

Neville Gabriel

Brief Biographical Notes



Neville Gabriel is the founding executive director of the [Southern Africa Trust](#), an independent regional agency that supports deeper and wider policy engagement between governments and non-state actors to overcome poverty in Southern Africa. In this post, he directs innovative work to build the capability of civil society organisations in southern Africa and beyond to engage more effectively in national, regional, and global policy development, including through grant-making. Working directly with official institutions such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) secretariat, the Pan African Parliament (PAP) bureau, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) secretariat, as well as regional civil society apex organisations and business associations, his work to provide technical and financial support, create new opportunities, and establish institutional mechanisms for direct policy engagement between governments and non-state actors in Africa is ground-breaking.

He is also a trustee of the [Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa \(OSISA\)](#) based in Johannesburg (which is part of the worldwide network of George Soros' Open Society Foundations) and the [African Forum on Debt and Development \(AFRODAD\)](#) based in Harare, a member of the board of the [Goedgedacht Forum for Social Reflection](#) based in Cape Town, a senior fellow of the [Synergos Institute](#) based in New York, a member of the [Africa Policy Advisory Board of Bono's ONE](#) campaign based in London, and a member of the founding steering committee of the [African Grantmakers' Network \(AGN\)](#).

He was previously a trustee of the [Southern Africa Trust](#) and a founding non-executive director of the [Southern African Regional Poverty Network \(SARPN\)](#) and has served as a non-executive director of several other civil society organisations.

Before becoming the founding executive director of the [Southern Africa Trust](#), Neville worked at [Oxfam](#) as its southern Africa regional media and advocacy coordinator and at the [Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference \(SACBC\)](#), where he was part of the founding team of its [Parliamentary Liaison Office](#) in Cape Town, its first secretary for economic justice based in Pretoria, and later coordinator of its [Justice and Peace Department](#) also based in Pretoria.

He co-founded the [Jubilee 2000 South Africa](#) coalition for debt cancellation as part of the global Jubilee movement and served variously as its national secretary, national executive committee member, and spokesperson.

Neville was born in Durban, South Africa. He matriculated with distinction before completing a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree at the [University of Cape Town](#). After a year's retreat and community service in an impoverished rural village in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province, he returned to study philosophy and religion at both the [University of Natal](#) and [St Joseph's Theological Institute](#) concurrently, graduating with Honours in Social Sciences (cum laude) from the [University of Natal](#).

Neville has travelled extensively, frequently speaking at national and international conferences, public campaigning events, and policy dialogues, including those relating to G8 summits and UN meetings on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and financing for development. His views, particularly in regard to economic justice, have been published widely and he is recognised as a leading civil society commentator on NEPAD, the MDGs, debt cancellation, the role of civil society organisations in development, and poverty reduction strategies.

For several years, he was rated by South Africa's [Financial Mail](#) as one of the country's most influential black citizens in the development sector.