



# **NYS in SA: Lessons We've Learned**

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# NYS in SA

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**Through the NYS Green Paper & the draft NYS White Paper, the following **VISION** was articulated:**

**“To provide a long term & effective means of reconstructing the South African society through physical rehabilitation, reconstruction of community resources as well as rebuilding the fabric of communities. The National Youth Service will enable young people to promote the spirit of nation-building by inculcating a sense of service culture, a common appreciation of nationhood & ensuring integrated youth development through service & learning activities.”**

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# NYS in SA

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NYS is a government initiative launched in August 2004 to engage young South Africans in community service activities in order to strengthen service delivery, promote nation-building, foster social cohesion & to assist youth to gain occupational skills necessary to access sustainable livelihoods. The primary beneficiaries of this Second Economy intervention are the communities receiving services. The out-of-school & unemployed youth who serve are considered secondary beneficiaries.

NYS seek to give practical meaning to the Constitutional principle of citizens' rights & responsibilities. It offers youth an opportunity to express their civic responsibilities in a structured manner.

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# NYS Objectives

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- ❑ To promote *social cohesion & build social capital*,
  - ❑ To inculcate a culture of service to communities,
  - ❑ To inculcate the spirit of patriotism & an understanding youth's role in the promotion democracy & national reconstruction,
  - ❑ To develop the skills, knowledge & technical abilities of young people to enable them to make a meaningful transition to adulthood, &
  - ❑ To improve youth employability.
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# NYS Model

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**Integrated model that harnesses the potential of youth to become active citizens who contribute to social & economic life of the country**

**The NYS model is premised on the assumption that service opportunities abound given the historical realities of deprivation. These opportunities offer an opportunity to gain occupational skills necessary to transit to the world of work. Provision of vocational training whilst serving serve the purpose of enriching the experience & preparing youth for livelihoods.**

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# NYS Coordination

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<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role</b>
<p><b>The National Youth Service Unit</b></p> <p>(The Minister in the Presidency has political oversight over the NYSU which is managed by Umsobomvu Youth Fund)</p>	<p><b>Work with government departments &amp; civil society organisations to explore &amp; develop opportunities for service</b></p> <p><b>Develop clear guidelines &amp; manuals to support the identification, design &amp; implementation of youth service projects</b></p> <p><b>Train &amp; register Technical Advisors (TAs) &amp; Programme Institutional Assessors (PIAs) who provide technical support to organisations implementing NYS</b></p> <p><b>Identify &amp; register projects that meet NYS criteria, brand &amp; profile NYS, secure funds &amp; raise awareness about value of service</b></p>

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# NYS Coordination

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<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>The Presidency</b>	Deputy President (Champion), Minister (Political oversight), Policy Unit (institutionalisation)
<b>Youth Commissions</b>	Lobbying, advocacy, project identification, monitoring & development of policy framework
<b>Umsobomvu Youth Fund</b>	Manage the NYSU which in turn identifies, register & facilitate programme implementation. Provide financial & technical support, capacity building, contract management (service providers), follow-up & aftercare (manage exit opportunities for youth) as well as M&E
<b>Government Departments</b> (incl. Provinces & Municipalities)	Implement NYS through projects in Home Based Care, Housing, Road Construction, ABET, Nature Conservation etc.

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# NYS Categories

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## CATEGORY 1

**Youth Employment:** a type of youth service comprising a structured model with accredited training, community service & linkages with exit opportunities as core criteria. This model needs intensification as it offers unemployed youth the skills & occupational experience while they serve their communities thus enhance social inclusion, social capital & employability.

## CATEGORY 2

A youth service intervention targeting **tertiary students**. It is proposed that community service be extended beyond the Health Professionals as it provides students the opportunity to give back to their communities & an opportunity to acquire occupational experience & therefore improve employability – reduce job searching time & costs.

## CATEGORY 3

A **volunteer model** targeting all cohorts of youth - including adults volunteering in projects that benefit youth, women, children & the elderly.

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# **NYS Delivery Model**

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## **CATEGORY 1**

**NYS is delivered through Government Departments within the context of key social transformation programmes like water, housing, ABET, food security & nutrition, community health, sports mass participation etc. NGOs provide implementation services ranging from life skills, entrepreneurship training, onsite supervision & mentorship & project coordination etc.**

## **CATEGORY 2**

**Tertiary institutions & student bodies identify, develop & manage community service activities.**

## **CATEGORY 3**

**CBOs & NGOs coordinate volunteer projects. The private can also lead implementation of this category directly or through civil society.**

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# NYS in Action...

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**What are the social costs?**

**Can this project be replicated?**

**Are there signs of social cohesion?**

**500 youth participate in this PHP project @ Moses Kotane Municipality – North West**

**Sizes range from 40 – 52 M<sup>2</sup>**

**Materials are produced by the community**

**Partners incl. municipality, youth organization & govt. departments**

# Some lessons – policy & institutional

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- ❑ **Elevating NYS into a Presidential initiative championed by the country's Deputy President propels the programme**
- ❑ **Inclusion of NYS into the country's growth initiative was a critical milestone that allowed the state to set clear targets**
- ❑ **Inclusion of NYS into the Programme of Action facilitates Executive oversight**
- ❑ **Collaboration & integrated planning across spheres of government is necessary to accelerate NYS**
- ❑ **Inclusion of NYS into departments strategic plans facilitate funding**
- ❑ **The National Youth Policy set clear principles for NYS**

**NYS Numbers grew from 5000 in 2004 to 55 000 in 2007**

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# Some lessons – programme level

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- ❑ **Proper orientation at the beginning of the projects reduces attrition - less than 5% dropout rate is recorded. It help to manage expectations & set the tone for the year ahead**
  - ❑ **NYS helps to build social capital – we use employment & self-employment numbers, & rate of enrolment in further learning programmes as indicators**
  - ❑ **Civic awareness & nation building indicators difficult to measure at project level**
  - ❑ **Local organisations play a critical in programme delivery**
  - ❑ **NYS projects allow marginalised youth to access & benefit from skills programmes & employment opportunities**
  - ❑ **Communities embrace NYS projects**
  - ❑ **Participants value the training & service (work experience) as much as they celebrate the stipends (food & travel allowances)**
  - ❑ **Learning Forums are useful to build communities of practice**
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# Some lessons – challenges

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- ❑ Communication: weak brand awareness
- ❑ Balancing the goals of service (social cohesion), increasing the numbers (reach & scale) & employment (social capital)
- ❑ Institutionalising NYS especially at local government level
- ❑ Adequate funding - maybe we have not built a strong case!
- ❑ Weak NGO capacity to effectively support the programme
- ❑ Integrating M&E & reporting systems of various funding partners
- ❑ Time lags between planning, fund approval & implementation often too long – opportunity cost!
- ❑ Poor private sector participation – maybe we have not built a strong case!
- ❑ Uniformity of standards – minimum requirements too fluid
- ❑ Resources & capacity of the NYSU vs. 100 000 target by 2010

**Assumed NYS critical drivers not 'scientifically' tested**

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# Voices of youth in service!

## A TREE AMONG TREES, A PLACE AMONG PLACES

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You grew up in a lonely place  
Where there were no trees around  
Where nobody visited you,  
Where nobody thought about you or watered you,  
And where nobody thought you will bear fruit one day  
But you stood up under all those circumstances  
Today you are a tree among other trees  
You bear fruit and you'll continue to bear  
More fruit, fruit that gives life, fruit that  
Heals the broken hearts  
You provided shelter for the people  
People who were homeless  
People who had given up in life  
You gave them hope  
And all of that you provided talent to us  
Today you are being noticed  
That you are a tree amongst trees  
A place among the places  
17 Shaft Youth Service Project – I'm not afraid to praise your name

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***21-yr old NYS  
participant – 17 Shaft  
Housing Construction  
Project, 2004***

# THANK YOU

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[www.gov.za](http://www.gov.za)

[www.nysu.org.za](http://www.nysu.org.za)

***South Africa, Alive with Possibilities!***

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