

NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

POLICY FRAMEWORK

- as approved by Cabinet -

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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1. INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The concept of social exclusion has gained wide currency in the public policy context worldwide. It has been effectively used as a handle to reflect on the complex set of linked problems centred around lack of opportunity and diminished life circumstances, including unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, poor health and family breakdown. Lately the concept has been associated with wider concept of citizenship.

Connections have been made between human and social capital formation and the impact of these on democracy. Social capital is increasingly seen as a useful concept tool for understanding the role of relations and networks in social and economic development. Social capital according to Putman refers to the “stocks of trust, norms, and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems”. This then implies a richness and robustness of relationships among people, suggesting that the members of a community are willing and eager to invest in one another. Communities build social capital through the development of active relationships, democratic participation and the strengthening of community ownership and trust.

Evidence indicates that countries are concerned about the civic and political health of their nations. In the process of developing inclusion goals the citizenship status of young people has also come to the foreground. The issue of youth apathy has been a subject of debate and contention especially when the barometer used is voting. The seeming decline in youth voting, an indicator of alienation, as well as the growing evidence that as segment of the population they seem to feel the brunt of a combination of linked problems has been cause for concern. Indeed the report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Fifty-Sixth Session highlighted the problems that

confront young people as poverty, vulnerability to the to infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, access to education and unemployment. Recognising therefore that in both the developing and developed countries the situation of young people is precarious the United Nations General Assembly has called on all member states to implement the “World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.” Member States are encouraged to formulate and implement national youth policies and programmes within the context of broad development strategies and a rights approach.

The search for strategies to bring about democratic renewal has led to a groundswell of dialogue about an old idea, national service. Consequently, the connection between national service and citizenship has become a priority for public policy. The benefits of service, it is believed, accrue to individuals as well as to societal institutions. An international review suggests that NYS has evolved in different contexts informed by the needs and conditions in individual countries. There are four broad categories that National Youth Service (NYS) falls into in the global context and these are:

1.1.1. Civic Responsibility

Falling into this category are countries that have achieved affluence and through NYS encourage young people to contribute to their own society or others societies in need. Countries such as the United States (Civilian Conservation Corps, Peace Corps, Volunteer in Service to America, AmeriCorps); the United Kingdom (Voluntary Service Overseas, Millennium Volunteers); Canada (Canada World Youth) have found that NYS allows them to ‘get things done!’

1.1.2. Developing a common identity

Where there is a strong need to develop a national identity or a need to overcome a difficult past, countries have also found that NYS can become a vehicle for consciousness

transformation. Typical examples in this category are: China (Youth Service in China); Canada (Katimavik); Nigeria (National Youth Service Corps; and Germany (Zivildienst).

1.1.3. Recovery and Rehabilitation

Recovering from either a civil war or war of liberation and therefore struggling with severe economic or environmental crisis, countries have through NYS mobilise the resources to rehabilitate and restore. Zimbabwe and India fall into this category.

1.1.4. Nation building

In countries where significant human resources are already mobilised through mandatory military service, the energies of young people have been harnessed to assist with nation building initiatives. In this instance countries such as Germany have found that NYS can be put to non-military endeavour.

We can learn from our African neighbours whose experience has proved the effectiveness of the NYS as a strategy. The Zambian National Service has three components: the Volunteer Youth Service Programme; the Youth Settlement Scheme; the Rural Resettlement Programme. The Ghana National Service Scheme makes it mandatory for graduates and diplomats to serve for a year in the public service. The Botswana approach has successfully integrated the twin movements of service and service learning. These and other examples indicate that young people are an important resource that can be effectively deployed to meet social, political and economic objectives. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) provides an opportunity to use youth service to build solidarity ties and the social infrastructure that becomes the bedrock for sustained development.

2. SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

In the quest to effect social and economic transformation and address the pressing conditions of the large sector of the South African population as necessitated by the legacy of Apartheid, The RDP identifies young men and women as the country's most important resource that need to be equipped and developed to play a meaningful role in the reconstruction and development of the country.

Responding to the challenge of youth development in South Africa, the RDP has furthermore asserted that "Youth development must focus on education and training, job creation and enabling young people to realise their full potential and participate in society and their future. It must restore the hope of our youth in the future, and in their capacity to channel their resourcefulness and energy into reconstruction and development."

National Youth Service has consistently been motivated by the South African youth sector as a programmatic vehicle which can respond to the multiple needs of young people and enable them to access new opportunities for employment and income generation, skills development and personal development, while contributing to national objectives for reconstruction and development of South Africa. The principles, values and purpose of a National Youth Service Programme have remained consistent since 1992.

The National Youth Commission mandated by the youth sector went on to lead the process of elaborating the concept and how it would be implemented in the Green and draft White Papers on National Youth Service. The agreements of the Presidential Jobs Summit re-iterate national commitment to the principles and purpose of a National Youth Service Programme and identified a potential implementation strategy. Special employment programmes such as Working for Water, the Land Care Campaign, Rural Water Supply, Community-Based Public Works Programmes, Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme among others, have laid the tracks for

National Youth Service. Since National Youth Service is not a job creation programme its outcomes should complement these other special programmes.

2.1. POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Government has since the advent of democracy put in train policy frameworks, legislation and programmes that has a bearing on the conception and establishment of National Youth Service, particularly the changes in macro economic policies that will impact on national priorities and extent of NYS support from time to time. Existing policy and legislative environments create a rich basis for the introduction of National Youth Service, particularly because of its crosscutting nature.

- The National Qualifications Framework through the South African Qualifications Act of September 1995;
- The National Skills Development Act of November 1998;
- The Higher Education White Paper and Act of December 1997
- The Further Education White Paper and Act of October 1998
- The Child Care Act of 1996 and report of the Law Commission on the Juvenile Justice Act of 1994
- The Urban Renewal and Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategies and Programmes; and
- The Local Government White Paper and Municipal Demarcation Act of 1998, the Municipal Structures Act of 1999 and Municipal Systems Act of 2000.
- The Green and draft White Papers on the NYS.
- The National Youth Development Policy Framework adopted in 2001.

Government has through these policies created an enabling environment for rebuilding human and social capital thus positioning the country for global competitiveness. The major thrust of the government's human resource development strategy is the

continuous attention to issues of access, quality and impact of new forms of learning. Greater focus has been given to a different distribution and organisation of learning, overcoming mismatches in the labour market and continuous retraining. The education system has also been positioned to play a central role in teaching habits of civic engagement in learners as well as other stakeholders such as communities in the education of their young.

With the advent of a developmental local government, a firm commitment has been embedded to community participation with a special emphasis on the inclusion of young people. The primary mechanism for achieving community participation is the Integrated Development Plan. Complementing this process of rooting local democracy has been the Urban Renewal and Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programmes. These provide the framework for tackling the high levels of poverty, unemployment, lack of access to infrastructure and a stagnant local economic base.

The basis has therefore been laid for embedding a culture of lifelong learning and ensuring that the South African society learns to act, manage and apply knowledge and skills in ways that foster greater personal, social and economic well-being.

3. NYS POLICY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The policy framework aims to:

- Define the concept of a National Youth Service (NYS) for South Africa;
- Generate opportunities for young people to develop marketable skills and to connect to their communities through service;
- Mobilise resources to support National Youth Service programmes and lay the basis for a national service infrastructure; and
- Propose the institutional arrangements for implementing the NYS.

3.1. NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

3.1.1. Defining National Youth Service

National Youth Service (NYS) is a concept that is transformative in nature and is broadly defined as the “involvement of young people in activities which provide benefits to the community whilst developing the abilities of young people through service and learning.” Informed by an understanding that: young people are disengaged because of a sense of powerlessness and irrelevance as opposed to apathy or disinterest; overcoming this sense of powerlessness and irrelevance requires access to opportunities for participation as individuals as well as a generation; their sense of efficacy increases when they are connected to issues that matter and key civic actors and institutions are encouraged to see young people as valuable resources; and meaningful opportunities to participate must be provided today to secure tomorrow. Thus NYS, as a special government initiative, seeks to contribute to the enhancement of youth as present and future social capital. An enhanced citizen status of young people means that they can participate meaningfully in the political, social and economic life of the country.

What National Youth Service is not ...

- a programme intended to displace the current workforce through special employment programmes for poverty alleviation;
- a programme involving bidding for tenders in competition with community contractors;
- waged work;
- a mechanism for financial reparation.

3.1.2. Vision

The vision of the NYS is the development of youth through providing a long-term and effective means of reconstructing South African society through physical rehabilitation, asset building and renewal of community resources and rebuilding the fabric of communities. The NYS will foster a spirit of nation-building by inculcating a culture of service, a common sense of nationhood, engendering a new form of patriotism as well as promoting intergenerational understanding.

3.1.3. Goals

In line with this vision, the following are the goals of the NYS:

- To inculcate a culture of service by supporting youth to participate constructively in nation-building;
- To inculcate in young people an understanding of their role in the promotion of civic awareness and national reconstruction;
- To develop the skills, knowledge and ability of young people to enable them to make the transition to adulthood;
- To improve youth employability through opportunities for work experience, skills development and support to gain access to economic and further learning opportunities; and

- To harness the nations untapped human resource and provide a vehicle for enhancing the delivery of the country's development objectives especially to disadvantaged and underserved communities.

3.1.4. Values

The engagement of young people in the community building is underpinned by the values espoused in the National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) that became government policy in 2001. These are set out below:

- The promotion of a common sense of nationhood

Since the advent of democracy, many young people have struggled to develop an identity that is 'South African' rather than one that is geographically, politically, ethnicity or racially defined. National Youth Service should therefore seek to promote the values of good citizenship and patriotism that assist young people to develop a positive identity and connectedness.

- Inclusiveness

NYS should engage a cross section of young people – unemployed, students, disaffected, disabled – from a variety of backgrounds, educational attainments, cultures and religious beliefs. NYS should therefore seek to expand opportunities for all young people who wish to serve.

- An integrated and holistic approach to youth development

The NYS should seek to build the character and competence of young people by focussing on the social, psychological, economic, cultural as well as political aspects of their development.

3.1.5. Operating Principles

The following are the principles underpinning the NYS.

○ Service learning

Clear service and learning objectives will be articulated for programmes to allow for participants to develop specific skills. The service performed has to be meaningful to the young people and the community thus served. Participants will gain a better understanding of their communities and have an opportunity to learn about people from different backgrounds. Extensive support and training will be provided to participants at different levels of development throughout their service. The individual young person has to demonstrate sustained personal commitment by completing a full year of service.

○ Sustainable development

The extent to which community assets are built and sustained will be critical. Community's participation will be key to formulating strategies, managing delivery and sustaining service outcomes. Linking NYS to community planning and outcomes as well as regional and national priority needs will facilitate mobilisation of resources.

○ Incentives to support participation

A range of incentives during and after service will be provided and may take the form of: a stipend that allows for travelling, food, uniform and accommodation; accumulation of credits towards part or full qualifications; business loans for SMME's to support potential entrepreneurs; reference letters for preferential consideration in employment; and educational awards to allow for access to Further Education and Training as well as Higher Learning.

○ Accredited learning

The training in the NYS will be structured to meet the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework and related system of credits.

○ Selection of sites for service

The energies and service of NYS participants will be deployed to areas deemed to be of high priority need. The selection of NYS sites will accordingly be determined by what it is communities consider the greatest need and therefore needing concerted community action. Thus NYS will provide tangible benefits to the communities where it is performed.

○ Developing a culture of self-reliance

Participants will be provided with the opportunity to build a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. Learning that they can be independent and depended upon, young people acquire the habit of self-reliance while interacting with others from different economic and social backgrounds.

○ Partnerships

The crosscutting nature of NYS and its success will depend to a large extent on partnerships between all the stakeholders and existing organisations to facilitate the development of innovative and flexible implementation. Partnerships require strong leadership particularly in fostering a culture of joint working and of sharing resources. This requires consistency of purpose and message from leaders of partner Departments and organisations to partnership working both inside their organisations as well as with partners

3.1.6. Target groups for national youth service

- Higher Education students,
- Further Education and Training students,
- Unemployed young people and
- Youth in conflict with the law.

The National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) recognised the role that NYS would play in the social mobilisation of young people and capacity building of the youth development sector. According to the NYDPF, youth service initiatives should broadly encompass the following:

- Develop skills, knowledge and the ability to make the transition to adulthood, and improve their employability through opportunities for work experience and to provide a vehicle for national development through their deployment to areas of need, specifically at community level, for example in clinics;
- Introduction of capacity-building programmes for youth leadership facilitating youth-driven poverty alleviation programmes;
- Community service as an integral part of tertiary education curriculum needs to be expanded beyond current community service for doctors; and
- Short-term service initiatives in the South African National Defence Force.

Furthermore, that a mechanism for the coordination and expanding of youth service initiatives should be established as a core function of the NYC in conjunction with government.

4. IMPLEMENTING AND SCALING UP NYS

Providing access and expanding opportunities for young people to serve is the responsibility of government in partnership with the private and non-governmental sectors. The roles and responsibilities of different agencies in the management, financing and sustaining of an effective NYS are as follows:

4.1. NATIONAL YOUTH COMMISSION

- Establishing and sustaining a policy environment which incorporates the principles of National Youth Service and manages strategic partnerships between government agencies responsible for infrastructure and social development delivery to use National Youth Service Projects as a method of delivery.
- Establishing national recognition and an accreditation framework for projects under the National Youth Service working closely with the South African Qualification Authority.
- Mobilizing youth understanding of and support for participation in National Youth Service.
- Maintaining a public profile of the service young people undertake and the benefit of this service to South African society as a whole.

4.2. STATE INSTITUTIONS

- Identification of projects, or components of projects, that can be delivered through the National Youth Service.
- Ensure contractual requirements of these projects incorporate the requirements for NYS projects.
- Contract NYS accredited providers to project manage and implement programmes.
- Allocate budget line items to ensure ongoing implementation of NYS projects.

4.3. SECTOR EDUCATION TRAINING AUTHORITIES

- Ensure appropriate Education and Training accreditation exists

for development projects;

- Train registered assessors to be competent and available to assist in assessment of young people participating in National Youth Service Projects.
- Work with NYC accredited NYS providers to identify emerging employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in the sector and ensure projects are designed to access them.
- Mobilize and allocate funding through the National Skills Fund to fund training components of National Youth Service Projects.

4.4. UMSOBOMVU YOUTH FUND

- Train youth workers, trainers and contracted technical staff in principles of youth development and equip them with the skills to run effective National Youth Service Projects.
- Finance the youth development and organizational development components of NYS projects.
- Develop, finance and implement demonstration project in NYS (15 per year).
- Follow-up on aftercare and mentoring of NYS graduates.
- Develop the institutional capacities of NYC accredited NYS service providers.

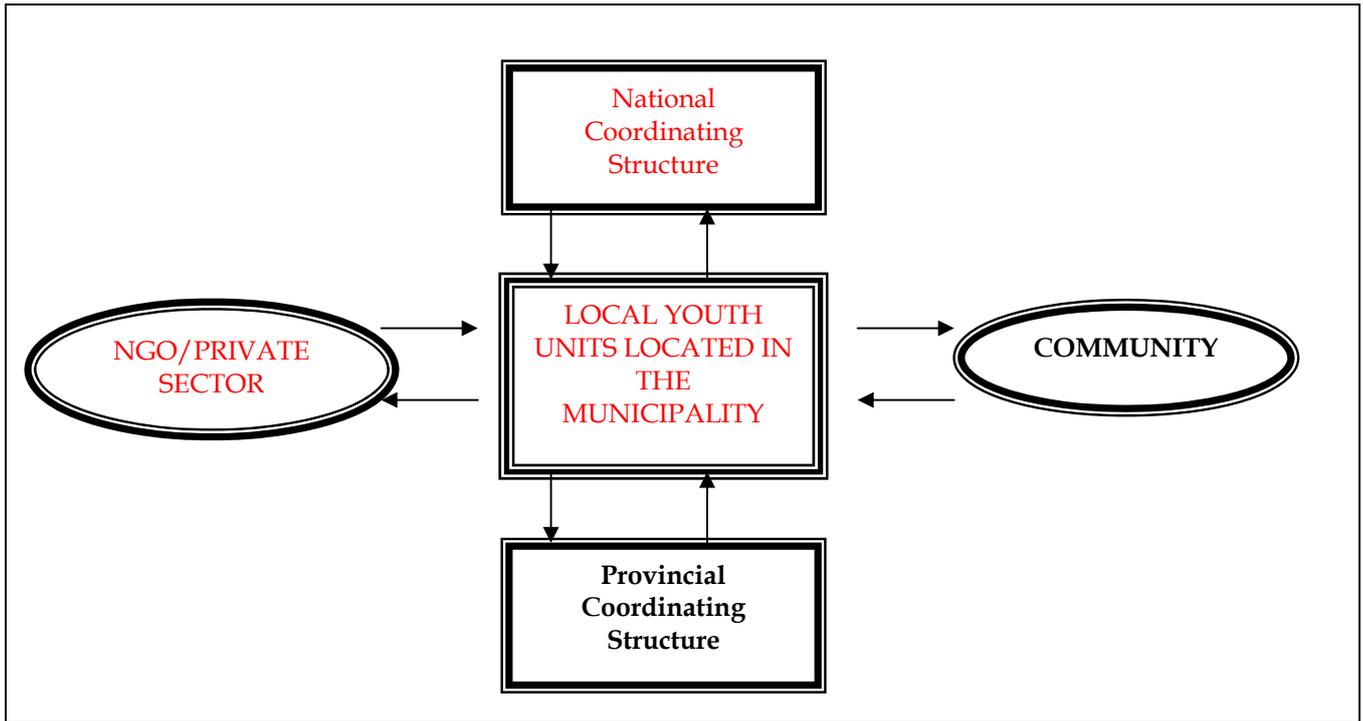
4.5. THE SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH COUNCIL

- Build the capacity and strengthen the voice of the youth sector.
- Mobilise young people to participate in the NYS.
- Inform the strategic implementation of the NYS.
- Create a platform for the youth constituency to monitor and evaluate the impact of NYS.

5. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

In order to facilitate efficient and effective delivery of NYS, it is essential that an integrated national delivery mechanism be purposefully designed. The mechanism has to take into account not only the vertical coordination required across all three spheres of government but horizontal coherence as well. The institutional arrangements while structured, need not be rigid bearing in mind that the NYS will evolve over time. A dynamic mechanism will ensure the easy flow of information and exchange of ideas. A fundamental principle of youth development is a youth centred approach that underscores the importance of the participation of young people in the planning, programme design and decision-making. The National Youth Service is therefore no exception when it comes to the role of young people in both the management as well as ownership of programmes.

It is envisaged that in the delivery structure of the NYS some of the functions would overlap between the three managerial tiers at the three levels of government. It is acknowledged that as much as the national structure is supposed to provide oversight, monitoring, co-ordination, resource mobilization and programme selection and evaluation, the provincial and local government levels have significant roles and resources to bring to bear. In addition, significant youth development resources have traditionally been located in civil society; these as well as private sector resources have to be leveraged for the NYS. It is at the community level that a seamless web of resources and opportunities has to be created. Given therefore that the NYS is a national initiative and that service finds expression at the local level, following is a representation on how implementation will unfold and coherence achieved.



5.1. NATIONAL UNIT

The NYS will be delivered through a National Unit and National Youth Service Partnerships (NYSP). While the National Youth Commission (NYC) will be home to the National Youth Service Unit, the latter will draw on the expertise of Umsobomvu Youth Fund, government Departments, agencies, South African Youth Council, nongovernmental and private sectors to reflect the multi-stakeholder nature of NYS. The National Unit will report to the Inter-Departmental NYS Strategy Group chaired by the NYC Chief Executive Officer.

The role of the National Unit will include the following:

- Identifying, defining and responding to the training and technical assistance needs to implement effective programmes;
- Assist in developing appropriate programme models that match the needs of communities;
- Develop and advice on incentive and rewards to encourage participation in the NYS;
- Develop the infrastructure that will support training, supervision

and technical assistance to data collection and analysis needed to improve the NYS and measure its impact;

- Develop a national information system of NYS initiatives and act as a clearinghouse for information on available service opportunities for young people;
- Continuously explore innovative ways and identify resources that can be leveraged to fund the NYS;
- Establish criteria and materials which will enable line departments to identify whether development projects can be implemented through NYS projects;
- Develop and publish materials and manuals to enable NYS accredited providers to implement effective NYS projects.

5.2. PROVINCIAL YOUTH COMMISSIONS

There is a tradition of collective decision-making between the National Youth Commission and its provincial counterparts. Provincial Youth Commissions (PYCs) have an important stewardship role at provincial level in the implementation of the NYS. PYCs in the various provinces have continued to be a reference point for youth development policy and programmes. The guidance and technical support they have given to municipalities in the integration of youth development at this local level of governance, has hastened the establishment of local youth units. They therefore, have a significant oversight and coordinative role to play in the successful implementation of the NYS. They will provide an important link in ensuring a seamless connection between the three tiers of government.

5.3. NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS

NYSPs will be set up in each of the areas where NYS programmes will be implemented. There is scope within the context of the modernised local government, Urban Renewal (URP) and Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programmes (ISRDP) to streamline NYSPs. The nodes that have been identified through the UR and ISRDP will be prioritised in terms of implementing the NYS. Needs have also been

prioritised through the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process that all municipalities have undergone. Thus, NYSPs at local level will be geared towards existing structures, processes and mechanisms for joint working rather than the creation of separate arrangements. The NYSPs will effectively represent the thematic area of youth development in a particular nodal area. The prospect of integrating the planning of delivery of services locally by key government department and agencies will be further enhanced by the advent of Community Development Workers as facilitators of change in the priority areas. Such a change agent will work closely with the local youth units that already exist in some municipalities. These have become a key mechanism for integrating youth development a local government level. The local youth development officer has a key facilitative and brokering role to play in the formation of NYSPs as well as youth organisations and youth workers in a particular community.

Since the focus of NYS will be broad ranging and will potentially encompass all aspects of the community such as, health, education, social development, basic services, infrastructure, public safety, culture, environment among others, NYSPs will be diverse.

6. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

National government is in the unique position to provide a base of sustained financial support that enables communities to implement NYS as a strategy for community problem-solving. There is obvious convergence between other government programmes and the NYS and these have in the past fit well with the objectives of the NYS. The value addition will be to strengthen existing programmes with demonstrated experience in providing structured service opportunities. These are the Expanded Community Based Public Works, Working for Water, Learnerships as well as South African National Defence Force Programmes. The Multi-Purpose Community Centres are an important resource in terms of the space that is needed in communities for youth development. The strategic partnership between the NYS and these programmes will continue to evolve.

Furthermore, achieving a cohesive NYS will to a large extent depend on the ability to pool budgets across departments. While there are accounting and legislative restrictions on the extent to which it is possible to fully pool budgets, joint investment planning offers a means for achieving greater integration. Setting common objectives based on outcomes will become an important dimension of the strategic partnerships that will be formed across departments. The financial procedures in the partner departments will have to pay due consideration to the impact on implementation and long-term outcomes of the NYS. It will be in the interest of the NYSP that barriers to such integration be identified and ways to overcome them, explored. The message conveyed by the process of selecting national performance indicators is a hopeful one and an important development in embedding a culture of partnership. Due consideration will also have to be paid to the capacity and limits of local, nongovernmental and private sector funding in some communities.

The private and donor sectors have a major role to play not only in the conventional sense of funding but in terms of the technical expertise and experience that reside in these sectors. Thus there will need to be concerted effort to secure donor funding for the NYS.

7. MEASURING SUCCESS

The success of the NYS will be judged by the:

- Volume of new and additional NYS programmes and opportunities for service created;
- The number of organisations running NYS projects;
- The number of young people taking up service opportunities;
- The number of young people completing the full year of service;
- The impact of NYS and youth led projects;
- The impact of service on local communities; and
- The impact of NYS on the self-efficacy of young people and employability.