

# HIV life insurance pioneer participates in CGI summit

When social entrepreneur, Ross Beerman, and some friends first advocated the idea of life insurance for people with HIV in 2004, he raised more than a few eyebrows.

Twelve years later, Beerman heads AllLife, a business providing life insurance to people living with HIV and diabetes. He is also a global ambassador for social impact enterprise initiatives.



## Financial inclusion for marginalised communities

Beerman's idea sprang from the various challenges that people living with HIV face, not least the stigma of being HIV positive. Many people living with HIV were not historically able to access life insurance or financial services products, leaving them economically disadvantaged and, in some cases, destitute.

AllLife's vision was to promote financial inclusion for previously marginalised communities who, with life insurance, could access mortgages and business loans and participate fully in the economy.

## Clinton Global Initiative

Beerman recently returned from New York, where he was invited to participate in the 12th and final [Clinton Global Initiative \(CGI\) annual meeting](#). He took part in a high level panel discussion on "Scaling social impact enterprises", which provided a platform for global social entrepreneurs to share ideas and inspiration - all in the spirit of promoting socially aware, sustainable businesses that make a positive impact in their communities.

"All businesses would love to have at their core the ability to positively impact the lives of their clients and society in general, whilst being able to profitably run a sustainable company. The CGI annual meeting provided a powerful platform to spread the message regarding how to go about building social impact enterprises." Beerman says.

## Great hope for seemingly insurmountable problems

"There are a range of phenomenal organisations and people doing extraordinary work globally and CGI has been a great place to both recognise and help scale these endeavours. It was truly energising to interact with a diverse range of passionate people, ranging from world and business leaders, through to celebrities and drivers of NGOs and social impact

ventures. The range of intellect, capital and creative solutions that are being applied to global issues gives one great hope for positive outcomes for seemingly insurmountable problems."

## **Not an easy journey**

Getting a social impact enterprise such as AllLife off the ground in South Africa has not been easy. Beerman cites two major issues which he has faced in this regard - finding appropriately skilled, experienced and talented people and accessing the requisite capital. The experience has however proved invaluable for his global counterparts.

"By overcoming some of the challenges in a developing economy, we have built a business that is uniquely positioned to assist with a range of first world issues. As an example, because of the lack of access to healthcare professionals, AllLife has codified healthcare interactions into its IT system, changing the cost, impact and scalability of health interventions."

## **Looking to the future**

Looking ahead, Beerman wants to continue to grow a sustainable business which positively impacts South African communities by helping them live healthier lives. He also plans to expand AllLife outside of South Africa, with a particular focus on diabetics (8,5% of the global population).

Beerman concludes: "Diabetes is the fastest growing disease globally and diabetics have very limited options in terms of life insurance products, even in developed markets. Ultimately, the impact which we make is not just around offering someone a financial product that helps them support themselves and their family but it's also about sending a message to the market that these consumers are being unfairly marginalised."

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