

Andrew Boraine

Andrew Boraine is CEO of the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership. He has more than 35 years' experience of working in the public sector in South Africa, and has been a driving force behind the establishment of several important institutions working in and with the nation's cities.



1. From National Government to City Leadership

Andrew Boraine was born in Pietermaritzburg in 1959.ⁱ When South Africa's first democratic government was established in 1994 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, Boraine - who had been an anti-Apartheid activist - was appointed Deputy Director-General in the Department of Constitutional Development. In this role, he was responsible for the amalgamation of South Africa's local authorities to form integrated (i.e. non-rationally segregated) authorities, and assisted in drafting the local government chapter for the new South African Constitution. The new constitution adopted an innovative definition of local government as an equal, rather than subordinate, sphere of government to national and provincial governments. This constitutional definition has empowered local government in South Africa ever since.

Wanting to put his policymaking experience into practice, in 1997 Boraine moved from national government to take up the position of City Manager of the City of Cape Town. The administration needed a good degree of restructuring, and much of Boraine's role constituted what he describes as 'transition management': restructuring of the tax base, reorganising the municipality's 20,000 civil servants and where they worked, and addressing the needs of populations and areas which had been excluded from the local government system for many years under Apartheid.

In 2001, Andrew moved back to work at the national level, acting as Special Advisor to the Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, where he advised on city development strategy and urban policy. As a result of his experiences as Cape Town City Manager, Boraine also used this time to conceptualise and coordinate the establishment of the South African Cities Network.ⁱⁱ The network, which is still in existence, established a means by which the country's nine largest cities could cooperate, exchange information, share best and worst practice, undertake peer reviews and support each other on the global stage.

Keen to return to the grass roots level, in 2003 Andrew joined the Cape Town Partnership (CTP) – an institution which he had helped to establish during his time as City Manager. The Partnership is a non-profit collaborative organisation in which public, private and civic sectors work together to develop, promote and manage Cape Town Central City. Boraine was CEO of the CTP for nearly 10 years, stepping down in April 2013 to focus his efforts on the wider Cape Town region, through his formation and leadership of the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership. The Western Cape EDP is a multi-sector partnership-based organisation that will lead and co-ordinate the entire region's economic growth and inclusion agendas.ⁱⁱⁱ Members are drawn from local, provincial and national government and work with partners from the private sector, community sector, voluntary sector and the educational sector.

Through his successes as a city leader, Andrew Boraine has become an international thought leader in city, economic and urban development strategy – he has spoken at the World Urban Forum, advised the UK’s Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government and participated in the OECD’s LEED Programme Urban Missions to the cities of Belfast, Derry and Barcelona.^{iv} Boraine is also Adjunct Professor at the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town and is on the advisory board of the State of Cities in Africa project. He is a Board member of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) where he chairs the Bank’s Development Planning Committee, and he also chairs the Board of the Cape Town International Convention Centre.^v

2. Leadership Style

Andrew Boraine’s leadership style reflects a commitment to multi-party collaboration and partnership building. The benefits of this style are plain to see in the achievements of the organisations which Boraine has lead, particularly the Cape Town Partnership (see Section 3). Three defining characteristics of Andrew Boraine’s leadership style are:

2.1. Collaborative Leadership

“Development is tough and getting it right, whether social, economic, housing or green, is not easy. Partnership is a way to improve the process and the result.”^{vi}

Andrew Boraine’s city leadership is based firmly on the belief that the most successful cities are those built through partnership between the city’s various stakeholders. He believes that partnerships between the public sector, private sector and civic society are key to unlocking the potential in cities of the future, as one organisation or part of society rarely has all the resources or ideas needed to solve persistent problems.^{vii} Unlike many city leaders, Boraine embraces conflict between different city stakeholders, and sees it as a vital part of decision-making. As CEO of the Cape Town Partnership he said *“Differences and tensions are fun. They give rise to the dynamic. We try not to shy away from them.”^{viii}* Both the Cape Town Partnership and the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership are organisations which firmly bear the hallmarks of Boraine’s influence, and both are founded in the principles of partnership building and collaboration. They aim to steer away from what Boraine calls a traditional *“distributive bargaining approach”* – an approach based on zero sum gain and a winner / loser thinking.

As the website of the Western Cape EDP explains:

“Partnership is about co-design and co-ownership of solutions. It steers a path between any one organisation’s preconceived notions of the problem and its solutions. In complex situations, such as in a developmental state, partnerships should be thought of as a prerequisite for success.”^{ix}

For Boraine, partnership is an essential component of solving city problems, not only because multiple stakeholders are needed to mobilise and leverage resources, but also because partnership drives innovation. He believes that:

“[Innovation] very seldom comes from within these big, rather clunky institutions. Often big institutions are compliance driven, they are risk averse, they are not allowed to experiment.....Innovation has to be [done] by risk takers, be risk driven and you have to be able to fail as much as you succeed, otherwise you don’t get innovation. So one of the key tasks of the

partnership is to provide that intermediate space, for people to drive innovation for change in society.”^x

In addition, the juxtaposition of diverse ideas, institutional approaches and organisational cultures is essential in moving beyond the binary thinking of the public sector / private sector / civil society and devising solutions. Furthermore, Boraine believes that effective partnerships cannot be sustained without collaborative leadership: the role of leaders is vital.^{xi}

2.2. Pragmatic Leadership

Andrew Boraine is a strong proponent of ‘getting things done’ at city level. He has criticised the over-lengthy discussions which often hinder South African decision-making, suggesting that the country is prone to *“a lot of churning without much traction”*.^{xii} The Cape Town Partnership exemplified his proactive can-do ethos, in particular through its innovative hybrid structure (see section 3) which combined vision and planning with delivery and action.

2.3. A Listening Leader

Andrew Boraine’s style as a leader was perhaps best summed up by Bulelwa Makalima-Ngewana of the Cape Town Partnership, who said the following words upon his stepping down as CEO:

“In African culture, the baobab tree is known for its power, its presence, its strength and grace. It is a protective tree, a nurturing tree, a listening tree. It succeeds where no one else can. For ten years, Andrew has been the baobab tree of the Cape Town Partnership. You don’t realise, when you’re sitting under an enabling, listening leader, that you’re sitting under the shade – until it’s been removed.”^{xiii}

3. The Cape Town Partnership: A Case Study of Collaborative Leadership

The Cape Town Partnership was established in July 1999 by the City of Cape Town and various business and other partners to manage, promote and develop the Cape Town Central City. At the time, the Central City was suffering from disinvestment and out-migration, due particularly to perceived high crime levels. Boraine, who was City Manager of Cape Town at the time recalls,

“We wanted to turn [the city centre] around. And we realised that as a city at that stage we couldn’t do it on our own, we had other priorities.... So what we did was, in forming the Cape Town Partnership, we got agreement between the City Council, the local Chamber of Commerce, the local property association, the historical building society, the planning association and things like that, to come together and work together to save the Cape Town central city.”^{xiv}

The Partnership developed a vision of an *“inclusive, productive and diverse city centre that retains its historic character and reflects a common identity for all the people of Cape Town”*.^{xv} A specific urban management vehicle, the Central City Improvement District (CCID) was launched by the Partnership in November 2000 to implement the CTP’s plans on the ground. The CCID is similar to a Business Improvement District (BID), as implemented in North America and the UK. It is responsible for dealing with issues of safety, cleanliness, urban management in the central city, and also – unlike a BID – for social development issues including homelessness, young people out of work on the streets, and children at risk

on the streets. Above the CCID level, the CTP itself acts as a managing agent, driving strategy and promotion. This gives the Partnership a relatively unusual hybrid structure – half dealing with vision and half dealing with action.

The Partnership's initial role was to bring the private and the public sectors together to find workable solutions to create a safe, clean and high-quality environment in the Central City in which to work, play, study and live. Within a decade of its establishment Cape Town's Central City had undergone a total turnaround, and become one of the cleanest and safest in the country. Crime has dropped by 50%, serious crime by 90%, and today 74% of people say they feel safe in the CBD.^{xvi} The CTP has developed an internationally recognised social development programme, innovative job creation schemes, attracted investment of between R14-18bn with a further R20bn in the pipeline, upgraded and redeveloped over 170 buildings, many of them of important heritage significance, restored property values and municipal revenues, revitalised public spaces and improved pedestrian environments, fostered innovative cultural, sustainable development and 2010 FIFA World Cup programmes, and developed an agenda for the future in the form of the Central City Development Strategy.^{xvii}

The Partnership's most recent success has been its leading role in Cape Town's successful bid for the title of World Design Capital 2014 – a year-long programme of design-focused events which will focus the international spotlight on the city. The CTP, led by Andrew Boraine, co-ordinated the bid working in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders and supporters. The CTP sourced and developed content for the bid 'book', prepared supporting material to strengthen the case, and hosted the judges in the city for a three day site inspection in mid 2011. Managing the bid required collaborative working not only with stakeholders within the city, but also with those in the wider metropolitan area: for example the CTP referenced the design assets of the neighbouring Stellenbosch area in its submission. Cape Town was announced as the 2014 World Design capital in October 2011, beating the shortlisted cities of Bilbao and Dublin to the title.^{xviii} Since then, the Partnership has developed 9 official World Design Capital projects, including Design Dialogues, a platform for emerging creatives and industry thought leaders to network and forge cross-sector connections.

Andrew Boraine left the Cape Town Partnership in 2013 to establish and run the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP). This entity will utilise a partnership approach similar to that which Boraine oversaw at the CTP, focusing on fostering collaboration between local and regional government, the private and non-profit sectors and communities in order to enhance competitiveness and increase sustainable and inclusive growth in the wider Western Cape region. The EDP's self-prescribed role is *"to mobilise and organise partners across all sectors, spheres and regions to establish a common agenda and align mandates and resources so that partners can collectively and more creatively address the multiple and persistent challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality facing our region"*.^{xix}

4. How to Establish a Successful Partnership

Andrew Boraine's lengthy experience in fostering collaboration between different stakeholders, both in Cape Town and at a national South African level make him an invaluable source of advice for city leaders looking to build effective partnerships. He has the following hints and tips:^{xx}

4.1. A partnership is only as strong as its weakest link.

A partnership's role is to help all the partners to deliver on their own mandates but in a collaborative way. Focus on building capacity of partners, and avoid any temptation to bypass or take over from a partner who is underperforming. A clear division of labour should be stuck to.

4.2. Identify shared values.

Partners will inevitably have competing interests and may come with different ideological positions or from different institutional contexts, so it is important to establish commonalities. Most fundamentally, partners should adopt a shared value of commitment to the partnership – a motto of *“we agree to work together despite our differences”*.

Adopting shared values was critical to the success of Cape Town's regional innovation network. The network was first conceived of as an innovation forum, which sought to bring universities, industry and government together around innovation. The forum was unsuccessful and the initiative collapsed - Andrew Boraine believes this failure was because *“people arrived there not to collaborate but to protect their interests, to make sure that their turf wasn't being invaded by someone else.”*^{xxi} He therefore helped to establish the, now successful, regional innovation network, by basing it on the premise that all members (regardless of sector) must be prepared to share information around innovation.

4.3. A partnership must commit to both vision and action.

Dialogue and implementation are equally important. As Boraine says *“Vision without action is pretty worthless. Blind action without a vision is equally worthless. But if you bring the two together it can be pretty powerful.”*^{xxii} The Cape Town Partnership is a successful example of this type of hybrid partnership – it is committed to vision and dialogue at the overarching partnership level, but has also committed itself to action through the creation of the Central City Improvement District.

4.4. Choose the right team.

Seek out leaders who want to collaborate rather than control. Collaboration is often antithesis to the tendencies of big institutions: both in the public sector, where the tendency is to command and control, and in the private sector which is characterised by an unhelpful cut-throat competitiveness. Collaborative leaders have a common set of characteristics, as Boraine describes:

“[they are] people who understand themselves very well, who are relatively well self organised and don't rely on a rigid hierarchy to tell them what to do, they have empathy – in other words they have a knowledge of the other – they know themselves well enough to know that they have limitations, and therefore they can work with other people to help themselves. They primarily are focused on relationship management. Those are the people you have to get into partnerships.”^{xxiii}

4.5. Keep partnerships loose and light rather than formal and complex.

Partnerships must be flexible enough to adapt to change. Embrace a system of trial and improvement. A partnership cannot be designed for every conceivable eventuality, so try different things as and when you need to.

4.6. Create Safe Spaces

In order to encourage innovation, it is important to create spaces that are accessible to a wide range of stakeholders, and which encourage them to freely experiment with new ways of thinking and working. The Western Cape EDP seeks to be this kind of 'safe space', a place in which people can take risks and innovate without fear of failure.

5. Advice for Future City Leaders

Andrew Boraine's primary piece of advice for future city leaders is to face outwards, not inwards. Leaders should focus on the people that they are there to serve, rather than the institutions within which they work. He warns that future city leaders should take care not be seduced by the corridors of power:

"It's very easy to become a servant of the institution you are running rather than the territory that you are trying to advance or promote, and that is fatal – that's a disaster.....Look outwards don't look inwards because otherwise you will become very unhappy – you may be powerful in your institution but you won't deliver anything to the people that matter."^{xxiv}

References

Image Source: <http://www.dbsa.org/EN/About-Us/Board/Pages/default.aspx>

ⁱ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/andrew-michael-boraine>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.oecd.org/forum/oecdforum2012andrewboraine.htm>;
<http://www.capetownpartnership.co.za/about/staff/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.wcedp.co.za/>

^{iv} <http://www.oecd.org/forum/oecdforum2012andrewboraine.htm>

^v <http://www.capetownpartnership.co.za/about/board/>

^{vi} <http://www.wcedp.co.za/news/the-practice-of-partnerships>.

^{vii} <http://www.wcedp.co.za/news/andrew-boraine-speaks-at-first-urban-assembly-congress-of-place-makers-on-16-october>

^{viii} <http://www.gsb.uct.ac.za/Newsrunner/Story.asp?intContentID=157>

^{ix} <http://www.wcedp.co.za/news/the-practice-of-partnerships>.

^x Interview with Andrew Boraine, May 2014

^{xi} <http://www.wcedp.co.za/news/andrew-boraine-speaks-at-first-urban-assembly-congress-of-place-makers-on-16-october>

^{xii} <http://www.esade.edu/public/modules.php?name=news&idnew=715&idissue=60&newlang=english>

^{xiii} <http://www.capetownpartnership.co.za/celebrating-ten-years-of-leadership-saying-goodbye-to-andrew-boraine/>

^{xiv} Interview with Andrew Boraine, May 2014

^{xv} <http://www.capetownpartnership.co.za/about/our-vision/>

^{xvi} <http://www.capetownpartnership.co.za/>

^{xvii} <http://www.capetownpartnership.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/Lessons-FINAL-8-Sep-09.pdf>

^{xviii} <http://www.icsid.org/events/events/calendar708.htm>

^{xix} <http://www.wcedp.co.za/about/why-an-edp>

^{xx} Adapted from <http://www.wcedp.co.za/news/the-practice-of-partnerships> and with input from an interview with Andrew Boraine, May 2014.

^{xxi} Interview with Andrew Boraine, May 2014

^{xxii} *ibid*

^{xxiii} *ibid*

^{xxiv} *ibid*