Action Plan Cooperation

Flemish Government

and

National Youth Development Agency

On

`Up-scaling and promoting Youth Volunteering in civil society organisations in South Africa`

April 2015 – March 2016
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1. Introduction

The first 3 years of the cooperation between the Flemish Government and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) on `Up-scaling and promoting youth volunteering in civil society organisations` was completed with the Youth Volunteer Summit which was held in October 2014.

The following key and significant achievements were realized during the three years of the cooperation:

- A capacity building toolkit on Volunteer Management was developed;
- Training on the toolkit took place in eight provinces with 198 civil society delegates trained;
- Two knowledge seminars, which were attended by 200 delegates respectively, were held;
- Research on Youth Perceptions on Volunteering and desk review of Polices and Legislations on Volunteer Policy in South Africa’s were conducted;
- An online database on volunteer opportunities, that is updated regularly, was developed; and A partnership with the Department of Public Works on the Expanded Public Works (EPWP) was established, allowing the NYDA to fund civil society organisations for their engagement of young volunteers; and
- A Youth Volunteer Summit, which was attended by more than 100 delegates, was held.

Based on an evaluation of these first three years and the input of delegates at the Youth Volunteer Summit, a new framework for the 2015-2020 cooperation on `Up-scaling and promoting youth volunteering in civil society organisations` was developed and submitted to the Flemish Government.

The delegates at the Youth Volunteer Summit decided on the following 4 building blocks for the 2015-2020 cooperation:

**Building block one:** Capacity Building – This building block will continue to focus at strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and volunteers in order to increase the quality of the youth volunteer experience and the quantity of young volunteers. The main activities will involve the operationalization of the recommendations of the evaluation, mentorship and the development of a manual for volunteers.

**Building block two:** Knowledge Generation – This building block focus will still be on the development of an indigenous knowledge base around youth volunteering in South Africa in order to promote volunteering in terms that make sense to young people and provide a wide variety of avenues for their civic engagement activities. Proposed activities over the next five years will include development of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the cooperation, holding of knowledge seminars, youth volunteer summits and further research work on volunteer policy development in the country.
Building block three: Marketing and Communication – This is a new block, which has replaced “marketing and advocacy” block which was identified as the weakest link and the worse performing block in the programme. This block, which will still maintain its strategic objectives of making the programme visible and, raising the profile of volunteering in South Africa and reposition youth volunteering as an opportunity for growth and development, will now incorporate what was euphemistically referred as the “infrastructure building block”. The implication here is that all the work that had and have to do with the volunteer database will now reside under this block. Indeed, the motivation for this was that the database itself constitute a communication platform and that this essentially belong to this new block. Some of the activities that will be implemented under this block will include improving on the database as per the recommendations of the evaluation report, development of a communication and marketing strategy for the programme, enhancement of the ambassadors programme and embarking on volunteer campaigns in cooperation with civil society organisations.

Building block four: Lobbying and Advocacy – This is a new block and some of the work regarding lobbying that was initially housed under the “marketing and advocacy” block will now be migrated to this block. This new block will be underpinned by policy work on the development of volunteer policy in South Africa and the funding mechanism geared towards the long term sustainability of the programme. This work will require and seek to influence the South African government and related stakeholders to support the development of volunteer policy in the country and subsequently allocate resources to the programme. The advocacy part of the block will closely be integrated with the marketing and communication building block.

This action plan is based on the 5 year framework and details the cooperation between the Flemish Government and the NYDA on ‘Up scaling and promoting Youth Volunteering in civil society organisations in South Africa’ for the year 2015-2016. The planned activities for the first year of the five year cooperation on these four building blocks are described below.
2. Capacity building

One of the main reasons for not achieving the full potential of volunteering in South Africa is that community-based organisations and non-profit organisations often lack the capacity and know-how to successfully recruit and engage volunteers. The aim of the capacity building activities will therefore be to strengthen the capacity of volunteer-involving and volunteer-placement organisations in order to increase the quality of the youth volunteer experience and the quantity of young volunteers.

The capacity building efforts this year will focus, as per the recommendation of the evaluation report which was endorsed at the YVS, on the translation of the Capacity Building Toolkit on Volunteer Management into two of the nine South African indigenous languages. The training of a minimum of 15 delegates from civil society organisations in one of the nine provinces will also be conducted. Furthermore, a local training capacity building plan will be developed for the local youth offices in order for them to be able to extend the services of this programme to their local communities. The key capacity building intervention during the first year of the cooperation will be the initiation, design and implementation of the mentorship programme which will focus on the organisational development of small Youth NPO’s by the much experienced NPOs.

2.1. Translation of the Capacity Building Toolkit on Volunteer Management

One of the recommendations of the Evaluation Research was to translate the Capacity Building Toolkit in indigenous languages in order to make it more accessible to local and rural CSO’s. The NYDA will therefore be translating the toolkit into one indigenous language yearly. The toolkit will be translated into Zulu or Sotho in 2015-2016. Both these languages cater for the Nguni and Sotho speaking people in South Africa.

2.2. Training of CSO’s on Capacity Building Toolkit

The evaluation research also advised that the training of CSO’s on the Capacity Building Toolkit be continued in order to train more CSO officials and make them aware of the principles of volunteer management. In this regard, one training will be organised and conducted on an annual basis. For 2015-2016, the training will be in Zulu and Sotho at the provinces still to be determined. Practitioners from at least 15 civil society organisations will be expected to attend.

2.3. Development of a Local Offices Capacity Building Plan

Concerns have been raised in several meetings on how to get the programme to the local government level. The EPWP YouthBuild Programme is currently reaching young people in communities but the question is how to bring the other products e.g. online database and toolkit, to the local level. In this regard, the NYDA is planning to conceptualised and develop
a training and capacity building plan for employees in local youth offices and at provincial branches. This training will enable them to be able to inform local organisations about the programme and its products and services. In 2015-2016, the focus will be on developing a plan on how to train the local youth offices and provincial branches in order for them to be aware of the cooperation, in line with the limited resources of the project.

2.4. Mentorship Programme

Numerous young people have brilliant ideas and start their own NPOs but often lack the capacity to effectively and efficiently manage and grow them to well-functioning organisations. The NYDA therefore wants to assist organisations run by young people by building their capacity in organisational development in order for them to build strong organisations that can be eligible for funding. As organisational development is a long term process, the NYDA will be establishing a mentoring programme, which includes a training cycle, followed by mentoring by established Non Profit Organisations (NPO’s).

The aim of the mentoring programme is to increase the viability and sustainability of youth led NPO’s.

The NYDA will approach the 5 organisations contracted in the EPWP YouthBuild Programme whom will then each identify at least 2 youth led NPO’s they will mentor. Linking it to the EPWP YouthBuild Programme ensures that the mentored organisations will be able to get the EPWP funding and therefore immediately have a funded programme to run.
3. Knowledge Generation

The building block `knowledge generation` seeks to develop an indigenous knowledge base around youth volunteering in South Africa in order to promote volunteering in terms that make sense to young people and provide a wide variety of avenues for their civic engagement activities.

This building block will focus on research on Volunteer Policy, development and implementation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the organising of a Knowledge Network Seminar.

3.1. Research Volunteer Policy

The work to be done on the establishment of a volunteer policy will follow up on recommendations of the desk review on `Policies and Legislations on Volunteer Policy in South Africa`, which has been undertaken and finalised in September 2014. A stakeholder committee will be established in order to continue the work on the Volunteer Policy. This committee will then advice on the next steps and process regarding the development of a Volunteer Policy in South Africa.

3.2. Development and Implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

One of the findings of the evaluation research was that a review of the program monitoring/results framework reveals an inadequate or limited choice of indicators. Greater emphasis and focus is placed on the lowest level (activity indicators). While these help track if the planned activities are taking place, it does not provide evidence if the project is progressing towards the desired results. The project did not explicitly state the second level (outcome) and third level (impact) indicators.

During the first year of the cooperation it will therefore be imperative to work on a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the 5 year cooperation which will guide the continuous monitoring and the evaluation mechanisms for the programme.

3.3. Knowledge Network Seminar

The Knowledge Network Seminars have been evaluated as successful since civil society organisations do not often get the chance to interact and engage with each other on the topic of youth volunteering. They furthermore create an opportunity for them to network with other civil society organisation and role players from public and private sector.

The knowledge network seminar will bring together +/- 100 representatives from civil society organisations, private sector and government, in order to discuss how to work together towards the goal of increasing youth volunteering in civil society organisations in South Africa. The aim of the seminar is to discuss a topic on youth volunteering, with representatives from...
different sectors, and identify the needs from the different sectors in order to reach the goal of increasing youth volunteering in South Africa. The knowledge network seminar is a unique space where youth, civil society, private sector and government come together to discuss youth volunteering. The topic of this seminar will be decided during the bilateral meeting.

4. Marketing and Communication

This is a new block, which has replaced “marketing and advocacy” block which was identified as the weakest link and the worse performing block in the programme. This block, which will still maintain its strategic objectives of making the programme visible and, raising the profile of volunteering in South Africa and reposition youth volunteering as an opportunity for growth and development, will now incorporate what was euphemistically referred as the “infrastructure building block”. The implication here is that all the work that had and have to do with the volunteer database will now reside under this block.

The key activity for this block during the first year of the cooperation will be the development and subsequent implementation of a communication and marketing strategy for the programme. In addition to this, this new block of the programme will continue to focus on growing the online database and the ambassadors programme and the volunteer campaign.

4.1. Myhandsandheart Online Database

During the first knowledge seminar, it was said that volunteer opportunities are there but youth often experience a challenge accessing a diverse set of quality opportunities for volunteering in the vicinity where they live. In order to source and make visible the many volunteer opportunities that are available to young people in different sectors, an online database on volunteer opportunities, which is called, myhandsandheart.org was established.

The myhandsandheart Online Database needs continuous maintenance and management in order to manage the available opportunities and communicate with organisations and volunteers. It also needs continuous updates in technology and database features.

4.2. Ambassadors Programme

In order to get local volunteer organisations across the country to sign up volunteer opportunities, an ambassador programme has been developed whereby young people become ambassadors of the database and assist organisations in creating, managing and reporting opportunities. The ambassadors provide support to both organisations and the volunteers. The ambassadors are therefore closing the gap between the NYDA and local communities and organisations.

One of the findings of the evaluation research was that ambassadors in different provinces, did not have much information about the database since they were only trained online. It was therefore necessary to have meeting and training sessions in different provinces. The focus
of 2015-2016 will therefore be to increase the number of ambassadors and ensure that they are getting the necessary training and information required for them to assist.

4.3. Volunteer Campaign

Since the EPWP YouthBuild Programme engages at least 2000 volunteers, the NYDA decided to establish volunteer campaigns whereby the EPWP volunteers introduce other young people to the concept and value of volunteering.

This campaign will be taking place towards the end of their engagement as EPWP YouthBuild volunteers so that they can share their experiences with other young people.

4.4. Marketing and Communication Strategy

The marketing of the programme has been evaluated as the weakest link of the past 3 years. It is therefore imperative to work on a marketing strategy that will ensure the visibility of the programme and all its products and services. This strategy will be developed in cooperation with the Communication Division of the NYDA and will include public relations, branding, advertising and events. It will include the use of social media as this medium reaches thousands of young people in South Africa.

5. Lobbying and Advocacy

This is a new block and some of the work regarding lobbying that was initially housed under the “marketing and advocacy” block will now be migrated to this block. This new block will be underpinned by policy work on the development of volunteer policy in South Africa and the funding mechanism geared towards the long term sustainability of the programme.

This work will require and seek to influence the South African government and related stakeholders to support the development of volunteer policy in the country and subsequently allocate resources to the programme. Furthermore, it will continue to focus on the EPWP YouthBuild Programme.

5.1. Volunteer Policy

In South Africa, legislation and policy development is a function of the Accounting Authority (in the case of NYDA – the Presidency). NYDA will therefore not be responsible for the development of the Volunteer Policy but will be facilitating the process and create a stakeholders forum to give input and feedback on the process.
5.2. EPWP YouthBuild Programme

The NYDA has established a partnership with the Department of Public Works (DPW), Expanded Public Works Programme for the Non State Sector (EPWP NSS), in order to support NPO’s in implementing youth volunteer programmes.

The EPWP NSS YouthBuild Programme aims at creating opportunities for at least 2000 young people yearly to volunteer in their communities. The target group is NPO’s focusing on youth development, who have been in existence for more than 3 years and can show an ability to administer a programme of this magnitude.

The NYDA will be responsible for selecting and contracting the NPO’s, managing the programme and funds, give young volunteers orientation and life skills training, ensure that young people receive job preparedness, career guidance and other opportunities offered by the NYDA. The NYDA will also report to the DPW on the funding received.

6. Governance

The NYDA is responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the cooperation in South Africa. This involves overseeing the implementation of activities on all five building blocks of the cooperation.

Bilateral meetings between the Flemish Government and the NYDA are held at least bi-annually in order to discuss the progress reports on the cooperation and agree on the future planning.

7. Action plan and budget

Kindly find the action plan with budget attached.

8. Conclusion

The first year of the renewed 5 year cooperation will be a busy year, with on the one hand the continuation of work that has been started in the previous 3 years, e.g. the capacity building toolkit, online database and knowledge seminars. On the other hand, this year will lay the foundation for new avenues in the years to come with e.g. the development of the marketing strategy, capacity building plan for local youth offices and the volunteer policy.

The NYDA would like to extend its gratitude to the Flemish Government for this long standing partnership which touches the lives of 1000’s young people in South Africa.