

Facebook hosts first-ever South Africa NGO Day

Facebook has introduced its first ever South Africa NGO day in Johannesburg that aims to bring local NGO communities together in a day of learning and networking.



L to R Emilar Gandhi, Public Policy Manager SADC at Facebook Africa; deputy minister of communications, Finky Kekana; Ebele Okobi director of public policy Facebook, Africa; Sherry Dzinoreva, public policy programs manager Facebook EMEA. © Strike A Pose Photography.

Focused on giving back, Facebook offered training and workshops including social media best practice and how to use the latest tools to engage with existing, and potential supporters and donors. In an event attended by NGOs, members of civil society, policymakers and government representatives, NGO Day provided an open forum for attendees to discuss and learn, and for Facebook to hear directly from its users.

Financially affordable tool

Commenting on the day, Emilar Gandhi, public policy manager SADC at Facebook said: “With more than 20 million people on Facebook in South Africa and 2 billion globally, Facebook continues to be an effective and safe place for NGOs to engage with their target audience, build their skills, and engage with each other. We’ve seen the effective and successful use of the platform internationally and here in Africa, especially in dealing with health and disaster-relief issues.”

Gandhi added: “As a financially affordable tool for NGOs to use – where they can share ideas, convey information or collate relevant data and to reach out to those they want to assist, Facebook continues in its commitment in supporting and investing in various communities across the continent, and I believe this event is just another step in helping the NGO community in South Africa to achieve their goals.”

As part of the event, Facebook also partnered with three NGO's to co-host and discuss topics relevant to the community in South Africa, including:

- Disaster management response: a session co-organised with the Gravitazz Institute for Disaster Reduction and Emergency Management. The workshop explored the current state of Disaster Response in S. Africa as well as the key challenges and opportunities.
- Social good session: co-organised with Phambano Technology. This discussed ways non-profits can increase their impact through social media, and improve their digital skills through creative content creation.

Highlighting the work the NGOs do online

As one of the many NGOs involved in the day as co-hosts, Nomsa Daniels – CEO Graca Machel Trust said: “Civil society has over the years contributed immensely towards addressing some of society’s most dire needs such as HIV, gender inequality, and child abuse. We play a vital role in bringing together communities and networks from the local, regional, and global levels.

What is often missing is fully amplifying the remarkable work which we do on a daily basis. This event with Facebook is very critical and will help many organisations to highlight the amazing things they do online and get more people involved in causes that address some of the inequalities that still exist.”

Adding her thoughts, Samantha Posselt, deputy director Phambano Technology Development Centre commented: “Watching Facebook further connect non-profits in South Africa with their initiatives (e.g WorkPlace) has been inspiring!”

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