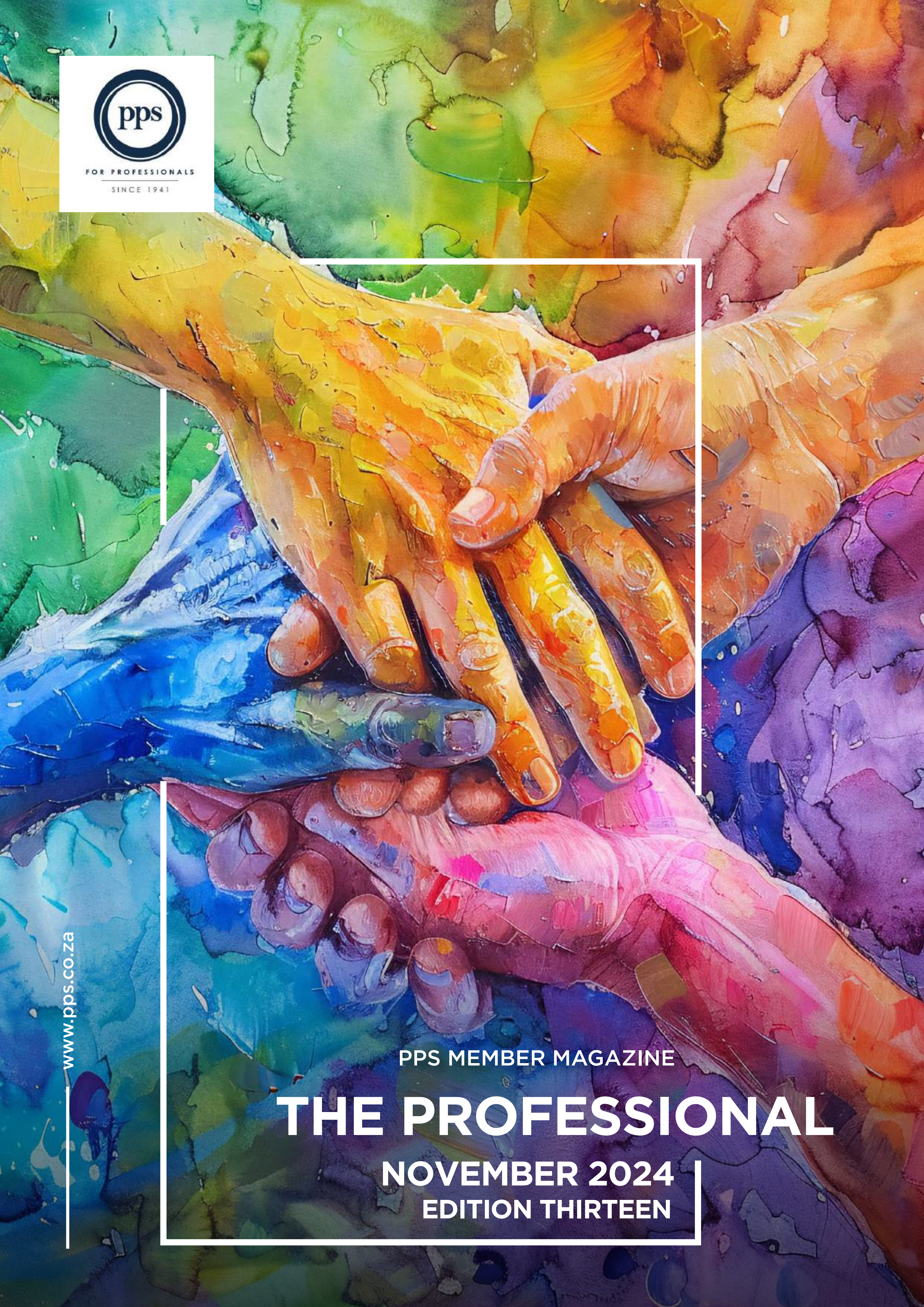

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PPS MEMBER MAGAZINE

THE PROFESSIONAL

NOVEMBER 2024
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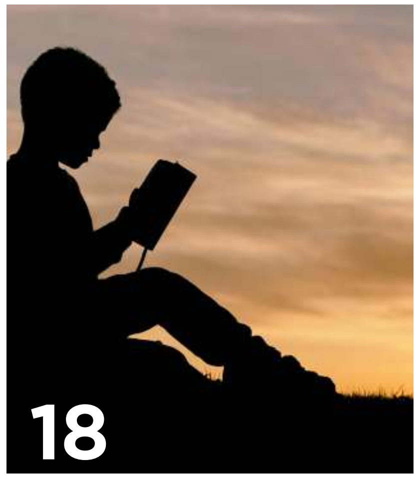

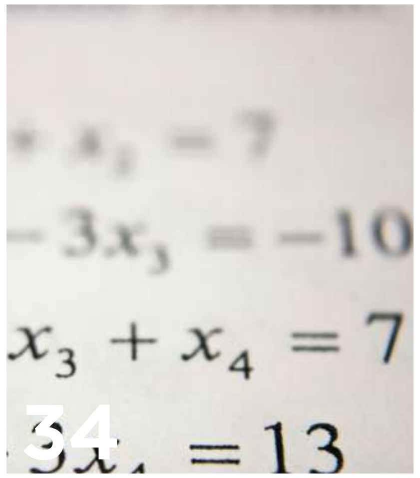

LIFESTYLE

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Editorial

As the year comes to a close, I invite you to explore this issue of *The Professional,* which features stories of transformation, leadership and innovation that encourage reflection and action. From the impact of a single act of kindness to how women are changing wealth strategies, I hope you find fresh perspectives and practical tools that can help you navigate today's complex world.

We begin this issue of *The Professional* with a feature that reminds us of the power of kindness. A small gesture, when done at the right moment, can set off a chain reaction of positive change. PPS Group CEO Izak Smit, in his article, *From swamp to success: The ripple effect of a single act of kindness,* recounts a tale of adversity turned to triumph, showing how one act of goodwill can transform a life and, indeed, an entire community (p. 8-11).

Another compelling theme in this edition is the evolving landscape of wealth management, especially as more women take the reins. In *The power shift: How women are redefining wealth strategies* (p. 12-13), PPS Investments Head of Research Andriette Theron dives into how women are embracing new approaches to wealth creation, reshaping investment paradigms in ways that prioritise inclusivity and sustainability. PPS Executive: Wealth and Business Development Linda Sherlock shares her thoughts on this shift and reveals the results of a recent study by PPS Wealth Advisory on what financial scenario South African graduate professional women find themselves in, in the article *Women's financial power in a changing world* (p. 22-23).

Financial worries are a common concern in our modern lives but there are ways to alleviate that burden. In *Mind over money* (p. 14-15), PPS Executive for Life Solutions Wimpie Mouton explores managing finances with greater confidence and less stress using appropriate life solutions. These solutions offer peace of mind in a world filled with economic uncertainty, allowing us to focus on what truly matters.

When it comes to leadership, every professional faces their fair share of "wicked problems" – the kind that seems impossible to solve at first glance. In our feature on leadership (p. 16-17), PPS Executive for HR Masenyane Molefe discusses collaboration as key to tackling these challenges, drawing on diverse perspectives to unlock innovative solutions. This approach does not just solve problems – it strengthens teams and fosters a more inclusive work environment.

Sustainability remains a crucial focus and in *The power of education-focused investments* (p. 18-19), PPS Investments Chief Investments Officer David Crosoer examines the role of investment in education in shaping the future and fostering a more equitable society. The global trends driving this shift are fascinating, with investors increasingly recognising that education holds the key to long-term prosperity.

In our conversation with Dr Sibongile Mashaphu (p. 20-21), a PPS member and lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, we learn more about her journey and expertise in mental health. Her work, especially at the intersection of psychological well-being and social issues, offers valuable insights on hope and resilience.

Of course, no issue would be complete without practical lessons from the world of insurance. We reflect on the lasting lessons from historical events in *Lessons from the Great Fire* (p. 26-27), examining how modern insurance policies continue to protect us from the unpredictability of natural disasters. For those intrigued by the future of insurance, our piece on microinsurance (p. 24-25) reveals how this growing sector is helping underserved communities protect their most valuable assets.

On a global scale, the healthcare sector is seeing a transformation, with partnerships between public and private entities becoming more common. In *Public-private unity for better healthcare* (p. 32-33), Profmed CEO Craig Comrie highlights the impact of collaboration in overcoming healthcare challenges and broadening access to quality care for all.

We also take a closer look at PPS Namibia (p. 30-31), where an inspiring programme is changing lives one surgery at a time. This heartening piece showcases how determination can emerge from the depths of despair, illustrating the profound impact of healthcare initiatives in underserved regions.

Finally, we round off the issue with a touch of lifestyle and leisure. Whether you are planning to spice up your holiday menu with exotic recipes (p. 40-41) or dreaming of a trip to New Zealand, the land of Hobbits and All Blacks (p. 42-43), there is something here for everyone.

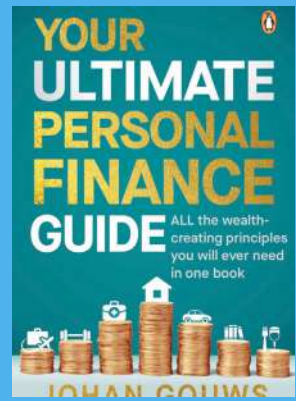
This issue is all about ideas that make a difference – whether it is through a thoughtful act of kindness, an innovative investment strategy or simply embracing collaboration. We hope these stories inspire you to engage with the world in new and meaningful ways.

Enjoy the read.

Elvira

Editor

Elvira Wood is Positioning Manager at PPS. She holds a PhD in Communication Studies from North West University and has previously worked as a financial journalist for some of South Africa's leading daily newspapers.



Two readers have a chance to win a copy of head of PPS Wealth Advisory Johan Gouws's book *Your ultimate personal finance guide.* Tell us of a single act of kindness you experienced and which had a profound impact on your life. We will send a copy of the book to the first two readers we receive a message rom.

Click here to share your story with us.

** Employees of PPS and their immediate families are not eligible to enter this lucky draw.*

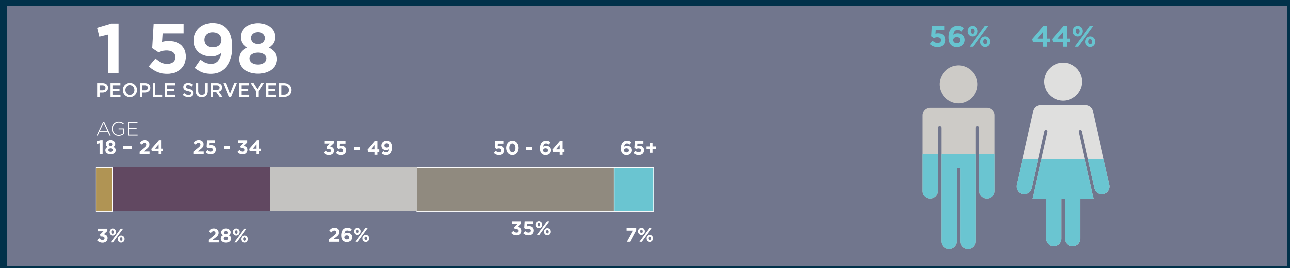
** PPS's decision regarding the lucky draw is final and non-negotiable. No correspondence or discussion will be entered into concerning the results.*

Elvira Wood

2024

GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL INDEX SURVEY RESULTS

In this study, graduate professionals who are PPS members shared their voices on issues influencing their professions and the impact this had on their livelihoods.



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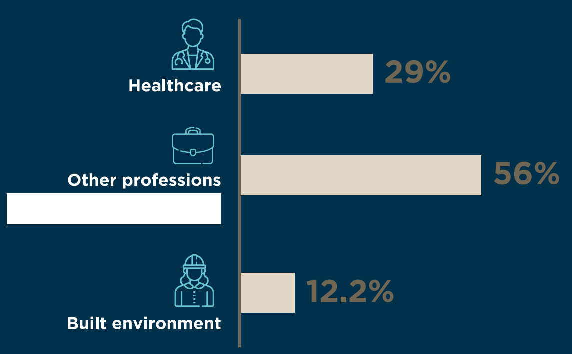
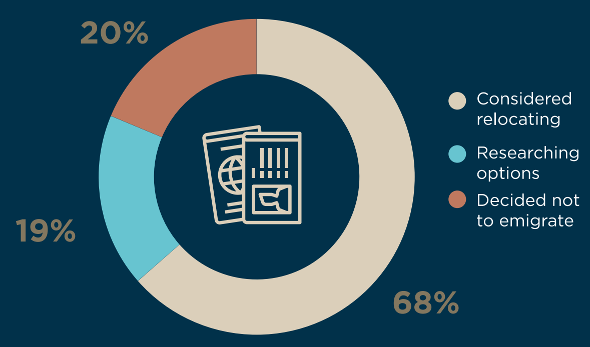
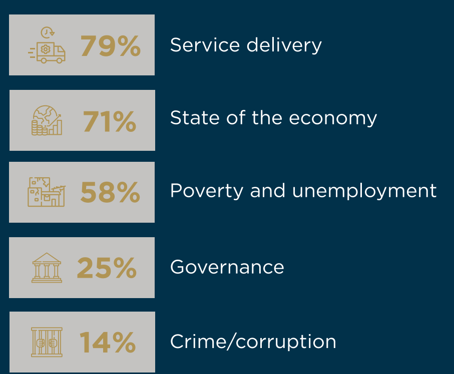


RELOCATION FROM SOUTH AFRICA

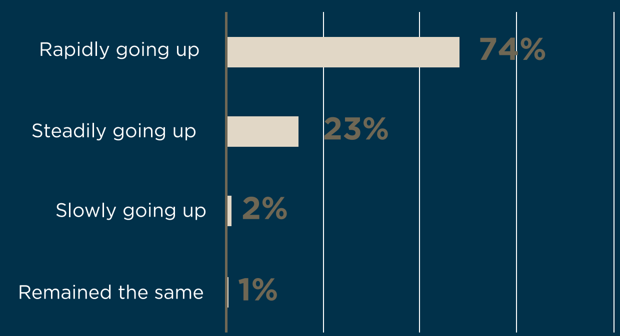


Respondents could select more than one option

KEY CHALLENGES IMPACTING PROFESSIONALS



IMPACT OF INFLATION



FROM THE CEO'S DESK

Dear reader,

A mentor of mine recently gave me a wonderful read, *Infectious Generosity,* by Chris Anderson, the Head of TED. It aligns perfectly with the mutual model and our natural human instincts – a fascinating book that I highly recommend to everyone, especially professionals. Is the essence of being a graduate professional not to add value to society, to help others, through our disciplined training and expertise, making the world a better place?

Anderson writes that the most powerful question people can ask of their own lives is: Am I a net giver or a net taker? The people we have hurt versus the people we have helped. The resources we have consumed versus those we have protected. The ugliness we have contributed to versus the beauty we have created. The trees we have destroyed versus those we have planted. It is an intensely personal yet very important question. Because, ultimately, it affects our personal happiness.

Helping others — through our professional training and personal endeavours — is a key ingredient for a contented life, to enjoy deep happiness. Many truths about happiness are well appreciated: Love can make us happy. Beauty – in nature and in art – can make us happy. Meaningful work (as done by us as graduate professionals) can make us happy. Money – up to a certain level and to some extent – can make us happy. But we do not always appreciate the profound happiness that comes from assisting others, from paying it forward without expecting a return – from the pure and simple act of giving.

As the Chinese proverb goes: "If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. For a day, go fishing. For a few years, inherit a fortune. But for a lifetime? Help others."

Anderson's message can be summarised in this paragraph: "Generosity is a core part of who we are. Whether built by God or by evolution, we are wired to look out for each other. Our deepest fulfilment comes only when generosity is a fundamental part of our lives. Our specific obligations to our fellow humans are personal. But it is truly important that we find our own answers to that question. Our reputations, our long-term happiness and the happiness of those around us all depend on it."

On p. 8 to 11 I share a few stories about paying it forward, from giving without any expectation of receiving anything in return. And yet, the universe has this peculiar way of sometimes blessing our generosity in the most unexpected ways, often ten-fold. The impact of simple deeds of kindness can be profound.

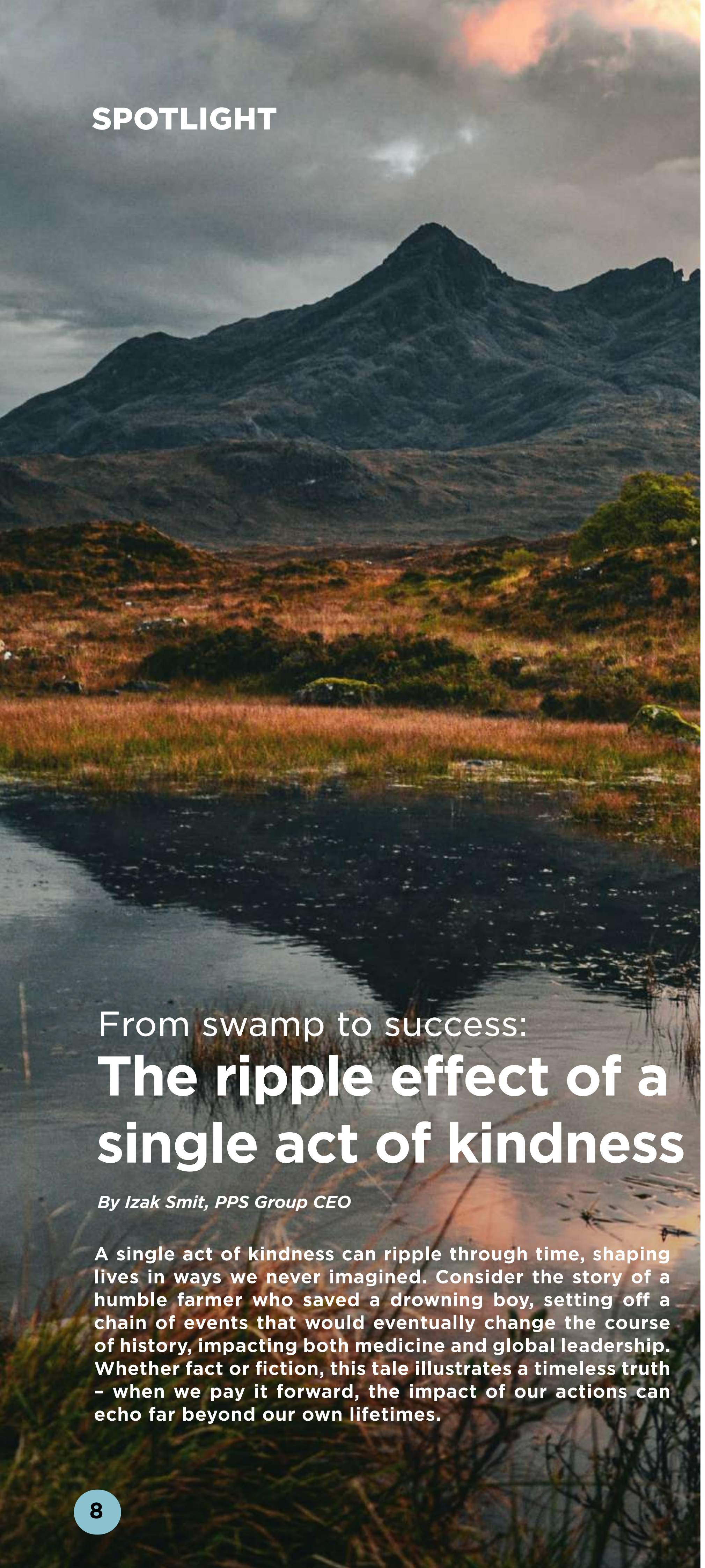
Which brings me back to the mutual model and collaboration. When we think about it, all major mutuals in the world exist because people were prepared to pay it forward. They were not founded because people invested money to yield a return. That stakeholder does not exist. No, they were founded because people were generous enough to be net givers rather than net takers. In that way a capital base was built. And as generations passed through these organisations, that capital base grew. Which also places a responsibility on us, as the beneficiaries of this generosity, to continue this growth and leave a legacy for the generations to come. Indeed, the fruit from many seeds that we as members of PPS today plant, new businesses in other geographies, new product lines, educational contributions, others after us will enjoy.

I trust that you will also enjoy this (thirteenth) edition of *The Professional.* And may we continue to look out for ways to collaborate and pay it forward!

Regards,

PPS Group Executive

Izak Smit



SPOTLIGHT

From swamp to success:

The ripple effect of a single act of kindness

By Izak Smit, PPS Group CEO

A single act of kindness can ripple through time, shaping lives in ways we never imagined. Consider the story of a humble farmer who saved a drowning boy, setting off a chain of events that would eventually change the course of history, impacting both medicine and global leadership. Whether fact or fiction, this tale illustrates a timeless truth – when we pay it forward, the impact of our actions can echo far beyond our own lifetimes.

The other day I again stumbled across this story about good deeds and the wonderful return that might be harvested from them. The story goes like this:

Many years ago, during the latter part of the 19th century, a humble Scottish farmer was toiling away on his farm when he suddenly heard some screams. It was a little boy in distress. The farmer immediately abandoned his tools and raced to the scene. He found the child struggling in a swamp, trapped and drowning. With no hesitation, he used a long branch to pull the child to safety.

A few days later, a visitor called at the farmer's modest home. It was the father of the boy whom the farmer had rescued. The visitor was a wealthy man and offered to pay the farmer handsomely for his kindness. The farmer, however, refused to take any money saying, "Saving someone is my duty; humanity has no price".

Just then, the farmer's own son appeared around the corner. The visitor asked, "Is this your son?" When the farmer confirmed the boy was his, the visitor offered a deal: if the farmer refused payment for saving his son, would he allow the visitor to pay for the boy's education at any institution he chose?

The farmer, realising that here was an opportunity for his son to gain an education that he could never afford to pay himself, gratefully accepted. His son went off to good schools and eventually attended St Mary's Medical School in London.

Now, what makes this story so interesting, is that the farmer's boy became Sir Alexander Fleming, the inventor of penicillin. And the rich visitor? That was Randolph Churchill, at some stage the Chancellor of the Exchequer (the UK's Minister of Finance). And Randolph's son? Sir Winston Churchill, of course, who would become the Prime Minister of Britain, twice.

If the story concluded here, it would already be a captivating tale. However, there is one more twist that completes the narrative. The story continues and, years later during World War II, penicillin saves Churchill's life when he falls seriously ill.

Is it not fascinating how a **single act of kindness** can ripple through history, saving so many lives and connecting individuals in unexpected ways?

> **"We do not know how the good that we do today might come back to bless us in future."**

Admittedly, historians have disputed for many years whether this story is fact or fiction with many concluding that it is indeed fiction, for a few reasons:

- There is no account of Sir Winston Churchill almost drowning in Scotland when he was a child. (There is the story of him having to swim the "mighty Apies" river in Pretoria after escaping from captivity during the Anglo Boer War but it is highly unlikely that he almost drowned in the process. What is true is that he did escape (from the State Model School in what is now Pretoria CBD), fled north and crossed the river. However, the Apies river was most likely not in flood at the time and Churchill probably waded through!)
- There is no record of Lord Randolph paying for Alexander's education.
- There is also no evidence that Churchill received penicillin for any of his wartime sicknesses. He was treated for very serious pneumonia in 1943 but with "M&B", a short name for sulfadiazine produced by May and Baker Pharmaceuticals. Typically, Churchill found that the most agreeable way of taking the drug was with whisky or brandy!

What should be noted is that in the 1930s, Fleming temporarily focussed his work on prontosil over penicillin. The tweaking of the prontosil formula led to the development of M&B in 1938. Hence, the story may have a grain of truth after all! It is also documented that Churchill consulted with Sir Alexander Fleming in 1946 about an infection that had apparently resisted penicillin. So there was a link between the two gents.

Historians trace the story's first appearance to the December 1944 issue of the general interest magazine *Coronet*. The article, titled "Dr. Lifesaver", was written by Arthur Gladstone Keeney, an American journalist who served in the Office of War Information during World War II.

So, is the story fact or fiction? Of course, we wish it to be true! Whether it is true or not, what is fact, is that Churchill and Fleming both saved many lives. Of course, as a war leader, one can argue that Churchill also sent many to their deaths. But overall, he saved the world from great evil. If you choose to believe the altruistic account, I cannot blame you!

"Is it not fascinating how a single act of kindness can ripple through history, saving so many lives, and connecting individuals in unexpected ways?"

The moral of the story is **to pay it forward.** We do not know how the good that we do today might come back to bless us in future. Or bless society. Sometimes it does not come back. Often, we perform good deeds without seeking or expecting any reward. The joy is in the pure act of giving, period. And we often do it in secret, not wanting the world to know about it. But it does have this peculiar way of, at times, circling back to bless us and others. We then reap what we have sowed.

There are other stories involving heads of government who have paid it forward. One is of the Polish premier who thanked the American president for the millions of lives he had helped save during and after World War I by distributing food. Before becoming president, he was his country's "food czar" and led the American relief programme, which provided food to the starving millions in Central and Eastern Europe. The president replied that there was no need to thank him. "You won't remember it, but you paid it forward once when I was a poor student at college and I was in a hole." The American president was Herbert Hoover. When Hoover was a student at Stanford, he invited famed Polish pianist, Jan Paderewski, to perform for a promised fee. Unfortunately, the ticket sales fell much short of the goal. After the performance, Hoover presented Paderewski with the money he had and promised to stand in for the difference himself. Paderewski allegedly refused the payment and gave the money to Hoover to cover his costs. Paderewski later became prime minister of Poland.

Of course, the concept features in many religions. Hinduism and Buddhism talk about karma, the relationship between a person's actions and the consequences following those actions. Although karma is not a term used in the Bible or the Quran, the concept features strongly in many verses, as most of us will know.

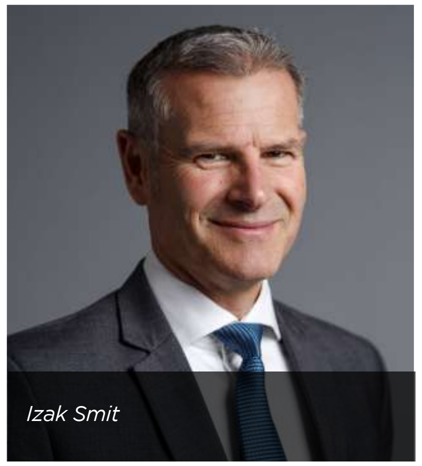
Now, paying it forward is **essential to mutuality.** Mutuals exist because others have paid it forward. We have a licence to operate because we have enough capital. Where did this capital come from? Not from a shareholder looking for a return – mutuals do not have shareholders – but through members who had put in more than what they had taken out. In essence, they have paid it forward. Which is our responsibility and obligation as well today, for future generations.

It reminds me of Michael Josephson's famous poem, *What Will Matter.* Because of limited space, I have shortened it somewhat:

"Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end. There will be no more sunrises, hours or days. Your wealth, fame and power will shrivel to irrelevance. Your hopes, ambitions, plans and to-do lists will expire. The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away. It will not matter which side of the tracks you lived. It will not matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.

"So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured? What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built, not what you got, but what you gave. What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught. What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others. What will matter is not your competence but your character. What will matter is not how many people you knew but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone. What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what. Living a life that matters does not happen by accident. It is not a matter of circumstance but of choice."

Finally, circling back to the Alexander Fleming story, it is about education. Because this poor son of a farmer received an education, he could eventually become a professional who, through his inventions, saved millions of lives. Who knows what might become of those bursaries that PPS sponsors today, taking kids, often from poor and disadvantaged background, and offering them the opportunity to become a professional themselves? Perhaps these acts of paying it forward might one day **result in a rich harvest,** professionals that will do amazing things, invent extraordinary things, save lives and make the world a better place.



Izak Smit

The power shift: How women are redefining wealth strategies

By Andriette Theron, PPS Investments Head of Research

The landscape of wealth and investment is undergoing a remarkable transformation, with women stepping into roles of increasing financial influence both locally in South Africa and around the world. This power shift is not just a trend; it signifies a fundamental change in how wealth is managed, invested and distributed.

THE RISE OF FEMALE INVESTORS

Globally, women are set to inherit significant wealth, with projections by the Bank of America indicating that by 2030, they could control a staggering $30 trillion in assets in the US alone. In South Africa, women are expected to **play an equally pivotal role** in the investment landscape as their financial influence grows. According to South African Census statistics, the proportion of households headed by women is rising, currently exceeding 42.2%. This demographic shift highlights the increasing economic power women hold in our society.

UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

As women **take on more financial responsibility,** their unique perspectives and priorities are beginning to reshape investment strategies. Research shows that women often prioritise values such as sustainability, social impact and long-term security. This approach contrasts with traditional investment strategies that may focus solely on financial returns. As a result, the demand for sustainable and socially responsible investment options is on the rise.

Women seem to be increasingly seeking investments that not only yield financial returns but also contribute positively to society. This desire to invest with purpose is driving asset managers and financial institutions to rethink their offerings. In South Africa, while the range of niche funds targeting specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is still developing, there are growing opportunities in infrastructure and impact investing that align with women's values.

THE ALPHA SIGNATURE: A NEW INVESTMENT PARADIGM

A key concept in understanding this shift is the "alpha signature". Traditionally, "alpha" has referred to the excess return earned on an investment compared to a benchmark. However, as women engage more in investment decisions, their alpha signatures **reflect broader priorities.** This means that their approach to achieving returns may incorporate considerations beyond pure financial performance, such as social impact and environmental sustainability.

Women are often more open to exploring non-traditional asset classes that can provide both competitive returns and align with their values. This includes investments in private markets, venture capital, and funds that focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria. As women increasingly assert their financial influence, the investment industry must adapt to cater to these evolving preferences.

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The power shift is not confined to South Africa; it is a global phenomenon. The World Economic Forum writes in a research article that in developed markets like the US and Europe, women are expected to inherit a substantial portion of wealth in the coming years. With this shift, there is a growing recognition that women's **voices must be included** in the investment dialogue. Financial institutions worldwide are beginning to recognise that tailoring strategies to meet the needs of women investors is not just good business; it is essential for sustainable growth.

THE PATH FORWARD

As we look to the future, the role of women in the investment landscape will only continue to expand. It is vital for financial institutions to create inclusive environments that encourage women to **participate actively** in investment decisions. By valuing diverse perspectives, the industry can foster innovation and develop products that resonate with the changing demographics of wealth.

At PPS, we are committed to recognising the valuable contributions of women in finance. Our focus is on providing personalised solutions that cater to the unique needs of all investors, regardless of gender.

> "Women are often more open to exploring non-traditional asset classes that can provide both competitive returns and align with their values."

We offer a range of services, including tailored investment portfolios, risk management solutions and resources that empower women to make informed financial choices. Our commitment to mutuality aligns with the belief that returns should extend beyond mere financial gains; they should also encompass social impact and community well-being. By promoting a sense of belonging and collaboration, we contribute to a more balanced and equitable financial landscape, supporting women in their investment journeys and helping them achieve holistic growth that reflects their values and aspirations.

Click here for more information about PPS Investments.

** Kindly note that this article does not constitute financial advice. The information provided is purely informational. Consult your PPS-accredited financial adviser for more information about insurance cover.*

Andriette Theron

Mind over money:

Alleviating financial worries with life solutions

By Wimpie Mouton, PPS Executive for Life Solutions

Financial security and emotional well-being are intricately linked. While financial planning is frequently centred on numerical aspects such as savings goals, investments and retirement funds, its psychological influence is sometimes disregarded. No one will argue that financial instability often generates considerable stress, whereas financial security can offer a profound sense of tranquility and confidence. In an increasingly uncertain world, it is crucial to acknowledge the emotional aspect of financial planning and the role holistic life solutions play in nurturing mental well-being.

FINANCIAL ANXIETY: A GROWING CONCERN

One must only look at official statistics to realise that many South Africans are probably very anxious about their financial situation. The South African Reserve Bank reported that in the second quarter of 2023 (more than a year ago), outstanding household debt amounted to R2 783 billion. Statistics show that this means that the average debt-active person in South Africa pays **at least half of their salary** to service their debt. *Daily Maverick* reported in March 2024 that some statistics show that many middle-class workers pay as much as 80% of their net take-home pay on servicing debt. In an article published in July 2024 on *Moneyweb,* Hardi Swart, writes that "debt is quickly becoming a form of modern-day financial slavery, and this issue is more than just an economic burden – it is a pervasive problem that severely impacts mental health."

He points out that some studies found that up to 63% of South Africans experience anxiety over their financial situation; 87% report financial stress, impacting physical and mental health and 58% acknowledge the adverse effects of financial anxiety on their well-being.

THE ROLE OF COMPREHENSIVE LIFE SOLUTIONS IN MANAGING EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Comprehensive life solutions — financial products and services designed to safeguard both wealth and wellness — are essential to creating financial stability. These holistic approaches go beyond traditional life insurance and retirement funds, incorporating a variety of tools and resources to alleviate financial stress.

PROTECTING YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET

Although many people might cite an asset such as their home as their most valuable asset, that is actually not the case. Think about it: what must you have to be able to acquire that asset in the first place? An income. Therefore, **one's ability to earn an income** is one's most valuable asset. What will you do if you can no longer generate an income?

That is why cover such as sickness and disability insurance is of utmost importance. Such cover offers a financial safety net, ensuring that even in the face of unexpected life events, individuals can maintain their lifestyle and meet their financial obligations. Knowing that you are covered in case of emergencies brings a sense of control over the future, reducing anxiety.

FLEXIBLE FINANCIAL PLANNING

Modern financial planning centres on getting the right advice and using the most suitable tools. These tools help **set realistic goals,** monitor progress and adapt plans as needed, reducing anxiety by allowing flexibility.

An experienced financial adviser is crucial in this process. They provide reassurance, navigate complex landscapes and tailor guidance to individual needs. This partnership empowers individuals to control their financial futures, enhancing well-being and reducing stress. Ultimately, combining expert advice with modern financial tools creates a support system that prioritises both financial health and mental wellness.

LONG-TERM SECURITY THROUGH LEGACY PLANNING

Legacy planning addresses the need for long-term security, offering peace of mind that loved ones will be financially secure in the event of an untimely death or disability. Comprehensive estate planning, including life insurance and Wills, ensures that individuals can rest easy knowing their family's future is safeguarded.

CUSTOMISED SOLUTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

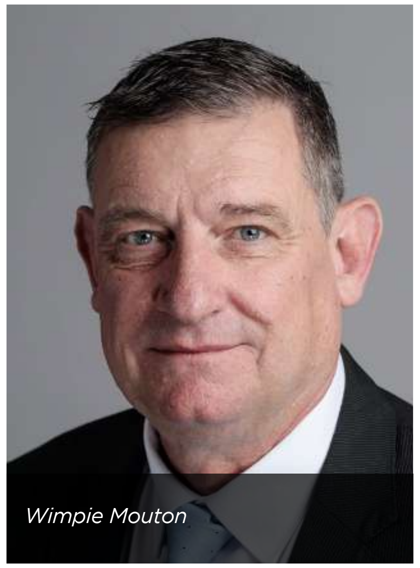
No two financial journeys are the same and the best life solutions acknowledge that. Tailored financial products that fit a person's unique life circumstances **reduce the feeling of overwhelm** that comes from trying to fit into a one-size-fits-all model. Customisation offers reassurance that personal goals, challenges and values are all being considered.

PPS exemplifies this approach by providing a range of tailored life solutions designed specifically for graduate professionals. Protecting our members' ability to earn an income was, after all, the reason for our founding in 1941. Today, we offer much more than just sickness cover. Our offerings include life insurance, sickness, incapacity and disability benefits, all crafted to meet the diverse needs of our members. By focusing on mutuality and understanding the unique challenges graduate professionals face, PPS ensures that individuals receive personalised support and guidance throughout their financial journeys, ensuring a sense of security and peace of mind. With such bespoke solutions, members can confidently navigate

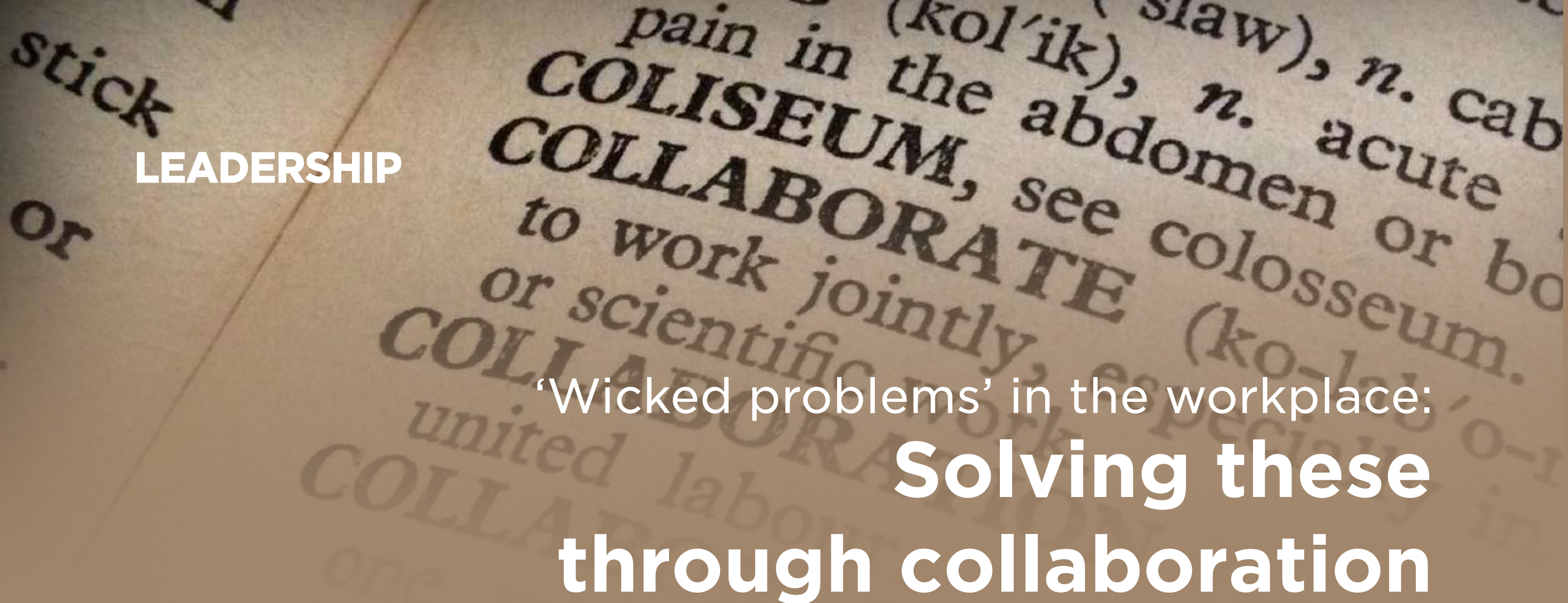
their financial futures while prioritising their well-being.

Click here for more information.

Disclaimer: Kindly note that this does not constitute financial advice the information provided is purely informational. The information, opinions and communication from the PPS Group or any of its subsidiaries, whether written, oral or implied, are expressed in good faith and not intended as financial or investment advice, nor do they constitute an offer or solicitation in any manner.



Wimpie Mouton



'Wicked problems' in the workplace: **Solving these through collaboration**

By Masenyane Molefe, PPS Executive for Human Resources

Remember when Netflix was known for its DVD rental business model? Probably not. That almost cost it its existence in 2000 when it faced what is described as a "wicked problem" – how to stay afloat in a rapidly changing digital market – a problem many companies and teams face today.

As digital streaming rose in popularity, Netflix's DVD rental model quickly became outdated. The company had to shift its entire strategy and embrace streaming to survive. However, the solution was not just in the pivot itself – the collaboration across various teams helped Netflix solve its wicked problem. As recounted in an article by *Monday Morning Economist* dated 2 October 2023, Netflix's teams from technology, content licensing and original programming worked together to develop a robust streaming platform. The technology team ensured the platform was reliable and user-friendly, while the content licensing team secured deals with major studios to provide a wide range of streaming content. The original programming team also played a crucial role by creating exclusive content that attracted and retained subscribers.

This collaborative effort allowed Netflix to transition successfully to a streaming service and become a dominant player in the entertainment industry. Before the pivot, Netflix's market value was around $50 million. After the successful transition to streaming, the company's market value skyrocketed to almost $300 billion on the NASDAQ, making it one of the most valuable companies in the world.

BUT WHAT IS A 'WICKED PROBLEM'?

Design theorists Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber coined the term "wicked problem" in the 1970s to describe challenges that are difficult to define and have no clear solution. Wicked problems are characterised by incomplete, contradictory or changing requirements, making them particularly difficult to address through traditional problem-solving methods. They often require ongoing adaptation and creativity, as solving one aspect of the problem can lead to new issues or unintended consequences.

WHY COLLABORATION IS KEY

Wicked problems require diverse perspectives, as they often cut across multiple disciplines. Solving these challenges often demands collaboration. Teams must pool their knowledge, skills and insights to create innovative solutions that would not be possible if members acted individually. Collaborative efforts help broaden the understanding of the problem, reveal hidden aspects and identify potential paths forward that might otherwise be overlooked.

Leveraging diverse perspectives, cultivatating agile and innovative cultures and sharing responsibilities are key strategies for effectively addressing complex, multi-faceted workplace challenges.

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ENABLE CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Wicked problems require thinking "outside of the box". By encouraging collaboration among team members from different departments, backgrounds and areas of expertise, businesses can bring together a variety of viewpoints. This diversity leads to more comprehensive solutions that consider the problem from multiple angles. For example, while a finance department might focus on a project's budgetary constraints, the marketing team may identify new opportunities to leverage media platforms that others had not considered.

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAMS ENHANCE AGILITY

Wicked problems often evolve over time, requiring agile solutions that can adapt to changing circumstances. Cross-functional teams, composed of members from various areas of expertise, can respond more effectively to these shifts. In this type of collaborative environment, teams are better equipped to change quickly and resolve new challenges as they emerge.

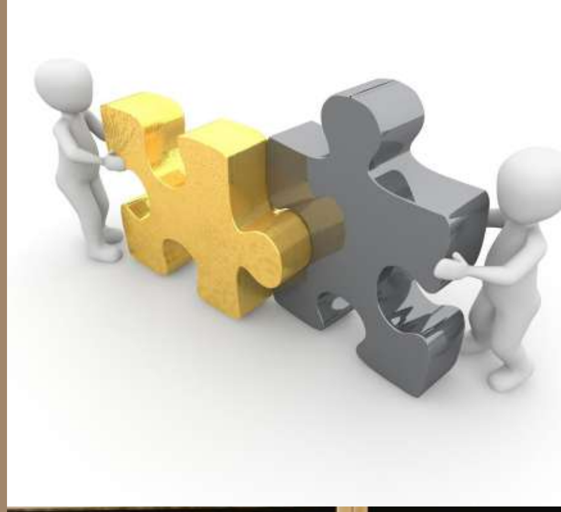
INNOVATION THRIVES IN COLLABORATIVE CULTURES

The most innovative ideas tend to emerge in environments where collaboration is encouraged. Wicked problems do not yield to conventional thinking and often the best way to tackle them is by creating a culture that values experimentation, open communication and collective problem-solving. In workplaces where collaboration is prioritised, teams feel empowered to share their ideas freely, leading to breakthroughs that would not happen in more siloed environments.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FUELS MOTIVATION

Wicked problems often come with uncertainty and risk, which can be daunting for individuals to face alone. Collaboration helps distribute the weight of these challenges, creating a shared sense of responsibility. When teams collaborate, they develop a collective ownership of the problem and its solution, which in turn drives motivation. Working together to solve a wicked problem also builds a sense of camaraderie and trust, which can enhance long-term team performance.

At PPS, we operate in a very competitive industry and we are all too familiar with "wicked problems". That is why one of our company values is "being eternally curious". We encourage our employees to innovate and seek new solutions to challenges. When it comes to collaboration, our ethos of mutuality emphasises the power of shared success. We believe that when we work together, pooling our diverse skills and perspectives, we are not just solving problems for today but building a stronger future for all our members. Through collaboration, we turn complex challenges into opportunities for growth, creating outcomes that benefit everyone – because at PPS, success is better, shared.




Masenyane Molefe

The Power of education-focused investments

By David Crosoer, Chief Investment Officer at PPS Investments

Imagine a world where the right to basic education is not just a constitutional promise but a lived reality for every child. Yet, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), an estimated 260 million children are denied this fundamental right, with millions facing profound barriers to accessing quality education. This is regardless of around 80% of the world's countries acknowledging this right in their constitutions.

In developing countries like South Africa, the struggle is particularly acute. In rural areas, children often must walk long distances without the safety of reliable transportation. When they arrive at school, they endure dilapidated buildings, overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of qualified teachers. South Africa's official Census 2022 revealed that as many as 5.2 million children of school-going age do not even go to school, with one of the reasons given being the poor state or lack of education facilities.

To add to the problem, for many, the school day is shadowed by hunger, as meal programmes remain inconsistent or altogether absent. This harsh reality **creates a relentless cycle** that not only hampers learners' ability to learn but also traps them in poverty, stealing their hope for a brighter future.

The drop-out rate in South African schools is significant. The Department of Basic Education estimates that between 42% and 56% of learners drop out sometime in their school career. The *BEE News* published by the BEE Chamber, reports that according to the Zero Dropout Campaign, this number is closer to 63%, which means that in reality, only 37% of Grade 1 learners ultimately pass Grade 12. This results in that, as per Census 2022, less than a third of South Africa's population (32.5%) has a matric certificate or equivalent.

South Africa, however, is not the only country facing this problem. The global scale of the educational crisis is so severe that it has become a central focus of the United Nations's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, SDG 4 calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all, underscoring education as a fundamental right and an essential lever for development. The goal is not just to **increase access to education** but also to ensure that education systems worldwide equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the modern economy.

> **"This harsh reality creates a relentless cycle that not only hampers learners' ability to learn but also traps them in poverty, stealing their hope for a brighter future."**

This is where investment houses can make a substantial difference. By channelling capital into education-focused initiatives, they can help **bridge the education gap** while still achieving financial returns. This form of impact investing is growing in importance as investors realise that addressing societal challenges like education also offers long-term economic benefits. Investing in education is not merely a philanthropic endeavour but a **way to build human capital,** which is essential for economic growth and innovation.

The impact investing market has grown significantly in recent years. A 2022 report by the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) highlighted that global impact investments reached $1 trillion, with education playing a pivotal role in that growth. More investors are seeking opportunities that combine financial returns with social impact, especially in regions where educational inequalities are most pronounced. In South Africa, investment in education infrastructure, digital learning platforms and programmes that improve teacher training **can have a profound impact,** not just on individuals but on the broader economy.

At PPS, education and supporting the youth — or potential future graduate professionals — is a way in which we see our ethos of mutuality expanded. For years PPS has been dedicated to supporting education from high school onward. The programme currently supports around 60 Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners through our Cultivating Tomorrow's Professionals initiative. These students are from eight schools across Cape Town and Gauteng. Additionally, the PPS Foundation supports 50 university students studying towards degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Several other initiatives also focus on improving education outcomes in schools and universities.

> **"Increasingly, our members are expecting institutions like ours to be more explicit about the positive (and negative) impact our business models have on society."**

PPS's investment mandate for our PPS Profit-Share Account™* allows for up to 15% in alternative strategies. That led to us making our first impact investment of R150 million in an education-focused fund in the second half of 2024. The fund will reach well over 30 000 students and give PPS the opportunity to scale our impact more effectively and work with other like-minded institutions to improve long-term educational outcomes for South Africa.

Increasingly, our members are expecting institutions like ours to be more explicit about the positive (and negative) impact our business models have on society. By being more deliberate about our alignment with positive educational outcomes, we can emphasise the core positive impact our mutuality model has on graduate professionals and South African society.

While we are making a significant positive impact through our targeted private equity investments, we will also invest R300 million in early 2025 in another private equity fund that focuses more broadly on infrastructure — not just education infrastructure. This investment aims to generate substantial public benefits while also delivering an investment return.

Click here to learn more about PPS Investments.

** Members holding qualifying life-risk products share in the profit and the loss of PPS through the notional PPS Profit-Share Account™ and past performance is not necessarily indicative of future performance.*
*** Kindly note that this does not constitute financial advice the information provided is purely informational. The information, opinions and communication from the PPS Group or any of its subsidiaries, whether written, oral or implied, are expressed in good faith and not intended as financial or investment advice, nor do they constitute an offer or solicitation in any manner.*

David Crosoer

In conversation with...

Dr Sibongile Mashaphu

Dr Sibongile Mashaphu is a specialist psychiatrist and lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Initially inspired to become a teacher, she shifted her focus to medicine and now practices at Ascot Park Hospital and Netcare St Augustine's Hospital. Learn more about her journey, experiences and commitment to mental wellness and professional development in South Africa.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EARLY CHILDHOOD.

My formative years were the best part of my life. I was born in Polokwane, Limpopo and grew up in a township called Lebowakgomo. In those days, the township had only one primary school called Little Bedfordview. At the end of my primary schooling, I was convinced I would become a teacher, basing my dreams on the fact that we were taught by some very talented and inspiring teachers. I then moved to Motse Maria High School, another public institution of excellence, from where I matriculated in 1990.

WHAT INSPIRED YOUR INTEREST IN PSYCHIATRY AND HOW HAS YOUR JOURNEY FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER SHAPED YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHTS?

As a child, I dreamed of being a teacher but my focus shifted to medicine in matric. I applied to UKZN and receiving my acceptance telegram was life-changing. Medical school required discipline, hard work and resilience, especially during the intense preclinical years.

After graduation, I aimed for postgraduate studies in either psychiatry or dermatology. My decision to specialise in psychiatry solidified during my community service at Groothoek Hospital, where an inspiring team and the evident shortage of psychiatrists in South Africa captured my interest.

I worked in the UK with the Bupa Group for a year but returned home in 2001, ready for the next chapter. This led to a psychiatry registrar position in early 2002, making my postgraduate studies more manageable thanks to my passion for the field and a supportive environment. By 2005, I qualified as a specialist psychiatrist, balancing teaching, research and clinical responsibilities – an ideal mix for someone who has always loved teaching, medicine and psychology.

HOW COMMON IS MENTAL ILLNESS AND BURNOUT AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS AND WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS?

Mental illness affects everyone, regardless of background or status. Professionals commonly face stress, burnout, depression and anxiety, with doctors being particularly vulnerable due to their caregiving roles. This can lead to unhealthy habits like people-pleasing, making it difficult to process personal emotions. Many avoid therapy, relying on self-help strategies until symptoms escalate. I encourage therapy as a safe space for exploring feelings, just as regular health checkups maintain overall well-being.

WHAT PRACTICAL WAYS CAN PROFESSIONALS SET BOUNDARIES FOR A HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

Balancing work and personal life is crucial for growth. It requires personal development, kindness and strong boundaries to protect your time and space from potential exploitation. Effective time management is essential; carve out time for enjoyable activities, take breaks and learn to say no for self-preservation. Recognise your limits and focus on impactful efforts without overextending yourself.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES IN YOUR LIFE AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

While my career has been successful, I believe it could have taken a different path with proper mentorship during my studies and early research. Many young people miss out on valuable mentoring that provides essential advice, skills and encouragement to help them advance.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR LIFE AND WHAT DID THEY ALLOW YOU TO DO?

My parents were strong advocates for education, supporting my academic pursuits every step of the way. Their encouragement inspired me to obtain my fourth degree in 2019. A highlight of my career was receiving an exchange scholarship to study research methodology at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2015. That experience was transformative and equipped me with skills that enabled me to complete my research quickly, culminating in my graduation from UKZN as the first black female psychiatrist with a PhD.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU WERE EVER GIVEN AND WHO GAVE IT?

The best advice I received came from my parents, who taught me to serve with a smile and show appreciation for everything I receive. This lesson was reinforced during my time in the UK, where I noticed that even wealthy patients expressed gratitude for my work. I learned that saying "thank you" has a powerful impact, cultivating appreciation and reducing entitlement. Gratitude enhances our well-being and it is important to teach children to express it with a smile.

WHAT IS THE BEST BIT OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS?

My advice to students is that hard work is irreplaceable; you achieve what you work for, not what you wish for. In a culture of entitlement, it is vital to emphasise the importance of effort. I encourage continuous self-development to enhance self-awareness and skills, which can lead to opportunities based on merit. For those facing personal challenges, I recommend using professional support services available at most institutions.

Women's financial power in a changing world

By Linda Sherlock, PPS Executive: Wealth and Business Development

Linda Sherlock

Professional women in South Africa are navigating a complex financial world that goes far beyond career choices and professional aspirations. A recent study by PPS Wealth Advisory, in collaboration with Human8, reveals key insights into the distinct financial planning needs of professional women, showcasing how their priorities and challenges differ significantly from their male counterparts. The findings offer a crucial lens into how the financial world is evolving for women and where opportunities for growth and empowerment lie.

UNIQUE FINANCIAL REALITIES

The research highlighted that professional women **face specific financial challenges** such as gender pay gaps, career interruptions due to caregiving responsibilities and a retirement savings gap. These factors, coupled with systemic occupational segregation – where women are overrepresented in lower-paying industries – compound the financial pressures on women. Additionally, the phenomenon of "black tax" or "sandwich generation" expenses places further strain on women who are supporting both their children and ageing parents.

One of the most striking aspects of the study is that while women tend to be more conservative investors, leading to lower returns, they are also living longer – about five years more than men on average, and even longer for professional women. This longevity intensifies the need for **sound financial planning,** yet women continue to prioritise their dependents over personal financial security.

These trail-blazing professional women represent only 0.84% of the South African population, yet they have a significant impact on their professions and the people who depend on them.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS: FINANCIAL AGENCY FOR WOMEN

Interestingly, 50% of the women surveyed are primary decision-makers in household finances, typically managing between 2.7 and 3.3 financial dependents. However, only 52% hold life assurance and just 25% have sickness cover. This is a surprising disconnect, especially given that 49% of women prioritise intergenerational wealth transfer. However, conversely, only 15% to 23% prioritise estate planning and the creation of a Will.

> **"Professional women in South Africa are navigating a complex financial world that goes far beyond career choices and professional aspirations."**

The research further found that 69% of post-graduate women have some type of unsecured debt (credit card, personal loans, overdraft), with 34% focused on the short-term goal of eradicating high-interest debt.

FINANCIAL PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS

The research also identified the primary concerns that keep professional women awake at night. Economic instability, inflation, extended family responsibilities and job security were all major factors. This is not surprising given that 38% of South African households are **financially led by women** – a number expected to rise, according to additional research done by McKinsey.

When making financial decisions, women overwhelmingly prioritise their extended families and dependents, a distinct contrast to men who generally focus on the nuclear family. Despite this, there remains a gap in terms of estate planning, which suggests the need for more focused financial education on long-term wealth transfer and security strategies.

THE PATH FORWARD: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

PPS Wealth Advisory's research uncovered that despite professional women's increasing control over their financial futures, there is a pressing need for more holistic, trusted and tailored financial advice. Participants noted **a desire for education** that goes beyond basic financial planning and addresses their specific needs, such as balancing short-term goals (like debt eradication) with long-term financial security.

In response, PPS Wealth Advisory has launched the **Women in Wealth Circle,** a platform designed to empower professional women through educational modules and regional summits. These initiatives aim to address the financial issues highlighted in the research, providing a community where women can learn, share and grow their financial knowledge.

> **"Money represents much more than just financial security for women – it symbolises freedom, comfort and independence."**

This research underscores the fact that while professional women have made strides in taking control of their financial futures, there is still a long road ahead. The findings illustrate the importance of focusing on tailored financial solutions that cater specifically to the needs of women, ensuring they are equipped to make informed decisions that secure both their present and future.

Money represents much more than just financial security for women – **it symbolises freedom,** comfort and independence. However, achieving those goals can be challenging without the right tools, education and support. The PPS Wealth Advisory research highlights that by empowering women with the knowledge and agency to manage their finances effectively, we can help close the gaps that still exist and support the growing number of women leading their households and shaping the future of wealth in South Africa.

** Kindly note that this article does not constitute financial advice. The information provided is purely informational. Consult your PPS-accredited financial adviser for more information about insurance cover.*

The 'refounding' revolution:

Tiny but mighty lessons learnt from microinsurance

Mzwandile Mtshali, PPS Group Executive: Advice and Distribution

The financial services landscape in South Africa is diverse. There are century-old large banks and insurers but also new, fast-growing, digital versions of these. A myriad of services are included – from "good old" savings accounts, life insurance and home loans to more innovative products such as mobile money, digital investment platforms, blockchain and cryptocurrency, artificial intelligence-driven financial advice and microinsurance, to name but a few.

Although its name suggests something "micro", in South Africa, microinsurance is a "mega" force in terms of size and reach. This sector, serving markets traditionally left out by conventional insurers, offers powerful insights into customer engagement, product simplicity and financial inclusion. For established players, including PPS, the mutuality embedded in microinsurance models holds profound relevance and offers key lessons for improving and refining financial services for higher-income earners.

WHAT IS MICROINSURANCE?

As a general concept, microinsurance targets the population that cannot afford conventional insurance policies. Some examples of speciality cover include health, life, property and agriculture, which are usually available through affordable instances and packaged products.

One standout example of microinsurance in South Africa is the funeral policy. These policies are integral to South African culture due to the importance placed on burial rites, making them popular across all income levels.

The structure of many microinsurance products also mirrors mutuality principles. As EY points out, many microinsurance schemes operate on a community-based model, where policyholders play an active role in the management of the scheme. These models embody the same principles that PPS embraces in its ethos of mutuality: a shared responsibility for the protection and welfare of the community.

A BIG INDUSTRY

Globally, the microinsurance market is anything but small. In fact, it was valued at around $74.2 billion in 2023, according to a July 2024 report by Global Market Insights. The market is projected to grow at a rate of 6.5% annually from 2024 to 2032. In South Africa, funeral cover alone is a multi-billion-rand industry. By June 2021, the value of in-force funeral policies had reached R38 billion, with South African life insurers paying out nearly R40 billion in death and funeral benefits in 2023.

LESSONS FROM MICROINSURANCE

Building community trust: Microinsurance shows the importance of being part of the community. Funeral homes, for instance, have the lowest lapse rates because they are trusted, local institutions. Insurers that actively engage with communities can build trust, which translates into better customer retention.

Competing with non-traditional players: Microinsurance often competes with non-traditional players like retailers. Insurers must adapt and realise that mono-line offerings can succeed in niche markets by addressing customers' essential needs. Adapting to unconventional competition is vital for success.

Focusing on what matters: Providing essential products – not just the most profitable – is key to long-term loyalty. Microinsurance demonstrates that focusing on solving real problems builds trust and deeper customer engagement, even when profit margins are lower.

Affordability and accessibility: Microinsurance thrives on affordability and ease of access. Funeral policies sold through retailers, for example, reach lower-income clients without requiring bank accounts or internet access, making cover more widely available.

Simplicity as a strength: Simple, easy-to-understand products build trust, especially for clients unfamiliar with insurance. This clarity can also appeal to higher-income markets, where transparent policies are equally valued.

Innovation in distribution: Microinsurance has pioneered distribution innovations, from digital platforms to retail partnerships, bypassing traditional channels like brokers. This cuts costs and increases accessibility.

Service over sales: Microinsurance prioritises service, especially in claims processing. Quick, efficient claims handling builds trust, while delays harm customer relationships. This lesson applies equally to conventional insurers.

REFOUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

Although PPS is more than 80 years old, we remain committed to evolving alongside industry trends and embracing change where necessary. We understand that the mutuality principles that guided our founders continue to be relevant in a modern world. This has inspired us to embark on a "refounding" journey, where we actively explore innovations and learn from other sectors, including microinsurance.

Our focus on mutuality means that we are constantly looking for ways to better serve our members. For instance, we have invested in improved digital platforms and member-centric solutions. Our focus on service excellence, particularly in claims processing, reflects our commitment to fostering long-term relationships and ensuring that members feel supported at every stage of their lives.

By incorporating the lessons learned from microinsurance and other industries, PPS continues to innovate while staying true to our mutuality ethos. This ensures that we not only meet the needs of our members today but also prepare for the future with solutions that reflect the changing financial landscape.

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Mzwandile Mtshali

Lessons from the Great Fire:

Using insurance to shield us from modern catastrophes

By Herman van Heerden, Deputy CEO, PPS Short-Term Insurance

Have you ever wondered what living in London, UK, was like in the late 1600s? Picture living in a wooden house with a secure, dry stable for your horse. You are on good terms with your neighbour, the baker, whose fresh bread is fit for even the king. But that was before the fateful morning of 2 September 1666.

If you lived in the city during the Great Fire of London, whether as the neighbour of the King's baker, Thomas Farriner, or not, you would likely have been among the thousands who lost their homes and possessions. The fire lasted four days, destroying approximately 13 200 houses and 87 churches. The death toll remains uncertain; official records report only six deaths but historians estimate that the actual number may have been in the thousands due to the scale of the disaster and poor record-keeping, particularly among lower-income communities. Following the fire, many residents were left destitute and diseases spread rapidly in cramped temporary shelters during a harsh winter.

The London Fire Brigade Museum estimates the damage to have been around £10 million while the city's annual income was only around £12 000. This means it would have taken more than 833 years to cover the repair costs using the city's entire income, without considering other expenses.

In 1666, insurance did not exist, which significantly complicated recovery efforts. It reportedly took the city 50 years to rebuild, mainly through charitable donations collected by local parishes. British insurance broker Alan Blunden notes that, despite these efforts, only about 0.13% of the estimated rebuilding costs were raised.

THE ROOTS OF INSURANCE

Following the Great Fire of London, insurance began to evolve. The first fire insurance companies were established in the 1700s, with **several mutual** and joint-stock insurers emerging. One of the earliest examples was the Insurance Office for Houses, founded in 1681 at the Royal Exchange in London. While joint-stock companies offered more corporate structures, mutual insurance arose from the disaster as well, driven by **individuals pooling their resources** to support one another in times of need.

Mutual insurance, built on the collective strength of its members, became a key feature of early insurance systems, offering a safety net that did not exist before. The model spread and evolved over the centuries, extending coverage to various risks beyond fire.

INSURANCE TODAY

The Great Fire of London might have happened more than 350 years ago but runaway fires remain a major problem, causing far-reaching damage.

The runaway veld fire that destroyed more than 1 200 homes in and around Knysna in the Eastern Cape in 2017 is a prime example of a disaster causing hardship to South Africans. *Mail & Guardian* reported in June 2019 that the fires "cost the insurance industry about R2 billion".

In 2024, several well-known buildings were also damaged or gutted by fire. These include the Blaauwklippen Manor house, built on one of the oldest wine farms on Stellenbosch, the Johannesburg Country Club in Auckland Park and the Bushman's Nek Berg and Trout Resort in the Drakensberg. All these housed businesses that had to stop trading (some at least temporarily) until the infrastructure was fixed. The financial impact also extends beyond not earning an income for some time to fund repairs.

The devastation caused by natural disasters extends beyond fires. South Africa also experienced significant floods, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal in 2022, when widespread flooding caused substantial damage to infrastructure and homes. *The Witness* reported in December 2023 that economic losses from this disaster were estimated to be more than R54 billion. Insurance claims from this event reached into the billions, providing crucial financial assistance to affected individuals and businesses. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established by the United Nations to assess scientific information related to climate change, states in its Sixth Assessment Report published in 2021 that the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, **are expected to increase** significantly due to rising global temperatures. This highlights the growing importance of insurance against natural disasters as we look toward the future.

BEING THERE FOR MEMBERS

PPS Short-Term Insurance plays a vital role in providing protection against these types of risks. Whether it is a fire, flood or another unforeseen disaster, PPS Short-Term Insurance offers comprehensive protection for private individuals and business owners. The role of PPS Short-Term Insurance is not limited to covering physical damage to property – it extends to protecting against business interruption, ensuring that businesses can recover and continue operating even after significant setbacks.

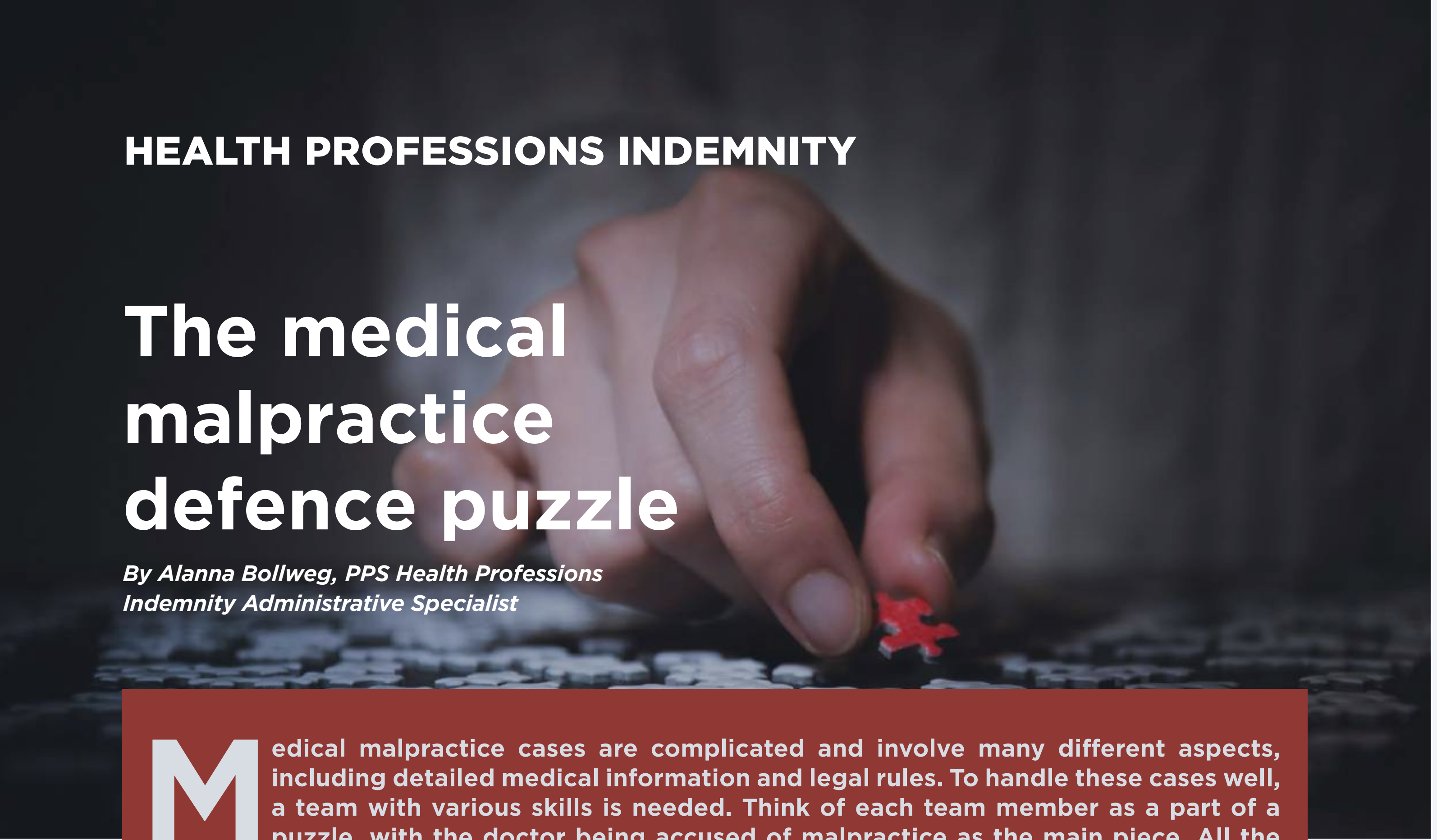
"Mutual insurance, built on the collective strength of its members, became a key feature of early insurance systems, offering a safety net that did not exist before."

Graduate professionals who own businesses or private properties face a multitude of risks. When disaster strikes, PPS Short-Term Insurance ensures that these are mitigated through tailored insurance solutions, providing not just peace of mind but also the financial backing necessary to rebuild and recover.

Click here to find out more about PPS Short-Term Insurance.

** Please note that this article should not be regarded as financial advice. According to the Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act, an FSP must conduct a risk analysis and examine a client's financial situation before providing advice. Information from the PPS Group or its subsidiaries is for informational purposes only and not an offer or solicitation.*

Herman van Heerden



The medical malpractice defence puzzle

By Alanna Bollweg, PPS Health Professions Indemnity Administrative Specialist

Medical malpractice cases are complicated and involve many different aspects, including detailed medical information and legal rules. To handle these cases well, a team with various skills is needed. Think of each team member as a part of a puzzle, with the doctor being accused of malpractice as the main piece. All the other pieces fit around this central piece to complete the puzzle.

THE MAIN PIECE: THE DOCTOR

The doctor (defendant) accused of malpractice is at the core of this situation. Their involvement and information are crucial for building a strong defence. The doctor provides direct details about patient care, helps explain medical records, prepares for the trial and plays a central role in the court process.

For example: A doctor was sued by a patient who wanted R10 million for damages. In this case, the doctor performed a surgery to remove the patient's womb as part of the treatment plan for cervical cancer. During the surgery, the patient's ureter was damaged and this was only detected three weeks after the surgery. The central issue in the case was whether the doctor was responsible for the damage to the ureter, which is a well-known risk of these types of surgeries. The doctor had exact notes, which helped in defending against the lawsuit. By giving clear and honest information, the doctor helped the legal team make a strong case. In the end, they proved that the care was up to the needed standards and the patient was treated professionally, following accepted methods.

PIECE ONE: THE DEFENCE LAWYER

The defence lawyer serves as the key link to the doctor/defendant building a case to counter the plaintiff's accusations. The lawyer's job includes conducting full investigations, bringing in qualified experts and devising a solid defence plan. Lawyers stress the importance of preparing well and understanding both the medical and legal sides of the issue.

In this case, the lawyer went through the medical records and collected all the important facts. They found gaps in the plaintiff's claims and put together the defence with help from the expert witnesses. The lawyer's smart approach played a big part in showing that the doctor followed the right standard of care.

PIECE TWO: THE ADVOCATE

Advocates breathe life into legal strategies in the courtroom. They make the case, question witnesses and argue convincingly to the judge. Their skill lies in their ability to explain complex medical and legal concepts.

In the trial, the advocate questioned the plaintiff's witnesses. This revealed gaps and contradictions in their statements. They laid out the defence's case ensuring the judge grasped the medical steps and the doctor's actions. The advocate's skills in court played a key role in changing the judge's view.

PIECE THREE: THE EXPERTS

Expert witnesses provide the necessary knowledge to complete the picture. They offer specialised opinions that help the judge understand the medical issues at hand. Experts are responsible for establishing the standard of care, determining if there was a deviation from that standard and assessing whether the deviation caused the alleged injury.

In this case, expert witnesses reviewed the medical procedures and confirmed that the doctor had followed the accepted standard of care. Their unbiased and objective testimonies were pivotal in showing that the injuries were not due to negligence but were unfortunate complications. The experts' insights helped the judge understand the complexities of the case.

PIECE FOUR: THE INDEMNITY INSURER

The indemnity insurer is the final piece of the puzzle, providing the financial backbone of the defence team. They provide the necessary funds for legal fees, settlements and judgments. Their role extends beyond just financial support; they also select and appoint the defence team, ensuring that the legal representation is experienced and capable.

In the highlighted case, PPS Health Professions Indemnity provided comprehensive cover, ensuring that all legal fees and expert witness costs were covered. This financial support allowed the defence team to focus on building a strong case without the added stress of financial concerns. The insurer's involvement was crucial in ensuring that the doctor had access to the best possible defence.

BENEFITS OF PPS HEALTH PROFESSIONS INDEMNITY

PPS Health Professions Indemnity provides comprehensive cover tailored to the needs of healthcare professionals. Our policies include cover for advice on adverse professional incidents, Health Professions Council of South Africa matters, civil claims and more. PPS also offers supplementary payments for compensation for loss of time during trials.

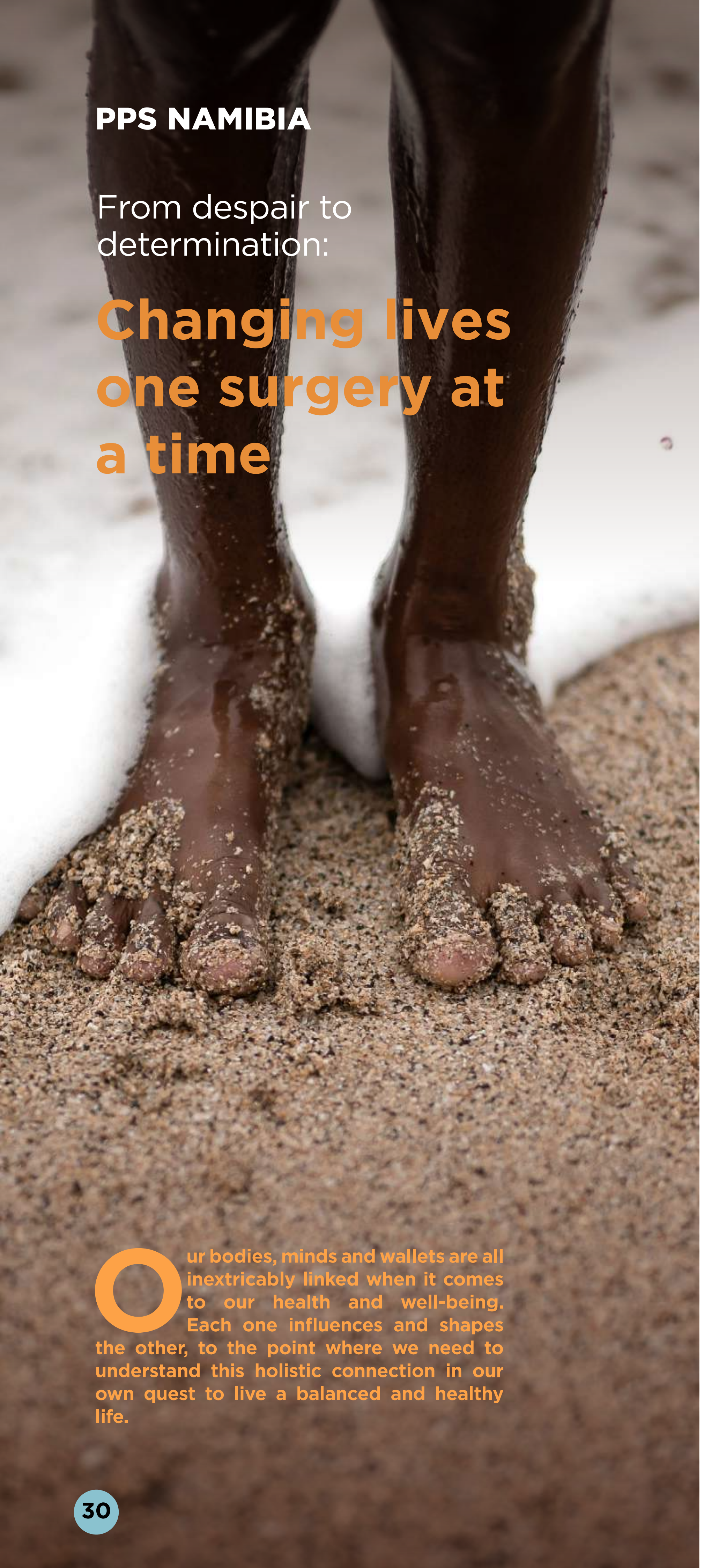
Additionally, PPS members are entitled to complimentary telephonic psychological support services via our partner Reality Wellness, accessible 24/7/365 at 080 112 2550, irrespective of whether they have a valid claim.

This extensive cover ensures that healthcare professionals are well-protected against the financial and legal repercussions of malpractice claims and supported through any psychological impact this may have.

Click here for more information.

Alanna Bollweg

Visit PPS Health Professions Indemnity for more information.



PPS NAMIBIA

From despair to determination:

Changing lives one surgery at a time

Our bodies, minds and wallets are all inextricably linked when it comes to our health and well-being. Each one influences and shapes the other, to the point where we need to understand this holistic connection in our own quest to live a balanced and healthy life.

Imagine a young child named Anna who dreams of running freely with her friends. Instead, she struggles with painful foot and ankle deformities that limit her mobility and keep her isolated. Every step is a challenge and simple joys, like playing in the park, seem out of reach.

However, after undergoing successful surgery, Anna experiences a miraculous transformation. With newfound strength and mobility, she not only rejoices in her ability to walk and run but also gains the confidence to participate in school activities and build friendships. This is the life-changing impact that Steps2Walk aims to achieve for children like Anna.

Founded in 2000 by renowned orthopaedic surgeon Mark Myerson, Steps2Walk is a global nonprofit dedicated to transforming lives through free surgical interventions and empowering local doctors with specialised education. By focusing on foot and ankle deformities, which severely limit mobility and quality of life, Steps2Walk provides critical surgeries to patients with limited access to such care. The organisation's commitment extends beyond immediate medical aid; it actively equips local healthcare providers with advanced knowledge, supporting sustainable improvements in healthcare systems.

According to institutions such as the World Health Organisation and the Clubfoot Research Foundation, foot and ankle deformities in children are a significant global health issue, with varying prevalence rates depending on the region. Globally, it is estimated that congenital foot deformities, such as clubfoot, **affect about one in every 1 000 live births.** In Africa, the prevalence can be higher, with studies indicating rates ranging from one to five per 1 000 births, often due to limited access to healthcare and resources for diagnosis and treatment. Steps2Walk points out that many patients could not have the deformities treated during childhood and had to live with them for decades.

In Namibia, Steps2Walk has made significant strides to assist patients suffering from such deformities, transforming the lives of more than 75 patients since its first involvement in the country. For individuals suffering from debilitating foot and ankle conditions, these surgeries are nothing short of miraculous, **restoring mobility, independence and a better quality of life.** In 2024 alone, Steps2Walk selected 23 Namibian patients for surgery, a testament to the initiative's growing reach and impact in the country. The benefits extend beyond the patients to their families and communities, opening new possibilities for a brighter future in a country where specialised surgical care is often scarce.

A cornerstone of Steps2Walk's success is **its collaborative approach.** Surgeries in Namibia are conducted by a team of six surgeons, including three local orthopaedic specialists. This partnership between local and international experts is crucial for achieving surgical success and ensuring lasting impact. The knowledge exchange during these collaborations empowers local surgeons, enabling them to refine their skills and adopt advanced techniques, creating a legacy of improved healthcare.

Central to Steps2Walk's mission is the support from organisations committed to community welfare and PPS Namibia **is proud** to be a key sponsor. As the only financial services provider supporting Steps2Walk in Namibia, PPS Namibia underscores its dedication to community health. By providing 46 lunch packs for surgery beneficiaries and their relatives during assessments and supplying activity books to keep patients entertained, PPS Namibia **helps families focus** on their loved ones during critical moments.

The success of Steps2Walk in Namibia highlights the importance of collaboration in community health initiatives. When organisations, healthcare professionals and sponsors unite with a shared purpose, they can create positive impacts that no single entity could achieve alone. The partnership between PPS Namibia, Steps2Walk and the medical community exemplifies the power of collective action. Through mutuality and shared responsibility, these programmes flourish and continue to change lives.

PPS Namibia remains committed to building partnerships that **uplift communities,** embodying the ethos of mutuality, where success is measured not only by financial outcomes but by the profound impact on society as a whole.

The efforts of Steps2Walk, supported by organisations like PPS Namibia, illustrate that together, we can create meaningful and sustainable change.

Public-private unity for better healthcare

By Craig Comrie, Profmed CEO

South Africa's healthcare system has long faced significant challenges – ranging from budgetary constraints and economic pressures to the ongoing debates surrounding the National Health Insurance (NHI). Despite these issues, the outlook for healthcare delivery need not be bleak. A key factor that could determine success is the collaboration between the public and private sectors, which holds the potential to ensure that quality healthcare services remain accessible to all South Africans.

The move toward NHI demands that both public and private healthcare services achieve world-class standards. This, however, is no simple feat given the current state of the healthcare system in the country. Nonetheless, it is achievable through **collective efforts** from both sectors.

While financial limitations are a reality, maintaining high-quality healthcare remains possible if the public and private sectors collaborate effectively. As public resources continue to be stretched thin, the private sector's role is set to become increasingly important, making cooperation even more critical to sustaining healthcare delivery.

One approach to addressing the disparities between public and private healthcare lies in establishing public sector "centres of excellence". These centres would not only provide high-quality care to uninsured South Africans but could also serve as a draw for medical scheme members, creating mutual benefits across the sectors. Opening these centres to all could result in broader access to better healthcare.

Successful models like Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town and the Donald Gordon Medical Centre in Johannesburg serve as examples of what can be achieved through collaboration. For instance, at the Donald Gordon Medical Centre, private revenues help support public medical training at Wits University, while liver transplants are made available to all patients, regardless of their insurance status. These centres illustrate the potential of public-private partnerships in **delivering healthcare excellence.**

The success of such initiatives depends heavily on collaboration. While private-sector funding is essential, leveraging expertise in areas like quality control, management and leadership can significantly enhance the effectiveness of public healthcare services. However, there are **hurdles to overcome.** Political interference and the lack of autonomy for public hospital CEOs are among the obstacles that must be addressed. Empowering hospital management to make independent decisions while maintaining public oversight is key to improving healthcare outcomes.

Retaining skilled healthcare professionals in South Africa is crucial in addition to financial collaboration. Investing in training facilities and centres of excellence can help reduce the brain drain, which has long impacted the healthcare system.

As the country navigates the complexities of healthcare financing, it becomes increasingly evident that a collaborative approach is essential for the success of universal health cover. Prioritising the development of centres of excellence and forming **meaningful partnerships** between the public and private sectors will be vital to ensuring equitable access to high-quality healthcare for all South Africans.

Click here for more information

** This article is for information purposes only and is not legal advice.*

"Maintaining high-quality healthcare remains possible if the public and private sectors collaborate effectively."

Craig Comrie

Mutuality in action:

Developing sustainable leaders for tomorrow

Elvira Wood, PPS Positioning Manager

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement, global economic shifts and increasing societal demands for ethical conduct, the need for sustainable leadership has never been greater. The world requires professionals who are not only experts in their fields but also visionaries who can lead with integrity, responsibility and long-term purpose.

"Sustainable leadership is about more than just achieving short-term success."

SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP: BEYOND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

Sustainable leadership is about more than just achieving short-term success. It involves creating long-lasting value by making decisions that consider future generations' well-being. Leaders who embrace this approach are characterised by their commitment to ethical behaviour, long-term vision and responsibility toward their stakeholders and the environment. They lead with integrity, aiming to positively influence not just their organisations but society as a whole.

MUTUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP: A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP

Mutuality is a key principle of sustainable leadership, encouraging shared success and collective well-being. Leaders who embrace this approach understand the ripple effects of their decisions, creating cycles of mutual benefit for stakeholders. In organisations that prioritise member development, mutuality helps create a culture of collaboration, ethical decision-making and long-term outcomes, all essential for sustainable leadership.

THE PATH TO SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

Sustainable leadership begins early and evolves through every phase of an individual's career. It starts with building an understanding of ethical principles and mutual benefit from a young age. By instilling these values in school-aged learners, we lay the groundwork for future leaders who are not only knowledgeable but also conscientious and forward-thinking.

School level: High school is a crucial time for learners to explore career paths and understand sustainable leadership. This stage offers a chance to introduce decision-making with long-term impacts and community benefits. Effective career guidance during this period helps learners align their strengths and interests with ethical leadership and informed career choices.

Tertiary education: As learners transition to tertiary education, institutions play a key role in shaping their leadership skills. By offering programmes focused on ethical practices, social responsibility and long-term thinking, students are prepared to apply sustainable leadership principles in real-world scenarios.

Young graduate professionals: When entering the workforce, young professionals benefit from support and mentorship to apply their education practically. Encouraging long-term thinking, ethical behaviour and consideration of broader impacts helps them build responsible and successful careers.

Experienced graduate professionals: Experienced graduate professionals who have accumulated valuable knowledge and expertise have a crucial role in shaping the next generation of leaders. By embracing sustainable leadership practices, they can model ethical behaviour and serve as mentors to younger colleagues. Their experience offers a wealth of knowledge that can guide emerging leaders in making decisions that align with long-term goals and societal benefits.

Inspiring future generations in retirement: Retired professionals can continue contributing by mentoring young leaders and sharing their experiences. Their insights help ensure that sustainable leadership principles are passed on to future generations in an evolving world.

PPS: INVESTING IN TODAY'S AND FUTURE LEADERS

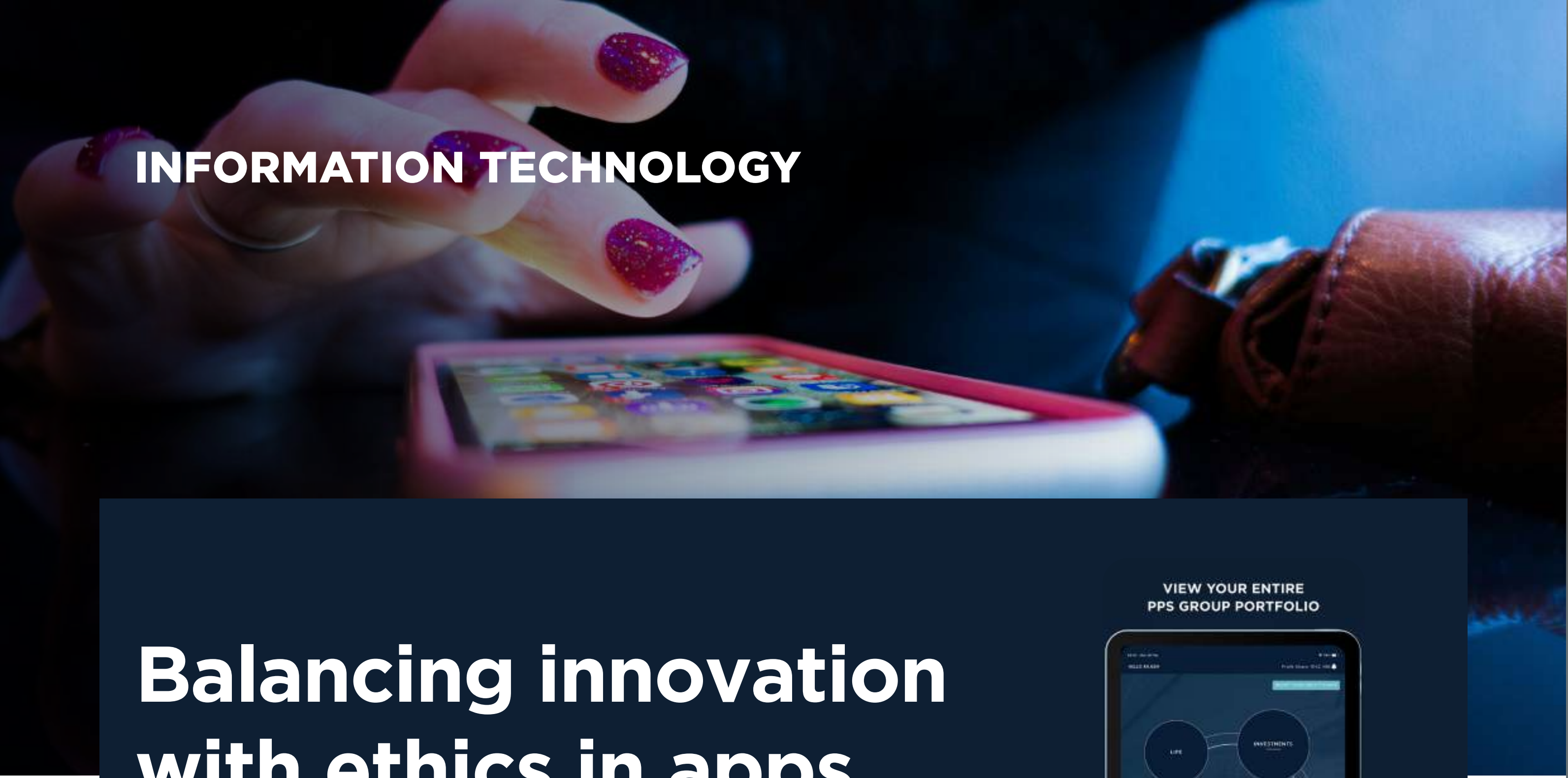
PPS is committed to building sustainable leadership early in individuals' careers, starting with its Cultivating Tomorrow's Professionals programme for Gr 11 and 12 learners. This initiative equips matric learners with resources and guidance to make informed decisions about further studies and build lifelong skills.

For university students, the PPS Foundation Bursary Programme supports those pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, while the LEAP Work-Readiness programme prepares them with essential life skills and workplace confidence. These programmes combine academic knowledge with practical experience to help students secure employment and thrive professionally.

PPS continues to support its members in their professional journeys through ongoing development, promoting leadership with integrity and a long-term vision. By creating a culture of mutual benefit, PPS empowers its members to understand that their success is linked to the well-being of their colleagues, clients and communities, driving lasting positive change.

Click here to view the 2023 PPS Foundation Annual Report.

Elvira Wood



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Balancing innovation with ethics in apps

By Francis Aldrich, PPS Head of Digital

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, technology has become a cornerstone for professional services firms, driving significant changes in how they operate. From enhancing client management to facilitating seamless remote collaboration, applications (apps) are now indispensable tools in the toolkits of modern professionals. Yet, as we embrace these advancements, navigating the digital transformation with a discerning eye is imperative. For professionals whose success hinges on maintaining client trust, the careful selection and regulation of technology are not just advisable but essential. Balancing innovation with ethical standards and reputation management is key to leveraging technology effectively in the professional services sector.

DATA PRIVACY: THE FOUNDATION OF TRUST

In South Africa, data protection is governed by the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), which sets out stringent requirements for the handling and processing of personal data. The Act requires that personal data, such as patient records in healthcare and clients' financial information in finance, must be kept confidential. Any app dealing with such sensitive information must adhere to high-security standards, including end-to-end encrypted messaging, two-factor authentication and secure cloud storage solutions.

Ethically, professionals must ensure that they **do not collect irrelevant or excessive information.** This is in line with POPIA's principle of data minimisation, which mandates that only data necessary for the intended purpose should be collected. Additionally, transparency is crucial. Professionals should clearly inform clients about the data collected from them, the purpose of the collection and how their data will be secured. This transparency is essential for clients to **make informed decisions** about whether to provide their data, thereby maintaining trust.

SECURITY BY DESIGN: PROTECTING AGAINST CYBER THREATS

Another significant ethical concern is security in an environment increasingly threatened by cybercrime. Professionals working with individual client information through apps must adopt a "security by design" approach, **integrating security systems** into the app's design stage rather than adding them later. Staying updated on app security patches, educating employees about cyber-attacks and conducting regular cybersecurity assessments are also essential measures to protect clients' data.

TRANSPARENCY IN ALGORITHMIC DECISIONS

Ethical issues surrounding transparency and fairness arise with the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in professional apps. Professionals must ensure that algorithms in their apps are traceable and comprehensible and that biases are identified and eliminated through periodic checks and modifications.

CONSENT AND AUTONOMY: EMPOWERING CLIENTS

Client self-determination is a fundamental ethical concern when using apps in professional services. Ethical app development involves clear and understandable terms and conditions, allowing clients to make informed decisions about their data and services. Clients should have control over their data, including viewing, modifying, correcting or deleting it.

BUILDING ETHICAL TECH SOLUTIONS: PPS AS AN EXAMPLE

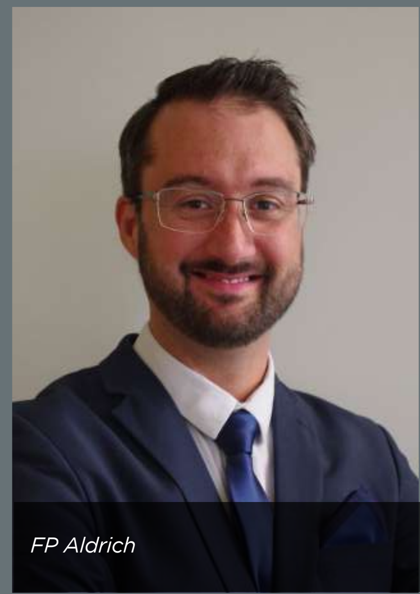
When developing its member-focused app, PPS took these ethical considerations into account to ensure that its platform adheres to the highest standards of integrity, security and transparency. PPS recognised that, as a provider of financial services to graduate professionals, its members' trust is fundamental to its operation.

PPS prioritised strong data encryption and secure storage to ensure that all sensitive member information remains confidential. Members are fully informed about what data is collected and how it will be used, with options to control their data preferences. The app's user interface is designed to be intuitive and easy to understand, with transparent terms of service and clear explanations about how the app operates. First-time users who have not provided POPIA consent through PRO-FiT are requested to provide consent before use. Also, users may access all disclaimers, terms, conditions and the privacy policy in the legal section of the main menu of the app.

From the outset, PPS built robust security features into the app's architecture. These include a single sign-on solution leveraging the member's ID number as the primary identifier, two-factor authentication, regular security updates and stringent data access controls (including controls regarding changes to contact details that affect two-factor authentication) to protect against cyber threats.

The PPS mobile app allows members to view and maintain their portfolios across the PPS Group (PPS Insurance, PPS Investments, PPS Short-Term Insurance, PPS Fiduciary Services and Profmed). Over time, the app will deliver a personalised experience to members, bringing the most convenient and frequently used features to their fingertips.

Members can access the PPS mobile app on Google Play or the Apple App Store. Once downloaded, the user must register using PPS's new enhanced login solution with two-factor authentication to access it. The app can be downloaded by all PPS members, including OPN investment clients.



FP Aldrich

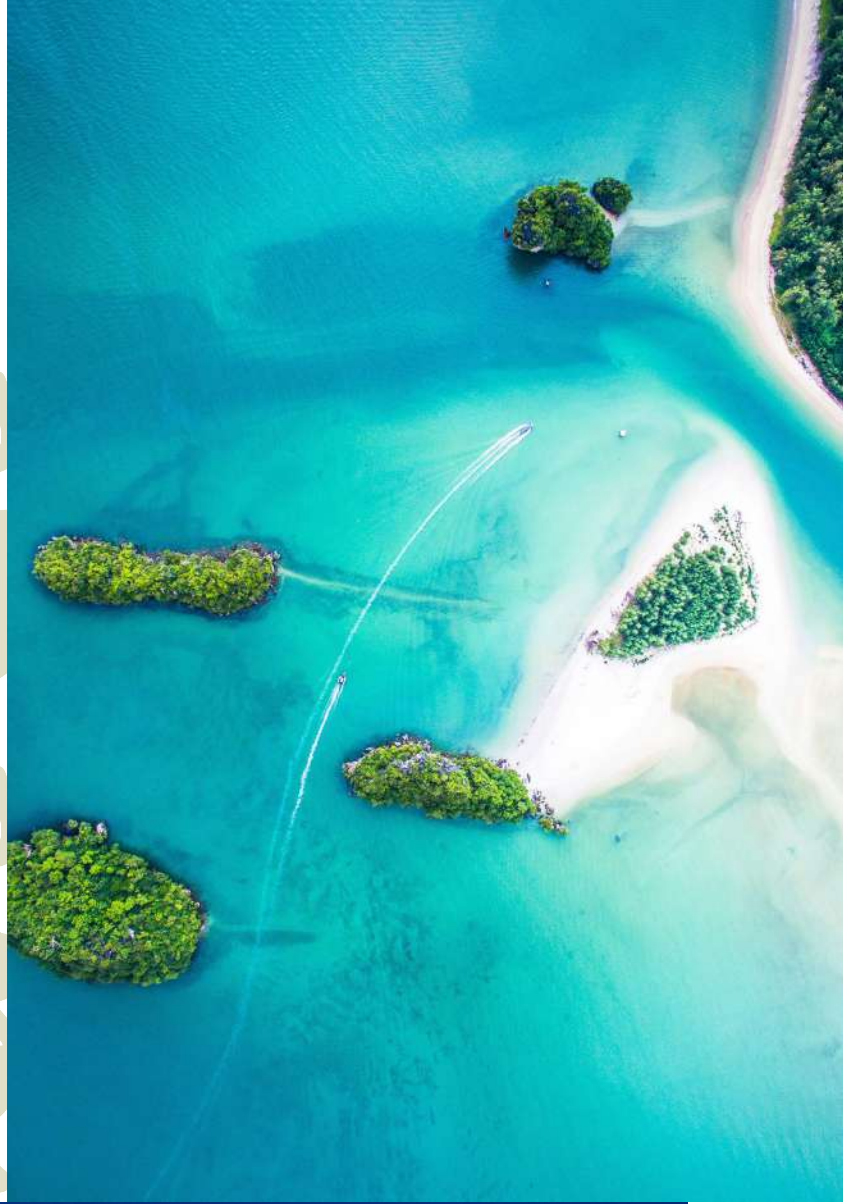
LIFESTYLE

From islands to networks:

Building bridges through collaboration

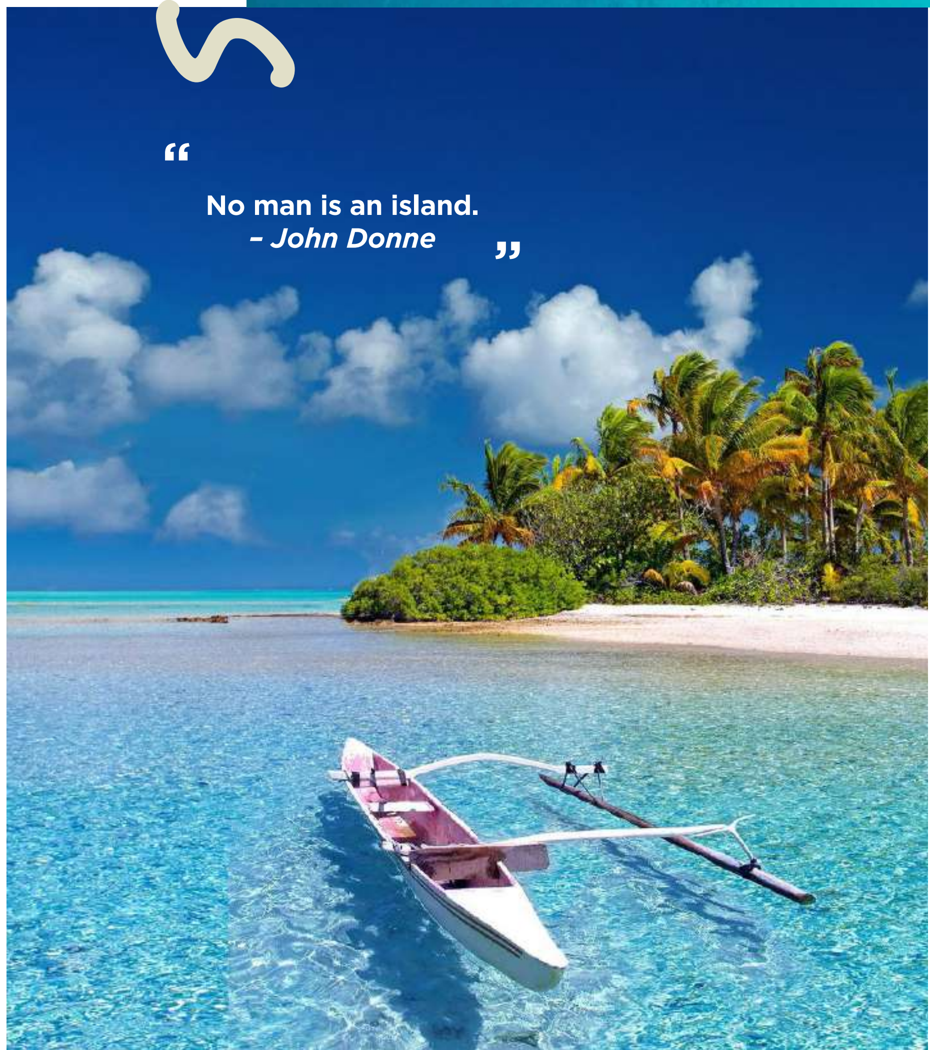
By Jaynashree Ellary, PPS Positioning Specialist

No individual is an island and this is true both in the workplace and our personal lives. As humans, we tend to function more effectively when we interact and connect with other individuals. We are naturally social creatures and research shows that your body releases endorphins during positive social contact, like the physical response after a workout. In both personal and professional settings, collaboration creates a sense of unity and mutual support.



Some critical elements of collaboration include:
- **Communication.** Open and effective exchange of ideas and information between everyone involved.
- **Trust.** Building mutual respect and reliability among team members.
- **Shared or common goals.** This allows everyone involved to have the same objective and to which they will work. It must be stated clearly upfront to keep everyone "on the same page" and on track when working closely together.
- **Mutual respect, agree to disagree.** You may not always agree with your colleagues but mutual respect allows you to express opinions without fear, judgement or bias.
- **Accountability.** Each contributor must clearly understand their short- and long-term duties and deliverables. This helps prevent duplication of efforts and the missing of major tasks.

Collaboration in the workplace can improve morale among colleagues, boosting overall job satisfaction. It brings together different expertise and perspectives, leading to innovative solutions. Working with others allows individuals to learn new skills and gain knowledge from their peers. It also allows tasks to be completed more quickly and effectively.



Some ways to increase collaboration in the workplace:
- Share the company's mission repeatedly. It helps to give employees a reason other than the proverbial "pay cheque", to show up each day and become passionate about their work. The more eager they are, the more likely they are to work with their teammates to achieve the company's mission.
- Communicate your expectations for collaboration.
- Highlight individuals' strengths. It goes without saying that it is crucial to recognise each employee's value to their team and the company. Not everyone may be a leader or a confident public speaker but each member can bring their own set of unique skills to the table.
- Promote a community working environment. If you create a psychologically safe working environment where team members feel safe from judgement, they are likelier to speak openly and contribute their ideas freely. The safer the communication environment, the more collaborative that space will become.
- Encourage creativity.
- Share knowledge, insight and resources.
- Lead by example.
- Get out of the office. An impromptu morning coffee or an afternoon beverage can help solidify relationships and encourage your team to connect better.
- Invest in collaboration tools.
- Celebrate and reward successful teamwork.

Some companies that encourage collaboration and have established well-known brands stand out as industry leaders by promoting teamwork and using the right tools. These include:
- Google: As per *Harvard Business Review,* Google is known for creating an open, collaborative environment that encourages cross-functional teamwork. With tools like Google Workspace, the company has revolutionised real-time collaboration, enabling teams worldwide to work together seamlessly, regardless of location.
- Microsoft: The company promotes collaboration both internally and externally through its ecosystem of tools like Microsoft Teams and Office 365, writes *Forbes.* These platforms have become staples for businesses globally, facilitating communication, project management and joint problem-solving in real time.
- Apple: Walter Isaacson writes in the autobiography, *Steve Jobs*, that Apple's collaborative culture is rooted in its design and development process. Teams across hardware, software and services collaborate closely to create integrated and innovative products. This holistic approach ensures a seamless user experience across the Apple ecosystem, which is a key factor in its brand success.
- Amazon: The company's collaborative nature is embedded in its leadership principles, particularly "customer obsession" and "invent and simplify", writes *Harvard Business Review.* Teams work together across departments to continuously innovate and streamline processes to enhance customer satisfaction, making Amazon a leader in e-commerce and cloud computing.

Collaboration in personal life strengthens relationships, creates more fulfilling experiences and provides emotional support among family and friends. It allows for growth through learning from others' experiences and giving back to the community.

By encouraging open communication, trust and mutual respect, we build interconnected communities where everyone contributes to a greater whole. Embracing collaboration ensures no one stands alone but is part of something stronger and united.


Jaynashree Ellary

RECIPES

Spice up the holidays:

Exotic dishes for your festive table

By Kerusha Govender, PPS Marketing Specialist

If you are looking to add a unique twist to your festive table this season, why not explore new flavours with these two globally inspired recipes? The rich, aromatic lamb biryani brings a fusion of Indian and Persian traditions to life, perfect for those who crave bold, savoury dishes. On the sweeter side, the pistachio and cardamom Tres Leches cake offers a delightful spin on a Latin American classic, blending warm spices with creamy indulgence. These alternative dishes are sure to impress and bring something special to your holiday celebrations.

LAMB BIRYANI

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5-2kg lamb curry pieces, cubed

Marinade:

- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 piece ginger, finely chopped
- 6-8 green chillies, finely chopped (adjust to your spice preference)
- Handful of fresh coriander, finely chopped
- Handful of fresh mint, finely chopped
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp ground coriander (dhania)
- 1 tsp ground cumin (jeera)
- 4 tbsp mixed masala
- ½ cup sour milk or plain yoghurt
- 4-6 tomatoes, finely chopped (can be blended with garlic, ginger, mint, coriander and chillies)

Curry:

- 4 large onions, chopped
- 4 tbsp oil (for frying)
- 4 large potatoes, steamed and deep-fried
- 1 cup water

Rice:

- 1½-2 cups basmati rice
- Biryani spice mix (whole spices like cinnamon sticks, cardamom pods, cloves and bay leaves)
- Salt, to taste
- Yellow or orange food colouring (optional)
- 1 can lentils, drained and rinsed (or cooked lentils)
- Half of the caramelised onions (from the curry preparation)

METHOD

Marinate the lamb:

In a large bowl, combine the cubed lamb, garlic, ginger, chillies, coriander, mint, turmeric, garam masala, ground coriander, cumin, mixed masala, sour milk/yoghurt and tomatoes. Mix well, ensuring the lamb is evenly coated in the marinade. Cover the bowl and refrigerate overnight for best results.

Curry:

In a large pot, heat the oil and fry the chopped onions until they are golden and caramelised. Set aside half of the fried onions for the rice and leave the remaining onions in the pot. Add the marinated lamb to the pot along with one cup of water. Stir well. Cover and cook on medium heat for about 45 minutes, then add the fried potatoes. Continue cooking for another 15-20 minutes until the lamb is tender and the gravy thickens.

Rice:

Boil the basmati rice with the biryani spice mix and salt until just cooked. Drain the water and set the rice aside. Add four to five drops of yellow or orange food colouring to different areas of the rice. Do not stir immediately. Let the rice sit for 20 minutes, then gently mix to create a two-tone effect. Mix half of the caramelised onions and the drained lentils into the rice.

Biryani:

Layer the cooked rice over the lamb curry in the pot. Gently mix the rice and curry together, being careful not to break the rice grains. Garnish with the remaining caramelised onions and chopped fresh coriander. Let the biryani rest for a few minutes before serving to allow the flavours to meld together. Enjoy this delicious lamb biryani with your favourite side dishes, such as raita or a fresh salad.

PISTACHIO AND CARDAMOM TRES LECHES ('THREE MILK BREAD') CAKE

INGREDIENTS

Cake:

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 5ml pistachio essence
- 5ml light green food colouring (optional)
- 125ml oil
- 125ml water
- 315ml cake flour
- 15ml baking powder

Milk soak:

- 8 green cardamom pods (seeds finely crushed)
- 1 tin condensed milk
- 1 tin evaporated milk
- 250ml fresh cream

Fresh cream topping:

- 250ml fresh cream
- 3-4 tbsp mascarpone cheese
- 2 tbsp icing sugar

Garnish:

- Crushed pistachios
- Edible glitter (optional)

METHOD

Cake:

Preheat the oven to 180°C. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs and caster sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the pistachio essence, food colouring (if using), oil and water. Mix well to combine. In a separate bowl, sift the cake flour and baking powder. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, mixing until you have a smooth batter. Pour the batter into a greased and lined cake tin. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Let the cake cool completely.

Milk soak:

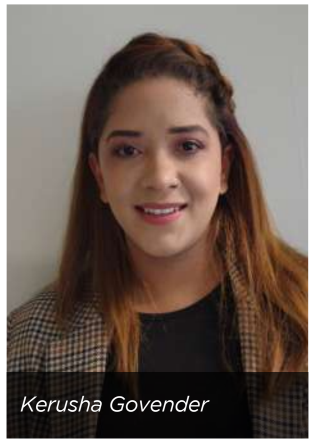
In a bowl, blend the crushed cardamom seeds, condensed milk, evaporated milk and fresh cream together. Once the cake has cooled, poke holes all over the surface using a fork or skewer. Slowly pour ⅔ of the milk mixture over the cake, allowing it to soak in. Refrigerate the cake for at least three hours to let the flavours blend.

Fresh cream topping:

In a chilled mixing bowl, whip the fresh cream with the icing sugar until it begins to stiffen. Add the mascarpone and continue whipping for another five minutes, until the mixture forms stiff peaks.

Assemble and garnish:

Just before serving, pipe or spread the whipped cream mixture over the chilled cake. For an extra touch of pizazz, garnish with crushed pistachios and a light dusting of edible glitter. Pour the remaining milk soak over each slice of cake when serving for an extra moist, indulgent experience. Enjoy this delicate fusion of flavours, where the sweetness of Tres Leches meets the aromatic notes of cardamom and pistachio!



Kerusha Govender

Visiting the land of the Hobbits and All Blacks

By Elvira Wood, PPS Positioning Manager

New Zealand, often called the "Land of the Hobbits" – or for South African rugby fans – the home of the All Blacks, is a captivating destination for J.R.R. Tolkien enthusiasts and rugby lovers alike. This country offers numerous unique attractions, especially for those wishing to delve into the world of Middle-earth. From the iconic film sets to the stunning landscapes, New Zealand promises an unforgettable adventure. Additionally, it is the home of the legendary All Blacks rugby team, a famous opponent of South African rugby, making it a must-visit for rugby fans.

FOR HOBBIT FANS

Hobbiton movie set: Located in Matamata, the Hobbiton movie set is a must-visit for any *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Hobbit* fan. This picturesque location features the famous hobbit holes, the Green Dragon Inn and the Party Tree.

Tongariro National Park: This UNESCO World Heritage site served as the backdrop for Mordor in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The park offers massive volcanic landscapes, including Mount Ngauruhoe, which was used as Mount Doom.

Wellington: The capital city of New Zealand is home to Weta Workshop, the special effects and prop company behind *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* films. Visitors can take guided tours to see the craftsmanship and creativity that brought Middle-earth to life. Wellington also boasts the Embassy Theatre, where the films' world premieres were held.

Fiordland National Park: This region, known for its dramatic fjords and pristine wilderness, was used to depict various locations in Middle-earth. Milford Sound and Doubtful Sound are particularly popular, offering boat cruises and scenic flights to explore the impressive landscapes.

FOR RUGBY ENTHUSIASTS

New Zealand is synonymous with rugby and the All Blacks are one of the most famous rugby teams in the world. South African visitors will find a visit to the famous Eden Park – regarded as the home of the All Blacks – fascinating, especially if there is a game to watch. The New Zealand Rugby Museum in Palmerston North – just less than two hours' drive north of Wellington – offers a comprehensive history of the sport in the country. It showcases memorabilia, interactive exhibits and the evolution of the sport.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Flight duration: The flight from South Africa to New Zealand typically takes around 15 to 18 hours, depending on the route and stopovers.

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZ$)

Exchange rate: R1 = NZ$0.09 (at the time of publishing)

Language: English and Maori

Travel: New Zealand has an extensive public transport system, including buses, trains and ferries. Various ride-sharing services are also available.

Weather: Summers (December to February) are warm, with temperatures ranging from 20°C to 30°C. Winters (June to August) are mild, with temperatures between 10°C and 15°C.

UNIQUE WILDLIFE

New Zealand is home to a variety of unique wildlife that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. The iconic kiwi bird, a flightless bird with a long beak, is a national symbol. Other unique species include the tuatara, a reptile that dates back to the time of the dinosaurs, and the kakapo, a nocturnal parrot.

ACTIVITIES

Running: New Zealand offers numerous scenic running trails that cater to all levels of runners. The Auckland Domain, Wellington Waterfront and Hagley Park in Christchurch are popular spots for a leisurely jog or a more intense run.

Hiking: New Zealand is a hiker's paradise with its diverse landscapes and well-maintained trails. The Tongariro Alpine Crossing, often considered one of the best day hikes in the world, takes you through volcanic terrain with stunning views. The Milford Track, Routeburn Track and Abel Tasman Coast Track are great walks that offer multi-day hiking experiences through some of the country's most breathtaking scenery.

Sailing: With its extensive coastline and numerous islands, New Zealand is a fantastic destination for sailing enthusiasts. The Bay of Islands, Hauraki Gulf and Marlborough Sounds are popular sailing areas where you can charter a yacht or join a sailing tour.

Water sports: The country's clear waters and diverse marine life make it an ideal location for various water sports. You can go kayaking in the Abel Tasman National Park, white-water rafting on the Kaituna River or jet boating in Queenstown. Moreover, the country's numerous lakes and rivers offer excellent opportunities for fishing, paddleboarding and windsurfing.

MAORI CULTURE

The Maori culture is an integral part of New Zealand's identity. Visitors can experience the rich traditions and customs of the Maori people through various cultural experiences. The Tamaki Maori Village in Rotorua offers an immersive experience where visitors can learn about Maori history, watch traditional performances and enjoy a hangi feast. The Waitangi Treaty Grounds in the Bay of Islands is another significant site, where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840. It provides insights into the history and significance of the treaty and its impact on New Zealand.

BOOK REVIEW

The power of proactive thinking and mutual benefit

Book: ***The 7 habits of highly effective people***
Author: **Steven R. Covey** Review by: **Elvira Wood**

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey is a classic that continues to resonate with readers around the world. This book offers a comprehensive guide to personal and professional effectiveness, grounded in principles that are as relevant today as they were when the book was first published in 1989 – decades before our working worlds pivoted to where technology and digitisation changed almost everything we do.

One of the most valuable lessons in today's often-rushed working environment is Covey's advice to focus **on what is important but not urgent.** This habit, known as "put first things first", encourages individuals to prioritise tasks that **contribute to long-term goals and values,** rather than getting caught up in the urgency of day-to-day activities. In the modern rushed working environment, this principle is often overlooked, leading to burnout and a lack of fulfilment. It is not easy to change one's "habit" of consciously allocating time to important but non-urgent activities but once one intentionally does this, it is remarkable how much one can achieve in a given time.

Another standout habit Covey highlights is **being proactive.** This habit emphasises the importance of taking responsibility for our actions and decisions, rather than reacting to external circumstances. The author encourages readers to focus on their circle of influence, which includes the things they can control, rather than their circle of concern, which are those things beyond their control.

The habit of **thinking win-win** resonates closely with PPS's ethos of mutuality, where we believe that success is better, shared. In his book, Covey advocates for a mindset that seeks mutual benefit in all interactions. This habit is about fostering an abundance mentality, where success is not a zero-sum game. By striving for win-win solutions, individuals can build stronger relationships and create more sustainable outcomes. This approach is particularly valuable in today's collaborative and interconnected world, where cooperation and synergy are key to success.

Seek first to understand, then to be understood is another habit that plays a crucial role in collaboration. Covey stresses the importance of empathetic listening and understanding others' viewpoints before expressing one's own. This habit develops effective communication and helps build strong, collaborative relationships. By truly understanding others, individuals can address concerns, resolve conflicts and work together more effectively.

Despite its widespread recognition, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is a book that can always be revisited. Each reading offers new insights and deeper understanding, making it a valuable resource for continuous personal growth.

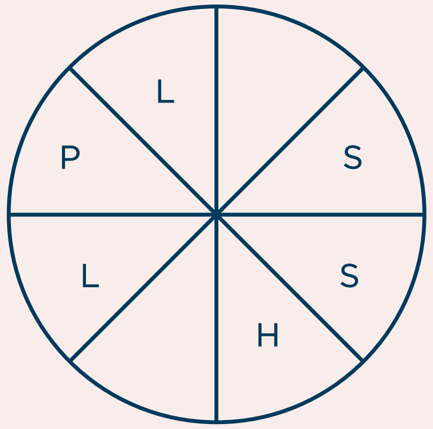
Days to note

NOVEMBER		DECEMBER		JANUARY	
2	Children's Day	2	Cyber Monday	1	New Year
4-9	Domestic Worker's Week	16	Day of Reconciliation	2	Tweede Nuwe Jaar
19	International Men's Day	25	Christmas	20-24	World Economic Forum
25	Start of 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children	26	Day of Goodwill		
		31	New Year's Eve		

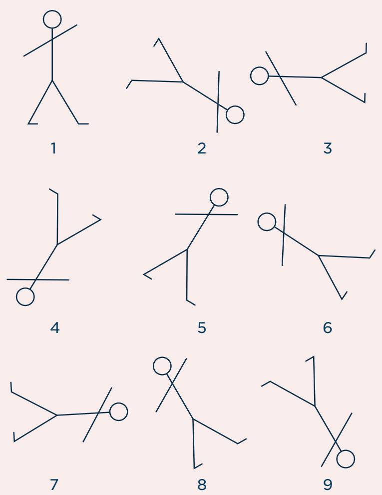
PRO-Quiz

Are you a "pro" when it comes to quizzes? Challenge your brain with these five quizzes.

1. Insert the missing letters:



2. Select the correct figure from the nine numbered ones.



3. Insert the missing number:

9	**(45)**	**81**
8	**(36)**	**64**
10	**(??)**	**??**

4. Insert the word that completes the first word and begins the second:

E N C (...) L E S

5. Find the odd man out:

SHROPAMEE

TOGA

RHOSE

VABERE

Answers:

1. E and E. (The word reads HELPLESS in a clockwise direction.)
2. 55 and 100. (The number required behind the rackets is the square of that in front of it. The number inside the brackets is half the sum of the numbers outside the brackets.)
3. 7. (All the other figures can be rotated into each other.)
4. RUST
5. SEMAPHORE (All the others are animals: goat, horse, beaver.)

Get in touch!

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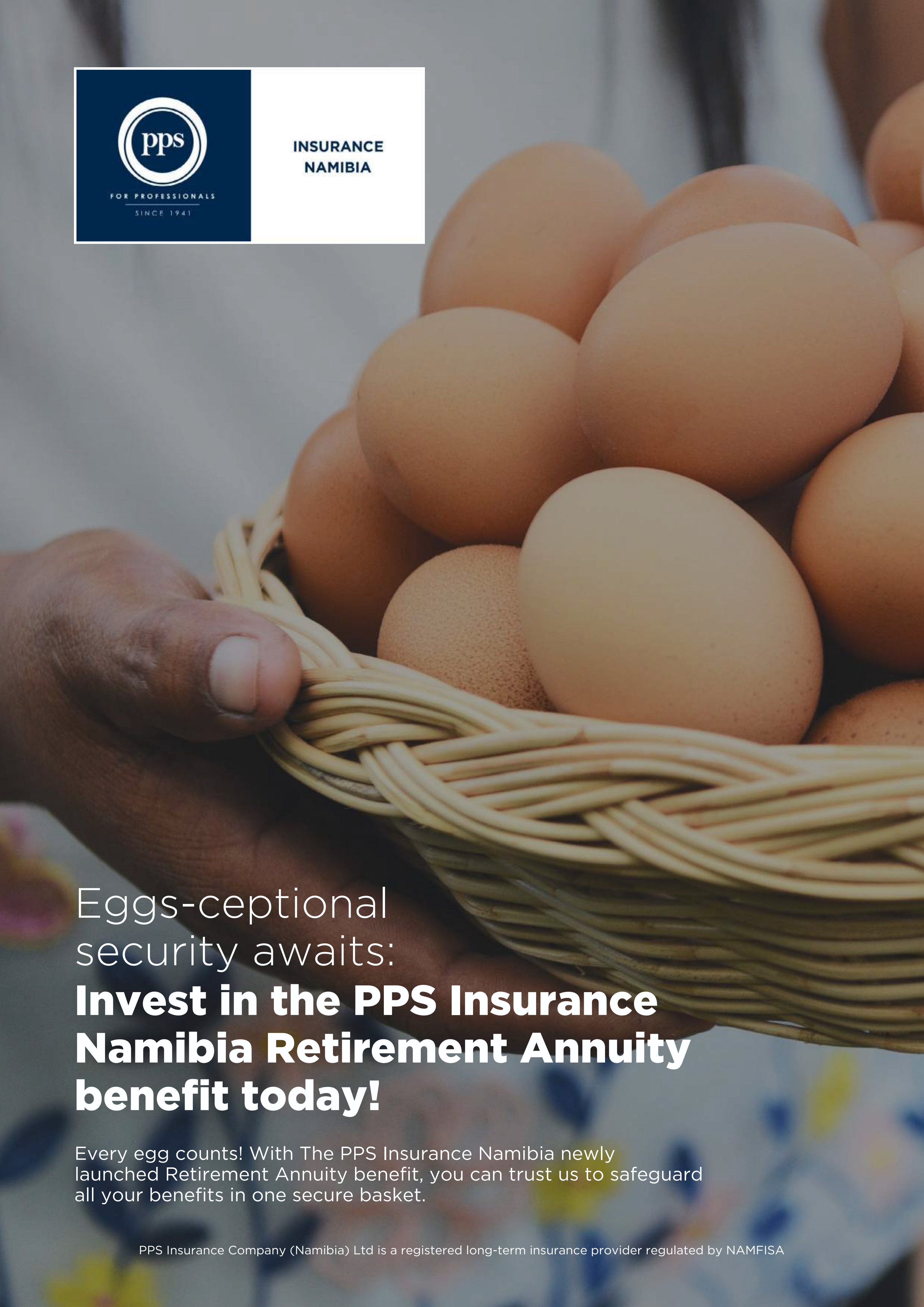
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