



KAA - BISA Networking Workshop

3 November 2021, Online

Post-event Report

Dated: 22 November 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kader Asmal Alumni (KAA) network was formed in 2017 to foster linkages and collaborations between the Kader Asmal Fellowship Programme (KAFP) recipients and to provide a platform. As part of Ireland's programme of development cooperation, the KAA directly contributes to the promotion of the KAFP through supporting activities coordinated by the Irish Embassy in promotion of Irish Higher Education institutions (HEIs). KAA use its local knowledge to support its alumni, while also ensuring their work is giving back to Ireland as ambassadors and advisors for current fellows. These are furthered through being resource persons to prospective fellows and the promotion of Ireland and Irish universities through our social media platforms.

The KAA also undertakes to broaden the alumni network through organising events/networking that bring together the wider alumni of the Irish HEIs in South Africa. We are guided by our objectives to: 1. Connect all KAA members to career and entrepreneurial opportunities; 2. Promote Ireland as a study destination through the Kader Asmal network; and 3. Foster an engaged and supportive alumni network that is accountable to its members. The aim of the networking workshop in collaboration with Business Ireland South Africa (BISA) is to foster an engaged and supportive network by helping them build key skills which are required to succeed post fellowship.

This report contains background information which explains the conception of the networking workshop. It also summarizes workshop discussions and the next steps that were identified by workshop participants. This report can be used to help plan the next workshops based on the needs of the participants which were identified in this workshop.

We, the Kader Asmal Alumni, would like to express our gratitude to BISA for partnering with us on this workshop initiative. Further, we would like to express our gratitude to the Embassy of Ireland for supporting this workshop, Mark Peters for facilitating the workshop, BISA members

who attended and Participants for their valuable knowledge, time and participation to ensure the success of this workshop.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The concept behind the networking event with BISA

One of the key aims of the KAA is to forge purposeful relationships with other stakeholders like BISA and support the development of members. The networking session, ran in collaboration with BISA, to provide an invaluable opportunity for KAA and BISA members to improve their networking skills and to foster relationships and connections between the two organizations.

Everyone talks about being a better networker in their own business or career but we never learned the “how to” in school or college. Many of us think we are good networkers if we arrive at a function, such as a cocktail party or presentation, walk around the room, hand out a couple of business cards and exit as quickly and as politely as we can!! In reality anyone can do that.

What is more difficult is to do is understand our personal strengths as a networker – play to those strengths and build our personal brand. This workshop was used as a build-up event to the in-person networking session that would take place at the Annual Reception. Alumni are encouraged to step outside of their comfort zone and build their networks.

The aim and objectives of the workshop programme

It was proposed that in this 1.5 hour sessions the participants (KAA & BISA Members) will:

- Meet 10 new people
- Practice and develop their elevator speech IE Value Proposition
- Build their brand
- Maximise their visibility
- Build confidence in selling yourself
- Know their power as a networker
- Understand the principles of good networking
- Develop skills to overcome networking roadblocks.
- Manage their personal and business network.

The Value Proposition for KAA & BISA is that:

- This will support the personal & professional development of KA Alumni & BISA Members.
- This will grow relationships between KA alumni & BISA members and help them achieve growth in their respective businesses.
- It is an opportunity to build a Brand Awareness of both BISA & KAA within these respective communities.
- This will contribute to KAA aims.

Agenda

Date: 3 November 2021

Time: 19:00-20:30 SAST

Time	Dur	Item	Stakeholder
19:00	5 Mins	Welcome - KAA	Greer O'Reilly - Chair
19:05	5 Mins	Introduction - BISA	Johnny Green - Chair
19:10	5 mins	Embassy of Ireland	Paul Deane
19: 15	5 mins	Expectations for the Workshop - FU from KAA Annual Reception form	Nicole Watson
19:20	10 mins	The Principles of Good Networking	Mark Peters
19.50	30 mins	Breakaway Rooms to practice Networking	Greer and Nicole to assist with assigning to rooms
20.15	25 mins	Report back	Participants
20.20	5 mins	Closing and thanks	Nicole Watson

Activities

It was proposed that in this 1.5 hour sessions the participants (KAA & BISA Members) will:

- Meet 5 new people in the breakaway rooms.
- Build their brand.

- Practice and develop their elevator speech ie Value Proposition.
- Receive feedback on the elevator pitch.
- Report back what was most memorable about the elevator pitch.

Details of presentation

The KAA networking is one of the initiatives meant to support alumni on their return to South Africa as they look for work. One of the key objectives is to facilitate the skills development of alumni as they transition back to life in South Africa. This is the first of many workshops where KAA focuses on the skills development of its alumni. This event is also meant to be a build up to the Annual Reception where we welcome alumni who have just returned to South Africa. What we did in preparation for the event was ask the alumni within the network what they would like to achieve from this session. The session focused on developing skills such as an elevator pitch.

Mark Peters, the facilitator for the event, was born in Ireland and moved to South Africa in 1985 as a peace co volunteer. In 1989, he joined Wits business school and has been in management education for 26 years. In 2012, he started his own business in strategy and lecturing. He has received numerous distinguished teaching awards from GMIT and Wits business school etc. In 2008, he was recognised as one of the top 100 teachers in emerging markets and awarded a scholarship to Havard.

Networking is an important part of our interaction with people. In South Africa, people are willing to put aside a short amount of time to interact with people. This presentation highlighted the importance of following up with people once you have their details. The department of higher education and training has released a book on scarce skills in South Africa. The document highlights some very important opportunities and gives you a sense of direction. The objectives of this workshop are to:

- Increased awareness the main issues around networking;
- Be able to network within the context of your company as well as career; and
- Be ready to use some networking techniques.

Everyone has contacts but most of us are very poor at using it. The strategic process of networking starts with accessing where are you now? Where do you want to be? What are the gaps? Accessing the options then choosing the strategy. Implementing the strategy and then finally reaching the destination. This is the perfect time of the year to get your positioning right for next year. One of the workshops that would follow up from this one is about finding an appropriate mentor. After someone has met you for 5 minutes, what are the likely things that they are going to remember? The way you position yourself is very important, do not sell yourself short.

Networking for a competitive advantage means understanding that 30% of your network would have left you in 2021. Some people would have immigrated, others would have fallen ill. Your contacts move rapidly. Build your reputation which can be things like response time to emails. Research in America shows that younger people are expecting responses to an email within 12

minutes. That may not be realistic within the South African context, you'd be lucky to get a response within 24 hours. Building trust and reciprocity is very important. Do not break people's trust by abusing their phone number and email address. If someone does something for you, there is an expectation that you would do the same for them. Associations like BISA and KAA are about reciprocity. It's about passing on opportunities which may be more suitable to others within your network. When you make a contact, the follow through is so important.

Your brand is very important so do not damage it. If you can build your personal brand through your CV then you are likely to command a premium price, as much as 23% more. Branding is the why we do it and networking is the method. Don't be afraid to refer people. The KAA needs to be a sign poster by connecting people to suitable opportunities. Relationships are key.

In summary, the networking checklist is:

- Maximise your visibility;
- Know your power as a networker;
- Influencing skills;
- Business cards;
- Manage your network; and
- All people are not equal in your network.

The principles of networking include: handshakes, always remember people's names. Reciprocity is the name of the networking game. Your elevator pitch is important, make sure it is unique so you stand out.

The participants were then divided into breakaway rooms of 4 people each where each person had 5 minutes to introduce themselves. This is an opportunity for each participant to sell themselves. The participants would then give their feedback on the elevator pitch and highlight their area of improvement. When the participants returned to the main group, they were each given a turn to highlight what stood out for them in their group.

BUDGET

There was no budget for this workshop as it was held completely online and the facilitator, Mark Peters volunteered his time for the workshop.

ACHIEVEMENT OF WORKSHOP

The networking workshop was able to achieve the following objectives:

- Enabled alumni within the community to grow their connections with each other;
- Alumni were able to interact with members of the BISA network;
- Alumni learnt the basics of effective networking;
- The importance of trust and reciprocity in networking;
- The impotence of referrals in networking;

- Heighted brand awareness within the alumni network.

PARTICIPANT LIST

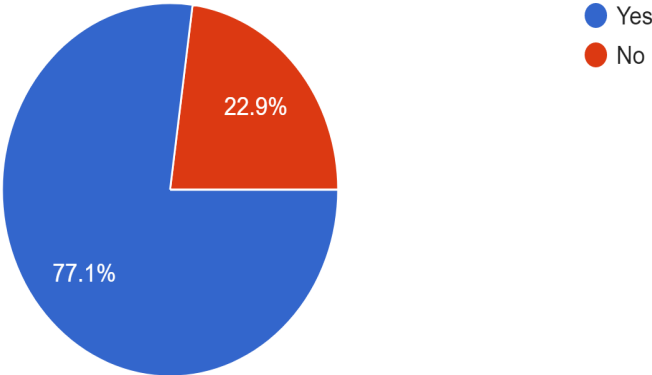
1. Mark Peters
2. Palesa Lepule
3. Greer Schoeman
4. Nicole Watson
5. Thuso Mokwa
6. Shamiso Chigorimbe
7. Thabo Sibiyi
8. John Murphy
9. Paul Deane
10. Mosima Rasesemola
11. Johnny Greene
12. Itumeleng Mafatshe
13. Ashleigh Hayward
14. Nadia Padayachee
15. Devina Harry
16. Tokelo Shai

ANNEXURE A: Pre-workshop Survey

There were a total of 95 emails sent out to all alumni requesting them to fill out the survey. There were about seven emails that bounced back and a total of 35 responses were received from alumni. We have the insights received regarding the BISA networking event below:

Are you interested in attending a virtual networking event with BISA?

35 responses



If we were to organise other events with BISA, which topics would you be most interested in? (tick all that apply)

35 responses

