbs and Schapper (2011) propose a knowledge-skills-attitudes framework as a content design approach in their research related to curriculum development for educating CSR. Stubbs and Schapper (2011) note that CSR curriculum should reinforce negotiation, communication, change management and critical analysis skills as students should be able to act as sustainability change agents in the world of work. Furthermore, students' attitudes should be developed by encouraging them to explore through structured analysis and reflection processes embedded in the curriculum (Stubbs & Schapper, 2011).

## **Methodology**

According to Bice (2015), many studies in the field of CSR engagement remain quantitative and pose substantial limitations to the understanding of ground-level CSR operations in businesses and the subsequent educational implications thereof. Qualitative studies are required in order to do a more in-depth investigation to determine the reasons for acting in a sustainable way (Font, Garay & Jones, 2014). The purpose of this study was to elicit better understanding of how industry is engaged with CSR and furthermore explore how university-business partnerships can be used to embed real-life CSR management in business event tourism curricula. Considering that this paper is exploratory in character, a qualitative approach is deemed particularly useful to answer the "how" questions and gain insight in terms of practical business events strategies on how to embed CSR in curricula. Information is therefore gathered from key informant interviews with 18 business event tourism practitioners involved with CSR engagement on various levels in various business environments. Interviews were conducted in Cape Town. Cape Town is viewed as a leading international business event and tourism destination and is included in CNN's Top 10 Cities List for 2015. Cape Town ranks 10th in the Top 25 Destinations in the World by Tripadvisor 2015, and has been named as one of the top five eco-friendliest cities in the world in 2015 by Conde Nast Traveler (Cape Town Tourism, 2016).

As qualitative research is an ongoing and emergent process, researchers typically are unable to state in advance one and all that will be included in the study and may opt to rather use inclusion criteria related to the research focus of the study as guidance (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The criteria for this study firstly considered whether participants are affiliated with the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI). SAACI is the official umbrella body for business events in Southern Africa and members affiliated with the association are vetted in terms of ethical business practices. Secondly, to gain valuable insights from participants with extensive business events curriculum exposure, event management graduates in possession of official

SAQA accredited NQF level 6 (National diploma) or NQF level 7 (Bachelor of Technology) were included.

**Table 1: List of interview participants**

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Occupational title</b>	<b>Type of business event tourism company</b>	<b>Purposive sampling criteria</b>
Participant 1	Client service manager	Event management and marketing company for high-profile brands	Qualified event management graduate (NQF7)
Participant 2	Event executive	International convention centre hosting major national and international events	SAACI member Qualified event management graduate (NQF6)
Participant 3	Project manager	Relationship marketing and brand communications agency	Qualified event management graduate (NQF7)
Participant 4	Event specialist	Event management company for product launches and activations	Qualified event management graduate (NQF6)
Participant 5	Freelance event management training facilitator	Public higher education institution for event management qualifications	SAACI affiliation Qualified event management graduate (NQF7)
Participant 6	Sales, marketing and revenue Manager	International hotel chain	SAACI affiliation
Participant 7	Event manager	Event and exhibitions company for experiential marketing	SAACI affiliation
Participant 8	Marketing manager	Event technology specialist	SAACI affiliation
Participant 9	Event manager	Event management and marketing company for sport events	Qualified event management graduate (NQF7)
Participant 10	Student centre assistant	Private training provider for event management certification	SAACI affiliation
Participant 11	Company director	Event audio-visual service provider	SAACI affiliation
Participant 12	Professional congress organiser	Conference and event management company	SAACI affiliation Qualified event management graduate (NQF7)
Participant 13	Event and sales specialist	Event, function and conference venues management	Qualified event management graduate (NQF6)
Participant 14	Stakeholder and marketing coordinator	Destination marketing organisation and convention bureau	SAACI affiliation
Participant 15	Personal travel coordinator	Meetings and incentive travel operator	Qualified event management graduate (NQF7)
Participant 16	Company director	Event management and décor company	SAACI affiliation
Participant 17	Event manager	Event management and production company	Qualified event management graduate (NQF6)
Participant 18	Senior event coordinator	Full service eventing, venue and event consulting company	Qualified event management graduate (NQF6)

At first network chain referral, or snowball sampling, was utilised by seeking potential participants based on referrals from industry networks, and as noted by Johnson and Christensen (2014), discerning who to talk to and what to focus on while collecting data in the field, is often a more effective in gaining in-depth research. In addition, as only representatives working in the business events sector could ideally contribute to the study, purposive sampling, related to the aforementioned inclusion criteria, was used in the further recruitment of participants (Saunders,

Lewis & Thornhill, 2007; Baker, 2002). Furthermore, due to the purely qualitative nature and focus area of the study, it was imperative to ensure participants were knowledgeable in the practice of CSR. For this reason, participants hold multi-level occupational titles as CSR responsibilities are distributed at random to individuals within companies. In addition, the size and nature of the participants' companies were typically reflective of the multi-faceted event tourism business industry. Details of the participants interviewed are shown in Table 1 above.

Participants were contacted by telephone in an effort to discern their level of CSR engagement and subsequently arrangements for interviews were made to gather individual responses to the range of open-ended questions and answers could be further probed to acquire more detail. All participants indicated a preference for telephonic interviews due to their respective business schedules and availability. The majority of informants were based in Cape Town where the interviews were conducted. However, as most business event tourism companies operate nationally, telephonic interviews were conducted and recorded for transcription where required by means of a mobile call recorder application. Data saturation was reached after 14 interviews; however, four more interviews provided further diversity in the typology of business event tourism companies and ensured that no new information surfaced. Data was reduced, displayed, and then verified by drawing conclusions (Punch, 2009) and guided by Creswell's steps for qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2014) as presented in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Steps in the qualitative data analysis of the study**

<b>Cresswell's six qualitative data analysis steps</b>	<b>Application to this study</b>
1. Organise and prepare the data	Each interview was logged and transcribed. The data was sorted and then arranged manually
2. Read or look at all the data	The overall depth and credibility of the data was determined and a sense of the meaning of the information was gained
3. Start coding all of the data	Data was organised in sets of information with accompanying memos and notes. Transcripts were interpreted through identification, categorisation and abstraction
4. Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as themes for analysis	Detailed information about the participants and the setting was noted and themes were created that displayed diverse quotes and findings. Once themes emerged, outcomes were reviewed and matched against transcripts supported by ATLAS.ti scientific qualitative data analysis (QDA) software
5. Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative	Narrative passage was selected to convey the findings of the analysis
6. Making an interpretation in qualitative research	The lessons learned from the insights gained were captured by using a theoretical lens and passing on research-based personal meanings

**Source: Adapted from Creswell (2014:197-198)**

## Results and discussion

A total of 18 interviews were conducted with practitioners in middle to senior management positions across the multi-faceted business event tourism sector as reflected in Table 1. To understand how industry perceives CSR, an exploratory question was asked in terms of how participants were engaged with CSR projects. Overall, four main categories of CSR engagement were identified. The first category, social activities, was most frequently mentioned and included contributions to children's homes, feeding schemes, and fund-raising for non-profit organisations (NPOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Closely related was the second category,

namely, skills development activities, which involved specific stakeholders. These stakeholders included youth and women in the local community. For instance:

One of the projects we do is we identify at risk youth and give them work placement experience. One of the conditions though is that they attend weekly support meetings with the counsellor who comes onsite. We currently have a young man we helped. He has been with the company for 11 months. When he joined he had been an addict since the age of 13. He has been clean for 10 months (Participant 11).

Currently we are part of an ongoing programme to uplift community members in the Helderberg and surrounding areas through assisting with skills development relating to the event industry. The programme focusses on teaching these skills to women in the area that have a passion for the industry but no means of getting training and have no income. They can use these skills to start working in the industry as entry level staff or start their own community based service and business (Participant 16).

The third category identified were professional service activities whereby the participants sponsored their business event service and expertise free of charge or at a discounted rate for various upliftment projects as expressed by the following participant:

Our CSR is mostly the sponsorships of venues, accommodation or food and beverage for charitable and fund raising events hosted at our hotel. We also contribute by offering discounted tariffs to NPO's (Participant 6).

The majority of participants also viewed their cause-awareness activities as a major CSR initiative. It was explained that events are often linked to causes and charities to reflect good corporate citizenship. Many participants spoke of their companies' commitment to various causes, charities, NGOs and NPOs such as CANSA (Cancer Association of South Africa), breast cancer awareness and the Red Cross Children's Hospital. One participant provided an example of her company's established management of a five kilometer walk held in aid of breast awareness:

At the event, women also get the opportunity to get tested for breast cancer, free of charge. All funds raised go to Pink Drive, a breast cancer awareness organisation that provides free breast cancer screening and education around South Africa (Participant 1).

In order to understand why business event tourism companies engage in CSR, participants were asked to disclose the motivation for their involvement with CSR. Four main themes emerged:

- Financial and business benefits;
- Positive public image;
- Staff morale; and
- Philanthropic values.

The first theme related to financial benefits that may be gained directly or indirectly from CSR engagement. The informants of this study held a consistent view that CSR initiatives can be financially beneficial to the company and are generally good for business. Many participants were of the view that CSR can generate prospective clients from CSR platforms. Three of the participants indicated that their CSR activations were eligible for tax refunds. Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), the South African governments' programme to redress the inequalities of Apartheid by giving certain previously disadvantaged groups economic benefits, can be aligned to CSR according to several participants. These insights are shared as follows:



With the new BEE codes there are ways to use your donations and enterprise development to get points. Also often potential clients are wanting to see if you do work with CSR projects (Participant 11).

Our main driving force as a business is to gain on our CSR and BEE ranking. Companies want to do business with companies who are ranked well [...] and governments are enforcing and incentivising CSR more than ever before. This is even more important in countries like SA where certain historical factors have created a level of disparity within our communities and society as a whole (Participant 6).

Utilising volunteers and students is cost effective if they are used in the correct areas of the event (Participant 3).

The second theme related to the positive effect CSR has on a company's public image. Most comments indicated that CSR enhances the popularity of the company and underpins corporate credibility. Some participants recognised this as an extension to the preceding financial benefits theme. The examples are expressed as follows:

More clients are likely to invest or purchase from a company that gives to their communities and engages in activities to improve society. You could improve your corporate reputation and generate positive publicity (Participant 2).

Consumers would pay more if they knew their favourite brand is 'doing good' (Participant 17).

One participant further noted the publicity value of CSR as follows:

I think for corporate companies their biggest benefits would be great marketing for the company and its products as well as amazing image enhancing publicity. Especially as most corporate companies are seen as "evil" in many ways and any good they do publicly helps their image. I do also think that is most probably why most corporate companies actually do it. So it's more self-benefiting (Participant 5).

Several industry practitioners expressed a boost in staff morale as a consequence of CSR-related activities. For instance, one participant actively described how staff felt energised to be part of something bigger by giving back to society. Primarily, informants to this study described how CSR improved teamwork when they worked towards a common goal that made a positive contribution to society. A few participants also alluded to the fact that staff prefer to work for socially responsible companies. This perspective was captured in the following quotation:

When staff can see that the organisation they work for is sincerely interested in people and communities outside itself, they have a greater sense of belonging. Millennials especially want to see what organisations do for the communities around them (Participant 11).

The final theme is related to the philanthropic values of the individuals that drive CSR in the company. All participants recognised a need to practise goodwill in their personal life as well as in their place of work. One participant revealed a strong belief that if CSR makes a difference in someone's life, it is worth doing. Another participant expressed the following:

My motivation for getting involved in CSR projects comes from a space of feeling a sense of responsibility, a natural urge to want to help and make a difference (Participant 17).

In addition, many respondents revealed that they are committed to drive CSR as a matter of personal principle. One participant shared how she was a resident at a child and youth care centre and how that motivated her to drive CSR initiatives to benefit the aforementioned centre:

This place means a lot to me [...], they rely merely on community support. I see my involvement as a way of giving back so others like me can have a chance to succeed (Participant 15).

Participants were probed to draw on their CSR experience and suggest approaches for CSR to be most successful and socially beneficial. Five clear themes and corresponding approaches to CSR emerged from the combined responses and are reflected in Table 3. Some supportive verbatim quotes are included in the table to highlight participant perspectives.

**Table 3: Suggested approaches for CSR to be successful and socially beneficial**

Theme	Approach	Supportive verbatim quote
Local community empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use locals as staff at events and make use of scholars and students to volunteer</li> <li>• Make use of local products and services and provide exposure for local businesses</li> <li>• Provide professional event management assistance to community-owned events</li> </ul>	“Giving the community ownership helps create [CSR] longevity and is more sustainable in the long term” (Participant17)
Skills development and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer practical business event management skills to local community to develop skills at events or business</li> <li>• Sponsor training or individual bursaries in the field of business events</li> </ul>	“Provide a place where out-of-work youth can experience some on the job training” (Participant 11)
Community needs analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the critical social needs within community in order to develop CSR projects relevant to their needs in consultation with credible NPOs and NGOs in the community</li> </ul>	“Benefits can be increased by really seeking out what the community needs, what type of CSR project. Doing proper interviews with candidates so that the success rate increases” (Participant 10)
Partnerships with credible NPOs/NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align with reputable organisations that have terms of reference and existing projects for CSR engagement</li> <li>• Create formal CSR activation agreements with local NGOs/NPOs</li> </ul>	“Link your organisation with projects and use it as a tool to directly impact communities around you” (Participant 11)
Fundraising and donation drives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting events specific for the benefit of a cause/charity</li> <li>• Create a link for cause/charity to benefit directly from specific events or company agreements</li> </ul>	“Create a platform; this could be an online platform, on which people are able to raise funds in support of a cause” (Participant 3).

An in-depth question was asked in order to find out how industry and educators can work together in a partnership to reinforce social awareness among students in business event tourism. Participants across the board regarded students as the future drivers of CSR activities in the industry. Sentiments were shared by many informants of the study that companies should use students on-site at business events more often. By implication, the company would be practising CSR by allowing students on site to gain experience and transferring skills. There is no question that the contextual experience on-site will benefit the students in terms of industry exposure. However, how can such experience benefit the students in terms of CSR exposure? One participant suggested that student volunteers be solicited to assist with CSR activations and CSR events within the industry. Many participants spoke about the importance of involving students, with fresh perspectives and dynamism, in CSR projects. This was apparent in the following quotation:

Get students involved and tap into their creativity and knowledge of how to get people involved in these projects (Participant 12).

Collectively, participants viewed CSR as an important part of today's event tourism companies and many participants shared the concern that it will become even more critical to display accountability in an industry that, by its very nature, impacts the society in which it operates. Comments relating to the industry-academia partnership in CSR advancement included suggestions for collective brainstorming and preliminary needs assessment. Many participants provided practical ideas for students to get involved in social awareness initiatives such as donation drives and on-campus activations. A widespread view among participants clearly indicated that students should be immersed in industry CSR projects outside the classroom under the guidance of industry mentors and educational facilitators. This perspective was captured in the following quotations:

Students could design custom CSR plans and campaigns which they could pitch to a company aligned with their campaign idea and together with the company plan it from start to finish. The CSR plan could be [...] custom designed for a chosen or interested company. This will allow students exposure to different industries, access to the specific industry information regarding CSR practices as well as resources from the company they will be working with. The company will then, along with the students, implement the initiative as firstly a one-time event and hopefully it will evolve into a long term initiative (Participant 5).

[Students] must be able to do business plans or models that promote new initiatives and think outside of the models we have in our everyday lives. Motivate thinking outside of the box by insisting on business research and interviews with businesses [...] this closes the gap in knowledge between the work place and the students' study material (Participant 3).

In the final set of main findings presented in this paper, participants concurred that graduates require specific knowledge and skills in order to advance sustainable CSR initiatives successfully in the South African business event tourism industry. Primarily, ethical business practices and in-depth understanding of sustainability were mentioned as vital. Further to this, many respondents stated that the ability to distinguish between genuine CSR and hollow CSR for the sake of window-dressing the company's image would be an important consideration. This was apparent in the following statements:

[Students] would need to understand the frameworks and guidelines laid down by government, why it is in place and the impact that CSR can have on your bottom line. They need to understand why CSR exists in the first place [...]. They need to be able to understand the value of CSR and the benefits to people, planet and profit (Participant 8).

CSR has been used as a greenwashing tool by ugly and evil companies to enhance their tarnished public images or reputations. They use certain initiatives and campaigns to do some good, to seem good in the eyes of the public and change the public's perception of the company to that of a socially responsible and conscious company, when in reality they contribute to many negative social, economic and environmental issues (Participant 5).

Participants were in agreement that both soft skills and hard skills would be required to implement successful CSR initiatives when graduates enter the world of work. Participants were asked to identify the essential knowledge and skill capacities required for business event tourism graduates to manage CSR initiatives successfully in South Africa. Their collective responses are illustrated in Figure 1 below, in the form of a word cloud that gives greater prominence to the words that appear more frequently in the text that was generated from individual responses.



Figure 1: Essential CSR knowledge and skill capacities for business event tourism graduates

From Figure 1, it is clear that participants viewed soft skills such as compassion, passion and creativity as predominantly important. The need for theoretical and conceptual underpinning of knowledge and skills related to fundraising strategies, greening principles, financial budgeting and effective monitoring and evaluation of CSR initiatives were highlighted by participants. Many participants viewed skills related to marketing, such as branding, sponsorship and relationship management as important.

In discussing the findings, it was the purpose of this paper firstly to understand how industry practitioners perceive corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the business event tourism sector. Accordingly, the findings of this paper shed light on the CSR initiatives that practitioners are engaged with and their motives, as well as the CSR approaches that proved to be successful and mutually beneficial to the company and the community. A secondary aim of the paper was to explore how university educators and industry stakeholders can form mutually beneficial partnerships in an effort to embed CSR in business event tourism curricula for vocational qualifications in South Africa. Accordingly, the key findings revealed industry insights in terms of business-university partnerships and the graduate knowledge and skills required to create sustainable CSR legacies specifically in the business event tourism sector of South Africa.

In summary, the findings and discussion are incorporated to form a knowledge-skills-attitude framework specific to CSR in business event management curricula with theoretical and practical implications for vocational qualifications. This framework has been conceptualised by linking the themes from participant interviews back to literature for business event tourism CSR education and is based on the fundamentals of the Stubbs and Schapper (2011) framework for curriculum development for CSR education: "Knowledge, skills and attitude - corporate sustainability: the business case".

This framework aims to provide educators of vocational qualifications in the field of business event tourism with an outline of how to approach a CSR module or unit within a subject as part of the curriculum. The paper does not wish to enforce CSR embedment in a rigid manner and does not consider the proposed framework as inexhaustible, but should be viewed as a flexible tool to assist with the generation of ideas to incorporate CSR elements in curriculum. In accordance with the view of Stubbs and Schapper (2011), the paper argues that it is possible to make a difference to student learning as reflected in the following quotation:

No matter how inadequate or piecemeal the curriculum, society cannot wait for universities to establish integrated programmes of sustainability – and neither can the planet (Stubbs & Schapper, 2011:265).

**Table 4: Knowledge-Skills-Attitude framework for CSR in business event management curricula**

<b>Educational component</b>	<b>Knowledge</b> ↓	<b>Skills</b> ↓	<b>Attitude</b> ↓
Lectures →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss sustainability and business event tourism greening concepts, issues and debates</li> <li>• South African legislation related to NPOs/NGOs</li> <li>• CSR business plan: financial, marketing and fundraising management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research social, environmental and economic impact of a business event and the implications of these for a business and provide strategic responses</li> <li>• Develop a fundraising proposal for an NPO/NGO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss and debate different CSR and sustainability perspectives and their underlying values</li> <li>• Discuss and debate greenwashing in the business event management sector and the legacy of major business events on communities</li> </ul>
Industry guest speaker/role model →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior executives from business event tourism sector</li> <li>• Business event tourism sector industry association officials</li> <li>• NPO/NGO managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job shadow at green events and initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspirational coaching and mentorship: industry role model</li> </ul>
Assessment→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written assessments: comprehend key concepts and issues</li> <li>• Participation: share knowledge and experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group company project and class presentation: develop skills outside classroom on-site to develop CSR activation in partnership with business event tourism company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual essay: CSR in the business event tourism sector</li> <li>• Reflective essay: post CSR involvement via industry project</li> </ul>
Other initiatives →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audiovisual: Technology, Education, Design (TED) talks on sustainability and issues related to CSR and business event tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical industry workshop presented by credible association (for example Event Greening Forum)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative participation in United Nations (UN) awareness days</li> </ul>

**Source: Adapted from Stubbs & Schapper (2011:264)**

Outlined in the framework presented in Table 4 above, is how the knowledge-skills-attitudes framework is applied to lectures, guest speakers, assessment and other aids such as audiovisual to reinforce theoretical concepts in the class room in partnership with industry experience and input. Firstly, the CSR unit seeks to develop the knowledge component and understanding of CSR in the business event management context by means of lectures, readings, research, audiovisual and discussion forums drawing on specifically South African greening and legislation and the design of an implementable CSR business plan. The knowledge is reinforced and further

vocational context is derived from industry guest speakers considered to be leaders in business event greening, and perspectives of sustainability are presented (Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008) to further stimulate the attitude component and shift students' thinking and interest in CSR beyond business as usual (Rusinko, 2005). Secondly, the unit focuses on skills development in an effort to understand how business event tourism may impact on destinations and how to formulate strategies in response (Stubbs & Lockhart, 2009). Students are expected to work in group format and develop CSR activations with real business event tourism companies of their choice. University-business partnerships are further utilised in event job shadowing and external (industry) practical workshop facilitation. Finally, inspirational coaching and mentorship from industry role models challenge students to create new ways of thinking and reflect on their own behaviour and attitudes towards CSR. A collaborative assessment approach includes reflective essays, knowledge sharing through presentations, and the real CSR project in partnership with a business event tourism product or service as illustrated in Table 4.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this paper was firstly to understand how industry practitioners perceive corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the business event tourism sector. Secondly, the paper aimed to explore how university educators and industry stakeholders can form mutually beneficial partnerships in an effort to embed CSR in business event tourism curricula for vocational qualifications in South Africa. The research contributes to CSR curriculum and business event tourism educational literature and the practical framework for CSR curricula embedment will be of interest to both academics and practitioners. Firstly, the research contributes by bringing together existent theoretical contributions to demonstrate the need for CSR curriculum in the business event sector specifically whilst highlighting the importance of industry-academia partnership to engender vocational learning. Secondly, there is a contribution to knowledge by providing empirical evidence and industry insight to support the design of a framework in an effort to approach CSR embedment in vocational business event tourism qualifications in South Africa. In this paper, a more industry-inclusive approach was adopted to reflect the business event tourism context in this knowledge-skills-attitudes framework for business events vocational qualifications in South Africa.

In terms of limitations to the study, it is recognised that CSR engagement and decision-making in the business event tourism sector is multi-faceted and includes the involvement of many persons within the company. Accordingly, although attempts were made to interview industry practitioners deeply involved with CSR, the views expressed by a single practitioner may not correspond to the views of the entire company in relation to CSR activities. The study acknowledges that curriculum design is a complex exercise and a range of curriculum implementation models are worthy of further exploration. Future research to the implementation of the approach examined in this paper in the form of a case study will provide further opportunities for research.

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