

Louise van Rhyn BSc (Comp. Science), MBA (Cum Laude), DMAN

Bio

Dr Louise van Rhyn is a social entrepreneur. She believes the world's huge intractable problems can be solved through *cross-sector collaboration* and a solid understanding of *complex social change*. Her approach to change is shaped by 38 years of working as an Organisational Change and Leadership Development practitioner. She holds a Doctorate in Complex Social Change and has founded a few entrepreneurial organisations.

In 2008 she returned home to South Africa (after living in Europe) and started a social enterprise with a purpose to mobilise active citizenship around the significant social issues facing the country.

In 2010 she launched **Partners for Possibility**, an innovative leadership development process for business and school leaders. Business leaders develop their capacity to lead in a complex and unfamiliar environment by becoming a co-learning and co-action partner to a school principal. The focus of their partnership is to lead positive change in an under-resourced school.

Between 2010 and 2023 more than 3,800 leaders (business leaders and school principals) across South Africa have benefited from the programme and they've won many national and international awards for their innovative approach to enable business leaders to make a significant contribution in education while developing their leadership skills. Leaders report that they learn more about leadership from working with a school in an under-resourced community than attending a course at a business school.

Under Louise's leadership, **Symphonia for South Africa (NPC) | Partners for Possibility** has won many national and international awards for innovation and impact, including:

- 2019: **Partners for Possibility** was selected as an official member of the **Million Lives Club (MLC)**, a global initiative that celebrates innovators and social entrepreneurs who are scaling impact to improve the lives of those living on less than \$5 (approximately R74) a day.
- 2018: **Partners for Possibility** was the recipient of the **Chairman's Guardian of Governance Award** created by the **Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa (IIA SA)**. This honour recognises individuals or organisations who have made a significant contribution to governance in the broader South African landscape, that is, a contribution to governance issues beyond the parameters of the internal auditing profession.
- 2018: **Partners for Possibility** was announced as **one of six winners** of the **WISE (World Innovation Summit for Education, Qatar) Awards** for its **innovative solution to education challenges**. Each year, the WISE Awards recognize and promote six successful innovative projects that are addressing global educational challenges. Projects are selected for their innovation, positive contribution and ability to adapt and scale up.
- 2018: **Partners for Possibility (PfP)** was announced as winner of the Social Enterprise Mark CIC **Making a Mark competition** which celebrates the impact that accredited social enterprises are creating within their local communities and wider society. **PfP** was the only competition finalist from outside of the UK.
- 2014: **Symphonia for South Africa** was the recipient of the coveted **Reconciliation Award** bestowed by the **The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (SA)** in recognition of the powerful impact of the **Partners for Possibility** programme with regard to nation building and social cohesion

For a full list of awards, recognition and endorsements: <https://www.pfp4sa.org/awards-and-endorsements-2/>

Louise is regarded as a master organisation and leadership development practitioner and works with organisational leaders across many industries to support them in their complex change journeys.

Awards and Recognition for Dr Louise van Rhyn

Louise has been recognised for her leadership by many organisations, including:

- 2021: **Thinkers50** (UK) – Ideas into Practice Award for **Partners for Possibility** and **Symphonia**
- 2017: **Women In Entrepreneurship, Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy Development (WEISED)** (SA) presented her with the **WEISED Leading Woman of Africa Special Recognition Honorary Award** in recognition of her tenacity and invaluable contribution to the advancement of women and to Africa’s socio-economic growth
- 2016: **Toastmasters International** (SA) honoured her with its **Toastmasters Communication and Leadership Award**. The Award celebrated her leadership in founding and extending the **Partners for Possibility** programme throughout South Africa
- 2012: **Ogunte** (UK) Women’s Social Leadership Award in recognition of her achievement in developing an innovative and bold solution to a pressing social issue

Formal education & Qualifications

2005	DMAN (Doctorate in Management)	Complexity and Management Centre University of Hertfordshire Business School Topic: Large Scale Complex Social Change
1994	MBA (Cum Laude)	University of Stellenbosch Business School (South Africa) Winner of Old Mutual medal (Best MBA Student)
1986	BSc (Computer Science)	University of Stellenbosch (South Africa)

Career History

2005-Current	Social Entrepreneur, Leadership Development Practitioner, Designer, Organisational Development Consultant, Community Builder	Symphonia group of companies (South Africa) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership & Organisational development • Change management support to organisational leaders • Capacity building for change practitioners • Citizen engagement
2010 – 2021	CEO and Founder	Symphonia for South Africa NPC A social enterprise with 72 staff members and a budget of R34,000,000 for the 2020/21 financial year
2002 – 2004	Management & Change Consultant	Ashridge Consulting (Organisational Development Consultancy, United Kingdom)
2002 – 2004	Part-time DMAN student	Complexity and Management Centre University of Hertfordshire Business School

1998-2002	Management & Change Consultant	Partners for Change (Change and Management Consultancy, United Kingdom)
1995-1998	CEO & Management Consultant	Integrated Projects (Management Consultancy, South Africa)
1994-1995	Marketing Manager	Digitron (IT Systems Developer and Implementer, South Africa)
1993-1994	Internal Consultant	Truworths (Clothing Retailer, South Africa)
1993	Management Consultant	Andersen Consulting (Management Consultancy, South Africa)
1992	Full time MBA student	University of Stellenbosch Business School (South Africa) Winner of Old Mutual medal (Best MBA Student)
1989-1991	Project & Product Manager	McDonnell Douglas (IT Systems Implementer, United Kingdom)
1988-1989	Project Manager	Medis (IT Systems developer and implementer, South Africa)
1987-1988	Business Analyst	Infoplan (IT Services organisation, South Africa)
1986-1987	Analyst Programmer	South African Development Trust Corporation (Development Agency, South Africa)