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State of the Art

A REPORT ON THE 20 YEARS OF THE FLEMISH

South Africa Cooperation



NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OUR YOUTH. OUR FUTURE.

**A REPORT ON THE
20 YEARS OF FLEMISH
COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**





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Flemish Minister for Youth, Benjamin Dalle





FOREWORD

For more than twenty years, the Republic of South Africa and the Government of Flanders have been working together intensively in youth matters. Mutual curiosity and, above all, a great belief in the power of young people underpinned this exceptionally long and fascinating relationship. The two partners invested their respective visions, knowledge and experiences. This resulted in a long series of diverse initiatives commuting between South Africa and Flanders, involving hundreds of young, enthusiastic South African and Flemish youth workers and experts. They came together in dozens of exchanges and training courses, internships in Flemish municipal youth services, congresses and the coaching of youth and leisure centres. The emphasis was placed successively on training young volunteers and youth workers, supporting local policy makers, developing youth programmes in community centres and stimulating voluntary commitment in local communities.

An uninterrupted collaboration of more than two decades is remarkable. In fact, it is exceptional. Especially because this continuity developed in a very open atmosphere that was highly motivating from all sides. And there was at all times a conscious investment of human and financial resources, regardless of the changing Ministers and systems.

The report we are presenting here as a diptych is grafted onto the same shared motivation, namely a reflection by South Africa and Flanders on this collaboration. It not only tells a positive story, in all openness, focusing on successes and points for improvement. It is above all a narrative about how both governments discovered each other... and are still discovering each other.

This two-part report wants to offer more than an honest and delightful retrospective. It provides insights into how the sustainable collaboration developed in practice. And at the same time envisages a hopeful future. After all, governments that systematically and enthusiastically invest in young people, that want to make them stronger and encourage them to become active and committed citizens, immediately demonstrate how hopeful they feel about the future.

We sincerely thank anyone who contributed to this report and hope that they and all those who will later work within this collaboration will share the same enthusiasm and conviction.

For the Republic of South Africa,
Minister in the Presidency Responsible for Women,
Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane

For the Government of Flanders,
Flemish Minister responsible for Youth

Benjamin Dalle



CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND	12
1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT	12
1.2 THE KEY ROLE-PLAYERS INTERVIEWED	12
1.3 REPORT ON THE 20 YEARS OF THE FLEMISH / SOUTH AFRICA COOPERATION	13
1.4 THE FLEMISH SUBMISSION	13
1.5 LIMITATIONS	13
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	14
2.1 ALL THE ROLEPLAYERS HAD IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WHEN THEY GOT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT	14
2.2 THE ROLEPLAYERS RATED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT HIGHLY	14
2.3 WHAT THE ROLEPLAYERS FELT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE DIFFERENTLY	15
2.4 THE PROJECT BENEFITTED THE NYDA AND THE FLEMISH GOVERNMENT	16
2.5 THE RELATIONSHIP SURVIVED BECAUSE OF COMMITMENT	18
2.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BENEFITTED BOTH THE FLEMISH AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS	18
2.7 THERE WERE A FEW SITUATIONS WHERE THE INTERVIEWEES FELT THE PROGRAMME UNDER THREAT BUT THE PROBLEMS WERE ALWAYS RESOLVED	20

2.8	THE PROGRAMME HAD REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS THE PAST 20 YEARS	22
2.9	THE NYDA/FLEMISH PARTNERSHIP RESULTED IN SEVERAL BEST PRACTICES THAT SHOULD BE CARRIED FORWARD	23
2.10	THE KEY ROLEPLAYERS HAD SOME PROFOUND MESSAGES FOR THE NYDA REGARDING THE FLEMISH PROJECT	25
3.	THEMED SUMMARY	29
3.1	LENGTH OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAMME	29
3.2	ROLES PLAYED IN THIS PROGRAMME?	30
3.3	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAMME, RATED OUT OF 10	32
3.4	THE BENEFITS OF THIS RELATIONSHIP	38
3.5	WHY THIS RELATIONSHIP SURVIVED DESPITE CHANGES	46
3.6	THE VALUE DERIVED FROM THIS RELATIONSHIP	49
3.7	SITUATIONS WHERE THE RELATIONSHIP WAS UNDER THREAT	55
3.8	THE BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS RELATIONSHIP THE PAST 20 YEARS	61
3.9	BEST PRACTICES THAT RESULTED FROM THIS PROGRAMME	64
3.10	A LAST MESSAGE TO THE NYDA ABOUT THIS RELATIONSHIP	68
4.	VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTIONS	73
4.1	INTERVIEWS	73
4.2	THE VIDEO	115

**A REPORT ON THE
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Mr. Sifiso Mtsweni

In his capacity as the Executive Chairperson of the 3rd NYDA Board of Directors, Mr. Mtsweni acknowledged that the partnership has come a long way. He highlighted the NYDA's happiness when he said "I want the partnership to be strengthened" for the youth of South Africa and the country to derive real value out of the program.

He sees this partnership becoming stronger and lasting even beyond the next 20 years. **"it's one of those things that will actually be handed over to different generations to make sure it continues"**. His message to the Flemish government was, "on behalf of the young people in South Africa, we appreciate the support, we appreciate the partnership and we call on you to continue to work with us. South Africa is a country that is alive with possibilities, a country that has a lot of potential and it just needs that potential to be harnessed to ensure that the partnership contributes to building better societies for the future".



Mr. Waseem Carrim

Mr Carrim the current CEO of the NYDA notes that "The Flemish government was one of the first international governments to support youth development post 1994 and we really value the investment from the Flemish people". The CEO further indicated that the cooperation generated important lessons for South Africa on areas such as social cohesion through the National Youth Service Programme, which was one of the key priorities at the time.

In his reflections, the CEO reported that many young people have participated in the various activities that have taken place. This cooperation has contributed to the rejuvenation of our youth service framework and policies. He believes that this has had immeasurable impact. **"And I think it has influenced, to a greater degree, the volunteer space in the South African landscape currently"**.



Ms. Ankie Motsoahae-Maepa

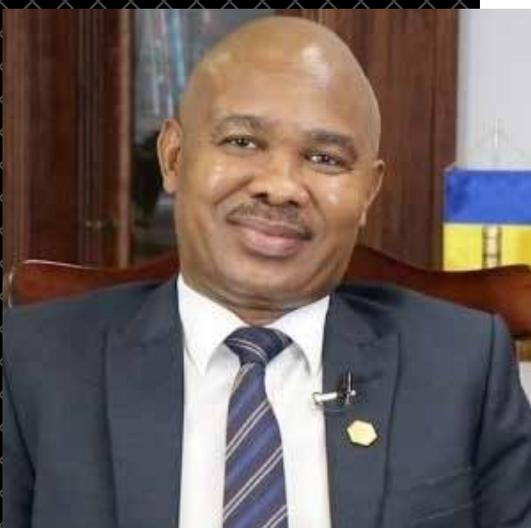
The National Youth Service Program is a program of the South African government with the NYDA coordinating it on behalf of the government. She outlined its main objective as ensuring that we promote social cohesion and nation building to deal with the plight of South African young people and address the problems that impact them as a result of the painful history of our country.

The program is anchored on two broad programmatic areas. The first one is the Volunteer Program. The second being what is popularly known as Category One program – which is really the skills program where young people are engaged in activities that ensure that, upon completion, they accredited skills, they have participated in volunteer community services, but also their chances of employability have been enhanced.



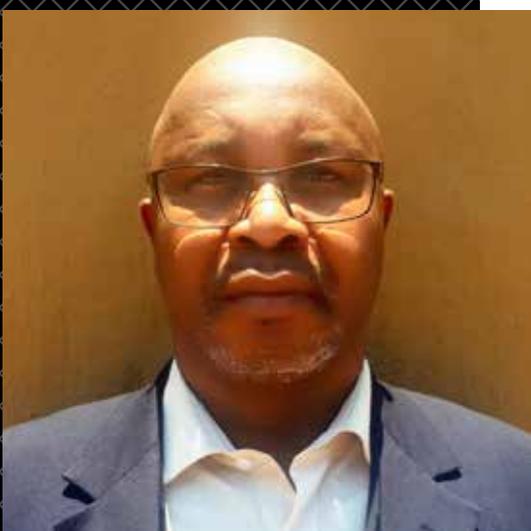
Ms Nthuseng Mphahlele

Ms Mphahlele was involved in this partnership as the head of the National Youth Service Unit for about seven years. "It was like a relationship based on equal footing, on the same level of partnership. It was not like one is bigger than the other. We were all in it for the common good, and we could discuss and see issues for what they were and agree on objectives depending on where we wanted to take the program".



Mr Jabu Mbalula

He was the chairperson of the National Youth Commission from 2000 until 2006 at the inception of the cooperation. Mr Mbalula rated the cooperation highly as one of the people who started it. "I would give it an excellent score because I think that we never had that break in terms of concept conceptualization of the project and the practical implementation. We were the pioneers of it, under the perspective of the then youth commission, and when the youth commission and Umsobomvu Youth fund came together to form the national youth development agency. On this particular project there was really no break in understanding the concept. In fact, what I understand currently exists, is that it has been redefined, it has been redefined and the scope has been broadened".



Mr Patrick Mphale

Mr Mphale was involved with the project as the NYS Senior Manager from 2009 to 2014. He also rated the effectiveness of the partnership highly at eight. "Even though they were putting money into the project, they were not imposing any of their thinking on us. They were the ones who actually insisted that we should involve civil society organizations to help us determine what type of areas of corporation would form our agreement". He however believed that lack of the involvement of the private sector limited the impact of the programme." When we started this process of strengthening volunteerism in civil society organizations, the idea was also to break into the private sector. In fact two or three organizations which were part of that working group were from the private sector. Unfortunately, by the time we completed the document, they had collapsed, and we never actually made concrete follow up (to determine if) we were to get the private sector from a South African perspective to be involved in this project.



Mr Thabang Molefe

Mr Molefe is a youth practitioner who started youth work around 2000. He is one of the first group of young people from South Africa to visit the Flemish communities in Belgium in 2004. With his background of research, he did a lot of youth development research at this early period with mentors from the Flemish. He rates the partnership highly giving it 10 out of 10 with his experience. "I would give it a ten actually. I would give them a 10 because of, in our time, we were a group of young people that were actively involved in politics and we have opinions. Hard core opinions about what developing countries had to do with their youth development, particularly our country, the role of our country in youth development. At that time we felt that the leadership of the country was not taking youth development seriously. It was not putting it at the centre of the development program of the country".



Mr Lwazi Mboyi

Mr Mboyi got involved in the programme since his days as the CEO of the National Youth Commission from 1998 and subsequently joining NYDA until 2017. He has over ten years of involvement in this partnership. He rates the partnership highly in terms of its effectiveness. "If I look at the totality of what we achieved then, and the activities that we're involved in and the contribution of the partnership to broader society, and the broader programs of youth development in the country, I would give it between an eight and nine out of ten" Mr Mboyi also believes that there are enormous benefits derived from the programme in the area of youth volunteerism and cultural exchange. "I think for the South African side (there was) also the benefit about developing systems of local government in as far as the young people are concerned and also exchanging experiences where we didn't have experiences and we didn't have expertise".



Mr Malose Kekana

Mr Kekana was the CEO of the Umsobomvu Youth Fund and got involved in the partnership from 2008 to 2010. He also rated the effectiveness of the programme highly at eight. "It created a very critical and trustworthy body of knowledge, that can be used to improve upon or to mainstream, the kind of work that the NYDA is doing".



BACKGROUND

1

Twenty years ago the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), in partnership with the Flemish government, implemented a project which aimed at promoting and up-scaling youth volunteering in civil society organizations in South Africa. The objective of the project was to cultivate an enabling environment for youth volunteering to flourish in civil society organisations. To deal with the constraints that youth volunteering in civil society faced in South Africa, the NYDA identified four building blocks:

1. **Capacity building**
2. **Knowledge generation**
3. **Marketing and communication and**
4. **Advocacy.**

1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

A Report on the 20 Years of the Flemish Cooperation' is a celebration of the whole cooperation and fulfils a strategic focus of the Cooperation, which is building block 3 "Marketing and Communications".

1.2 THE KEY ROLE-PLAYERS INTERVIEWED

The NYDA Board decided to address this building block by capturing the views of key role-players that was involved in the project the past 20 years. Six interviews and a video, including three key roleplayers, are documented in this report.

The people interviewed were:

- **Mr Thabang Molefe**
Former Youth Leader and Activist
- **Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle**
Former Executive Director: Operations at NYDA
- **Mr Patrick Mphale**
Former General Manager of Skills and NYS at NYDA
- **Mr Lwazi Mboyi**
Former CEO of the National Youth Commission and Former Executive Director at NYDA – who also participated in the video
- **Mr Malose Kekana**
Former CEO of Umsobomvu Youth Fund and of The NYDA
- **Ambassador Jabu Mbalula**
Former Chairperson of National Youth Commission

The people that participated in the video were:

- **Ms Ankie Motsoahae-Maepa**
Executive Director: NYS
- **Mr Waseem Carrim**
CEO of NYDA
- **Mr Lwazi Mboyi**
Former CEO of the National Youth Commission and Former Executive Director at NYDA – who was also interviewed

1.3 REPORT ON THE 20 YEARS OF THE FLEMISH / SOUTH AFRICA COOPERATION

The report reflects the views of the people interviewed and captured in the video on the following themes:

- The interviewees' involvement in the project
- What worked well
- The benefits of the project for
- The Flemish government
- The value of the relationship for
- The South African government
- The beneficiaries
- The situation
- Achievements of the relationship
- A last message to the management team from the key role-players
- Their view of the effectiveness of the project
- What could have been done differently
- The NYDA
- Why the relationship survived 20 years
- The Flemish government
- The NYDA
- Situations where the relationship were under threat
- The solution
- Best practices that should be taken forward

The report comprises four sections:

- The first section of the report is an executive summary on the trends identified in the interviews and the video
- Section two is the comments of the different roleplayers interviewed according to the themes
- Section three is the verbatim contents of the interviews and the video
- Section four is the Flemish perspective on the Cooperation.

1.4 THE FLEMISH SUBMISSION

Insights and conclusions after 20 years of bilateral cooperation on youth (work) policy between South Africa and the Flemish government”.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

According to the project document interviewees were required to sign a document to prove that the interview was done.

- All the interviews were conducted in the presence of a NYDA staff member
- Recordings of the interviews were made.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2

2.1 ALL THE ROLEPLAYERS HAD IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WHEN THEY GOT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Most of the people interviewed were involved with the National Youth Commission before they got involved with the NYDA and the Flemish project. This meant that they were familiar with the needs and the realities of the South African youth.

2.2 THE ROLEPLAYERS RATED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT HIGHLY

The roleplayers indicated that their high rating of the project was due to the following elements:

A planned approach was followed

A plan was created for youth development, based on a survey funded by the Flemish. It enabled the leaders of the NYDA to focus on youth development and to develop principles according to which it must be done. The Flemish project ensured that the youth development was done according to a set deadline, specific principles, it was properly controlled and quantitatively managed.

A positive relationship

The relationship with the Flemish counter-partners was positive. They visited each other, had open discussions about the challenges and the opportunities. They never imposed their thinking on the NYDA.

The awareness created within municipalities about the need for youth development

As a result of this project and the conference in Somerset-West, guidelines were developed for municipalities to focus on the development of young people. This not only created awareness about the importance of youth development, it also facilitated a structured approach to addressing the needs of young people.

Skills development

The project enabled people from South Africa to experience the best practices in youth development in Flanders and for the people of Flanders to experience the realities of youth development in South Africa. Having first-hand experience made the Flemish government aware of the resources that were required to succeed.

The consistency of their approach

The representatives from Flanders had a very specific process they used for youth development. It was clear what they expected, when and at what standard. They set SMART objectives that were clear to all involved. The Flemish government openly committed to be involved in the longterm. This process included an internal audit process and the reporting system strengthened the governance of the project.

2.3 WHAT THE ROLEPLAYERS FELT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE DIFFERENTLY

Despite their positive perceptions of the relationship, some of the people interviewed felt there were things that could have been done differently.

Building the Youth Build brand

This programme could have been used as the basis of the programme developed with the Flemish government. The NYDA would then have had a brand under the Flemish programme. The reason why it was not used was probably because it was not properly documented.

The lack of private sector involvement

The idea was that the private sector should be involved and initially a few organisations were involved but the relationship was not maintained. It was never determined why the relationships with the organisations did not succeed.

The internal processes of the NYDA

The Department of Public Works wanted to become involved and contributed a substantial amount of funding towards youth development. The Flemish government responded on time, but due to the internal processes of the NYDA, the project never came to fruition.

Using Dutch in communications

The Flemish delegation sometimes forgot that the team were not all Dutch speaking. Conversations in meetings and email messages would thus not be accessible to the NYDA team members. Only when visiting Flanders, they realised that certain information was not shared with the NYDA team.

Overseeing the establishment of youth development functions in municipalities

The NYDA should have stayed involved in this and ensured these functions were established and their functioning, performance and reporting processes should have been monitored.

Extending the learning process

The youth sent to work in municipalities in Flanders would have benefitted more if they stayed longer than just two weeks. They could have learned more about designing and updating a policy, designing an intervention, the budgeting process, reporting on a project and aligning projects with municipal priorities.

Improved coordination with a full-time resource

Coordination would have been easier and more effective if the Flemish government allocated a full-time staff member to work at the NYDA offices, especially at the start of the project. This would have helped both parties to understand the expectations and requirements of the other party.

Sharing the knowledge about youth development

There is a need to build a knowledge bank about successful youth development programmes in other countries, especially in Africa. Collaboration and the sharing of knowledge should have been encouraged. There should have been more cross-pollination and sharing of information between donors and recipients of funding.

2.4 THE PROJECT BENEFITTED THE NYDA AND THE FLEMISH GOVERNMENT

The interviewees all felt that the project had benefits for both the NYDA and the Flemish government

2.4.1 The NYDA:

The structure of the NYDA

The structure of the NYDA was based on the foundation and the understanding gained in Belgium. The National Youth Commission and the Umsumbomvo Fund were combined to have an integrated, uniform approach to mainstream youth development.

Reconfiguring youth development in local government

The NYDA was exposed to a structure and knowledge on how to establish youth development on local government level and in districts. The association with the Flemish government assisted the NYDA to make inroads in this regard. The exchange programme, where staff and young people were exposed to youth development models and the time spent in municipalities in Flanders, created an understanding of how youth development programmes should be conceptualised and implemented on local level.

The way the Flemish government treated the NYDA

The partnership with the Flemish was unique. Other donors wanted to be prescriptive and tell the NYDA what to do, not willing to listen to our realities and needs. The Flemish on the other hand was willing to listen, to discuss, to understand our needs and realities. It was a relationship based on an equal footing. They treated us with respect and we had a common goal.

The governance structures

Their governance structures and reporting requirements had a positive impact on how the NYDA accounted for the utilisation of resources. Their high standards impacted positively on the reputation of the NYDA as a well-managed entity.

The relationships built with civil society organisations

The NYDA reached civil society organisations with their help which would not have been possible without it. Another benefit in this regard was that the NYDA could take representatives from civil societies in South Africa along to learn from the Flemish.

The exposure of the NYDA

The leadership of the NYDA had the privilege to experience youth development in another country. With the help of the Flemish the leadership of the NYDA also had the opportunity to attend and present papers at international conferences.

New insights on youth development

The exposure to youth development in Belgium created new insights about best practices, like starting with youth development from the age of three (3). Their focus on the development of creative skills and art and involving people from a very young age in volunteer programmes had a significant impact on the way the NYDA planned their interventions.

The stability of the relationship

The NYDA was established during a time of change in the country, but because the relationship survived from the National Youth Commission it created stability and confidence in youth development in South Africa.

Personal relationships were built

People became friends and contributed to each other's lives outside the formal structures. The importance of the friendships and "brotherhoods" that were formed, should not be discounted.

2.4.2 The Flemish Government

They learned about youth development in a developing country

It was a relationship of mutual learning. Not only did we learn from them, they also learned about the realities of South Africa as they were willing to engage with us and the South African youth. They always wanted to engage and find ways to improve the situation of young people. They returned to Belgium with new ideas about how to address youth development in their country and in other developing countries. They specifically benefitted from the way cross-cultural training and diversity was handled.

They could meet their development targets

The Flemish government have international development targets and their involvement in the NYDA enabled them to achieve it. In the process they could contribute financially and with their knowledge to the lives of young people in a developing country.

2.5 THE RELATIONSHIP SURVIVED BECAUSE OF COMMITMENT

Despite many changes over the past 20 years, the relationship continued because of a mutual interest in youth development; the way people treated each other, and the quality of the discussions people were prepared to have.

Consistency in focus and leadership

The two parties shared an interest in youth development – the one because they wanted to assist, the other because they needed it. Furthermore, the leadership on both sides was consistent. Even though the people in the leadership of the NYDA changed, their focus did not. The representatives from the Flemish government that were involved when the project started, are still involved.

The leadership of the project

The leadership on the Flemish side were advocates for youth development and could motivate resources. The seniority of the representatives of the Flemish government gave credibility to the project; they were strategically well positioned and could guide the NYDA. They were also committed to the success of the project. Similarly, the NYDA was equally well positioned in the office of the Presidency, giving credence to the importance of youth development for South Africa. The interest of the political leadership in both countries strengthened the relationship.

The changes in youth development were well managed

The smoothness with which the transition from the National Youth Commission to the NYDA was handled created confidence in the leadership of the new organisation and its positioning in the Presidency indicated that the government was serious about youth development.

Open discussions

Whenever there were differences of opinion, the different parties would have open discussions and find common ground. The discussions were, despite differences, done in the spirit of cooperation – the end goal was always to cooperate to achieve the common youth development goal. The Flemish were strategically focused yet not prescriptive, or forcing the NYDA to accept their views. The two groups could always look beyond their differences to the bigger goal and find a way around the different views. There was trust and mutual respect between the parties because both were clear on their end goal.

2.6 THE RELATIONSHIP ADDED VALUE TO ALL INVOLVED

The role-players interviewed felt that the project added value to all the parties involved.

2.6.1 The Flemish Government

The opportunity to be involved in Africa

The Flemish government's focus was on empowering youth in African countries and the NYDA provided an opportunity for them to achieve that. This project helped them to introduce South Africa to the way they were involved in youth development through the local governments in Flanders. They could influence policies about youth development and gave input to guide the systems and structures to support it.

2.6.2 The South African Government

The project supported the Government's agenda

The programme provided the space and platform to develop the young people of South Africa. This partnership focused the youth development programmes of the government that were already being presented, e.g. entrepreneurial and life skills. The Flemish government had a clear structure according to which youth development was done and that included local governments. It thus contributed to the discourse about youth development within the government.

The learning that took place

The South African representatives that went to Belgium learned a lot from the models that the Flemish applied. As a developing nation we could learn a lot from a country that have walked the road already. A specific insight gained was the importance of strategic partners and how to form such partnerships.

The awareness created about youth development

The people that were in the first group to visit Belgium used their knowledge to write articles and present papers about youth development, creating awareness about the process amongst education and training authorities and the private sector.

To work with a credible

The Flemish government was not marred by corruption. It was a partner partner which rated governance highly and implemented governance programmes that benefitted the government's reputation. There was no other similar partnership between the South African government and another government. They used scientific models, based on thorough research and evidence of activities when they recommend programmes.

2.6.3 The NYDA

It strengthened

The NYDA was at the beginning stages of trying to improve the quality of process that just lives of our young people. At the time when the Flemish got involved started local governments did not focus on young people, but through this partnership and the mechanisms that were put in place, local governments could focus on young people.

A body of knowledge

As a result of the quality of research that was conducted, the NYDA built a significant body of knowledge on youth development.

The extra funds

The NYDA was supported by the South African government but the **broadened the NYDA** additional funding enabled them to expand their youth development **scope** programmes and reach more young people.

Leadership support

Despite several organisational and leadership changes and reputational **increased the fortitude** issues, the Flemish leadership was prepared to continue their support because they believed in the organisation. This in itself added value to the reputation of the NYDA.

It provided

When the Flemish got involved, South Africa was still building its policies framework and social cohesion through the National Youth Service. The cooperation with the Flemish led to South Africa learning about youth development from its international counterparts. It gave the NYDA a framework within which to develop our own youth service programme.

2.6.4 The beneficiaries

They gained valuable skills and knowledge

The beneficiaries gained skills they could share and use for the benefit of the whole organisation and youth development specifically. Some of the young people that were part of this initiative used their skills and knowledge and moved on. They are now using the knowledge they gained in other roles and some are currently playing important roles in youth development in local governments.

Experience gained to assist local Governments

The young people that worked in municipalities and were sent to Belgium, gained valuable expertise and could get involved in the establishment of youth development programmes in local governments afterwards. The young people focused on gaining specific skills and expertise that enabled them to start programmes that will benefit young people.

2.7 THERE WERE A FEW SITUATIONS WHERE THE INTERVIEWEES FELT THE PROGRAMME WERE UNDER THREAT, BUT THE PROBLEMS WERE ALWAYS RESOLVED

It seldom happened that the people interviewed felt the relationship was under threat because of the open relationship and the honest discussions that usually rendered an amicable outcome.

Though it did not happen frequently, there were, however, a few situations where the relationship was under threat.

The leadership crisis in South Africa

The past ten years there was a leadership crisis in South Africa, causing people in government not sharing the youth development vision.

The newly elected leadership of the ANC have a vision to continue with what was there before.

The transition from the Youth Commission to the NYDA

Trying to convince the Flemish that they need to align to the mandate of the previous project with the NYDA mandate caused a bit of stress. However, it was well managed and eventually they could see that it was not about changing the initial project plan and going outside it. It was rather about scaling up and making sure that more people were added to the process.

When things got tense during the change process from the National Youth Commission to the NYDA, the NYDA team would invite the CEO or even the Chairperson of the NYDA to the meeting. The executive would be briefed to make sure that the Flemish partners were assured that even though the NYDA was going through change, the interests of the Flemish will be safe and that the program will be executed, and that nothing will be concluded unilaterally. That reassurance was quite important and had the necessary impact.

Cultural differences caused misunderstandings

Culturally differences sometimes caused stress. Not all the team members were culturally aware of the way the Flanders did things. Even though it caused misunderstandings on both sides, it was never serious and the team was able to work things out.

Political realities caused uncertainty

Whenever there were elections in Belgium, the team would be concerned because if another party won the election, they might discontinue the relationship. This is a continuous threat, particularly with the right-wing parties in Europe gaining increasingly more political power.

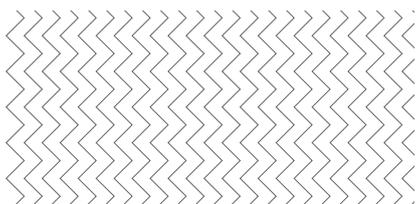
In South-Africa the situation was the same. The ANC government supported this but there was no guarantee that another government would do the same. Even changes within ANC impacted on the project and when people change, the focus change and programmes that were supported were under threat. This one cannot not be resolved. This is a threat that the NYDA will always have to recognize.

Different views of the research approach

The Flemish team had a specific view regarding the research approach that had to be followed and there were people on the NYDA side with different views on what type of research must be done. It was an argument amongst research experts, but they could eventually find each other, and the research was done.

The team resolved it by keeping on asking the right questions. The NYDA team would explain why a specific type of research was done and what worked in the South African context. We would discuss the differences and after discussions we reached consensus. It never happened that we walked out of the room without finding each other. We would look at the bigger picture, we did not differ on "what" we wanted to achieve - we were often differing on "how" though.

We wanted to build the capacity of South Africans so that they can implement these plans in the future but the Flemish model is that you use established experts:



They would want to work with an expert from a university when they have an academic on their panel. It never came to a point, not even once, where we felt the team was skating on thin ice. The personal relationship we developed over the years helped a lot in solving problems like this.

Differences were resolved before it became issues

The Flemish team never imposed their ideas on the NYDA, they were always open for discussion and new ideas. On the NYDA side there were dedicated, committed people on the program. People were always open and coming forward to make sure that they did their bit to support the program. Most of the issues we differed on were resolved through discussions. Sometimes we would differ on the direction of the partnership; on what were the expected outcomes and focus, but then we would discuss those issues and come to a solution that were to the mutual benefit of the two participating countries.

2.8 THE PROGRAMME HAD REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS THE PAST 20 YEARS

The key role-players interviewed were unanimous in their view that the programme has had remarkable achievements:

- Establishing youth development institutions and restructuring existing institutions;
- The intensification of the research process around youth development;
- The reorganisation of government youth institutions, defining their role and participation;
- The mobilization of young people to know their responsibilities and their roles;
- The involvement with the Extended Public Works Programme. It started with a contribution of R1 million and 20 – 50 volunteers. With the Flemish involvement it was expanded to R20 million with 2 000 volunteers and 100 employees. Part of expanding this programme was to change the whole idea that volunteerism is about a schooled person giving their service and really not expecting anything in return. That was how the concept is applied in Europe. We had to show them that in South Africa volunteers had to be paid. Even though we call them volunteers, it was more about these young people that need to be skilled, and be placed somewhere else;
- The capacity building intervention to do training of trainers at institutions where the volunteers were placed. Those people received specific training on how to work with young people;
- Projects in the Western Cape where the NYDA dealt with youth that used to abuse drugs, but they had been clean and had to be put into a program;
- The fact that the programme is still running after 20 years. The way the relationship evolved over different phases and different focus areas, and in all that the beneficiaries were young people;
- The centres that were established in the North West and the Free State to support this programme, are still functioning;
- Identifying opportunities for volunteerism and organisations which have volunteering opportunities, and to develop the My hands my heart online database;
- The seminars and conferences where the NYDA brought in civil society organizations to help us reflect on the challenges the programme faced and what could be learned from what we have achieved. In other words, to bring people together and talk;

- The development of young people in the South African context. Whether it was in research or local government activities or volunteer programs, or arts and culture, it was always the young people that benefitted. The biggest achievement were however the young people who were trained through these programs, and the youth could exchange experiences through these programs;
- The government-to-government relations and the relationships that were built between the people of South Africa and Flanders;
- The work done in local governments. They benefitted extensively from the internal knowledge that they gained on this project and from this partnership;
- The volunteer programs that are being run at the moment as a result of this partnership. The volunteering skill has been embedded amongst young people, it is not something tangible that you can say we've built this camp, but it is something that permeates throughout society; and
- The creation of a body of knowledge that can be distilled to create programs. As a result of this programme we have a knowledge base about youth development that is probably more extensive than any other in many parts of the world.

2.9 THE NYDA/FLEMISH PARTNERSHIP RESULTED IN SEVERAL BEST PRACTICES THAT SHOULD BE CARRIED FORWARD

The interviewees could list several best practices that were evident during the time they were involved in the NYDA.

Educational practices that focused on play

The Flemish created awareness about the educational value of games in education. They know playing was important and connected it with development and with work.

The Flemish values are embedded in everything they do

They have infused their value system into every aspect of life of the Flemish society – from being honest when nobody saw you to organisational governance.

Do less but deliver quality

They taught us to focus our interventions and to deliver quality. The Youth-Built project is something to be proud of, because it exemplified that.

The relationship and how the Flemish managed it

While other donors would indicate on what and how their donations must be managed, they asked what the NYDA would want to focus on for the next five years and then, at the end of the five-year term ask us what would we want the next focus to be. They allowed us to consult with other parties before we come back to them with recommendations.

The political support for the project from both governments

Despite the challenges it created, both the Flemish government and the South African government supported the project since its onset. That gave the project credibility.

The importance of a dedicated person

One of the reasons why this project was so successful was because the Flemish dedicated a person to the project, someone who was committed, who shared the vision 20 years ago and still shares it today.

Involve the beneficiaries

It is important to bring the beneficiaries together and ask them if the NYDA was doing the right thing; if it was going according to plan; what else could we do; and then use this to inform our next plan.

Involve civil society organisations

The Flemish insisted that the NYDA should bring civil society organizations along to Brussels to expose them to the way the Flemish did volunteerism. That build relationships and the other organisations gained valuable insights in the process.

The standards that were set

The NYDA has one of the few programs that has a standard of practice because the way the Flemish team managed it. They provided processes and procedures for governance and the NYDA were required to report according to specific guidelines. All this left the NYDA with a set of standards that can be applied to any project.

The importance of youth development in local government

We now know how important it is to involve young people in issues of local government. The project and the relationship with the Flemish government provided us an opportunity to know how and what are the best ways, platforms and instruments that can be used to engage young people on this level. Ant this is not just to involve young people for academic purposes, but involve them for real meaningful, practical outcomes. It also presented us with the ideal structures that could be used at the local government level to ensure a real interface between young people and the local sphere of government. They made us realise the need to have dedicated programs and budgets for youth development on local government level. We now know what youth development can be, where youth development should be located and in what space of influence within the local government.

2.10 THE KEY ROLEPLAYERS HAD SOME PROFOUND MESSAGES FOR THE NYDA REGARDING THE FLEMISH PROJECT

Grow the spirit of the youth

One of the important traits that the young people have always had, is that whenever they are called upon, they will come forward. So, we should admit the adversity that is there, the challenges that are facing young people and they should be encouraged. We should encourage them to participate in programs that advance the wellbeing of society as a whole through volunteerism.

Go back to local Government level

Going back to the local government, there is still a lot of work to be done. We need to make sure that there are programmes on local level. Somewhere we lost the spirit of building proper programs for young people on this level. We lost the spirit of building proper systems. We lost the spirit of building the types of services that we would want for young people in municipalities.

You need an overall view of what's happening in the municipalities, because they are at the coal face of servicing local communities. You really need to build it from there upwards, and make sure that the local municipalities are focused intently on the well-being of young people. Somebody needs to go back and do the research to determine what is being done. We never went back to determine whether progress was made after the first and second conferences took place and the guidelines have been developed. We did not go back to determine whether those guidelines were properly institutionalized.

Maintain and grow the relationship

Maintain the relationship, strengthen the relationship and expand the horizon of the relationship. Expose more people to the relationship between the Flemish society and South Africa.

Expose more young people to the programme

Take more young people in, get money elsewhere if possible, but take more young people to stay for a year in the Flemish community to understand how it operates. When they come back, they will become influencers in South Africa.

Promote social cohesion

Pursue the agenda of social cohesion in the country by utilizing some of the best practices that were seen in the Flemish society. We are falling behind on uniting the country through the diverse nature of our value systems and our cultural practices.

Involve the private sector

Bring in the private sector. This was in the initial plan but it did not succeed. Bringing in the private sector is important from a sustainability point of view. The Flemish politics affects this relationship, and if that changes there won't be access to funding. To sustain the program, you need to get the private sector involved.





Build critical skills within the youth

Continue the partnership but define it in a meaningful manner to assist the building of more skills in our young people. Assess what the most important needs are for young people to contribute to the broader society and build those skills.

Expand the project into Africa

The EU was looking at building other partnerships going forward with Africa and South Africa. They need to look at volunteering and exchanges between the South African youth and youth from other parts of the African continent, maybe target one or two countries. Just share experiences, and make sure that there is a proper exchange of ideas.

Create awareness about the successes of this project

Governments function based on symbolism - they need to be acknowledged and be seeming to be doing well. It is very important for the NYDA to actually profile this relationship as the symbol of successful geo-political involvement. People need to know about successful projects such as this program supported by the Flemish government. If the NYDA just write reports and don't talk about the project, few people will know about it. There needs to be a lot of communication about this relationship to encourage others and to create awareness about its impact.

We must create more awareness about this collaboration and what makes things work in emerging developing countries. When people talk about foreign direct investment they tend to think about Ford and Volkswagen and BMW and this type of policy-based investment in skills. Human development often receive less attention. On youth development itself, it has been a huge uphill battle. The NYDA is ten years old and they must just let people know that there are good things happening in the NYDA.

Expand the project to include more countries

Continue with the project - not only with the Flemish government but with all the strategic bilateral countries the South African government has relations with. In doing this, we shall continue the culture of connecting young South Africans with the spirit of internationalism and build innovation among young people.



THEMED SUMMARY

3

The key-roleplayers were asked to share their views on the following themes:

- Length of their involvement in the programme
- Roles played in this programme
- The effectiveness of the programme, rated out of 10
- What worked well?
- What could have been done differently?
- The benefits of this relationship
- Why this relationship survived despite changes?
- The value derived from this relationship
- Situations where the relationship was under threat
- The biggest achievements of this relationship the past 20 years
- Best practices that resulted from this programme
- A last message to the NYDA about this relationship

3.1 LENGTH OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAMME

Mr Thabang Molefe

We started in 2000, 2001, 2002 I got involved with the National Youth Commission. At the time I had just written a paper for the country about the establishment of what is now known as a special program, Unity. At the time the discussion paper was about the institutionalization of youth development in South-Africa. I had just written that for the African National Congress Youth League, and then there was a debate that was continuing. The National Youth Commission was at the centre of that debate. Mr Mbuli was then the CEO of the National Youth Commission. We had a discussion and he said it may be wise for you to go and experience what other countries are doing around youth development. One of those countries was Belgium, particularly the Flemish Community in Belgium. I agreed and in 2004, if I remember well, that's when we went, a group of about ten or fifteen individuals that went into the program.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlele

I got involved in the project when the NYDA was commissioned. But I'm not sure completely, it was around 2009, up until probably 2016. This was when it first came to NYDA from the Youth Commission and there was a project manager that was appointed by the Flemish government to work under the Youth Commission. So, when the merger happened, that resource was reporting to me because at the time I was the head of the National Youth Service program.

Mr Patrick Mphale

I was involved with the project from 2009 to 2014. When I was involved with the project it was (during) the merger between the National Youth Commission and Umsombomvu to form the NYDA. This project was part of the National Youth Service Program, and it was led by the program manager called Tina Cornelly, who was reporting directly to me at the time. The focus at the time of the merger was on arts and culture. It was probably two or three years later when we had to review our corporation agreement and we put together a team of civil society organizations and some private sector organizations, and we did a lot of brainstorming sessions to determine and decide what the focus of the corporation should be. This culminated into the document called Promoting Volunteerism amongst Civil Society Organizations. That was what we did, we identified what we called building blocks of the corporation. The first one was what we called capacity building, because this project was going to focus on civil society organizations who were working with volunteers. The other one was knowledge generation, which was more about to manage research. The third one was marketing and communication and fourth one, the last one, I believe it was advocacy. When I left the NYDA towards the end of 2015 we just started to implement some of that. One of the building blocks that we had already started to implement at that time was the capacity building, because by the time I left we'd produced what was called the volunteer toolkit.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

I was with the National Youth Commission for about eight years. So that's the extent to which I was involved with the project. But even after I left the commission, I still had engagements with the project from time to time depending on the requests and everything. So, I really have been involved for more than 10 years.

Mr Malose Kekana

From 2008 until January 2010.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

I was appointed the chairperson of the National Youth Commission from 2000 until 2006. Right at the beginning of my term already, there already has been interaction between the youth commission and the government in Belgium to start on this project. And I also immediately got myself immersed into it. And so, I can safely say I was involved with it for the solid six years I was in charge of the National Youth commission.

3.2 ROLES PLAYED IN THIS PROGRAMME

Mr Thabang Molefe

Because I came from a local government, and when we got into the arrangement, i.e. into the program, I was given the task to do research, to focus on the youth and the economic integration in the Flemish community. That was my role, that's why I got a mentor from the city, I forgot his name.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

I was head of the National Youth Service Program. It was basically to give direction to the project and to make sure that the project is aligned to the mandate of the organization of the NYDA. When the project came to the NYDA it was focusing more on Arts and Culture, empowerment of NGO's and youth that were working in that space. When they came into the NYDA we were at a point (where) we were redefining a new strategic direction for the National Youth Development Agency. At that time, we were still thinking about how do we grow the National Youth Service Program (so) that we have many young people that are employable after the intervention. We had to negotiate with the Flemish government to drop the arts and culture partnership because it got quite small and controlled and to align, for instance, with the National Department of Public Works, NDWP so that we can begin to scale up and have impact. In that sense we got a good relationship going and an understanding of the Flemish side, as well that for the project to become sustainable, it doesn't have to be funded by the Flemish Market budget, but we can also try to now integrate (it) within our own program in government, and then we can grow in that way.

Mr Patrick Mphale

I was a senior manager; the program manager was reporting directly to me. There was a steering committee that was established between the Flemish government and us as NYDA. We met twice a year. They would come to South African for bilateral talks, to review progress, look at the challenges, and maybe come up with solutions and make recommendations. Once a year we would also go to Brussels for maybe four to five days to review, report back on the progress that we've made based on the plan. We had a five-year plan we had broken into annual plans. I was part of the delegation that hosted them when they were here, and was also part of the delegation that went to Brussels to report back, so I was an integral part of the planning and implementation of the project.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

I was the CEO of the Nation Youth Commission then, and the National Youth Commission was a structure that had the partnership with the Flemish Community, under the broad offices of Government. We reported to the Presidency, which is still the case now with the NYDA. That was my official role, and they (the Flemish project manager) reported directly to my office, then the CEO. The relationship started may be just a year before I joined, or a year or two before I joined. I mean the initial meetings started just before I joined, and then I joined immediately after that. I think the first meetings were in 1996 and 7. Those were first meetings to explore the potential partnership. From 1998 I was taken aboard, and we put together the first clear partnership. In terms of the draft documents, in terms of the nature of the partnership, areas of corporation involved. I led the partnership on behalf of the Commission at the time. You could technically say on behalf of everyone else really, because it was vested in my office. But I was also involved in the negotiations on an ongoing basis on the nature of the partnership, on what goes into the partnership package and what programs we would focus on. As time went on, we had a staff member that was dedicated to running the partnership, and she reported directly to me.

Mr Malose Kekana

Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Development Agency. My role was to supervise the people that worked on the projects funded by donors, such as the Flemish partners.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

Yes, I was the chairperson of the youth commission at the time. Meaning that I had to oversee the entire operations of the organization, its finances and more importantly its programs, which included this relationship. And further to that, I also had a direct relationship with the project itself.

At times, I also had to participate in some of the bilateral meetings that took place between us and the Flemish government, in which I had to give guidance and leadership on how the project has to be unfolded and how we saw it unfolding from the South African side. The CEO of the youth commission at the time was also working very close with the project manager on the project at the time and both of them, reported directly to me

3.3 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAMME, RATED OUT OF 10

Mr Thabang Molefe

I would give it a ten actually. I would give them a ten because of, in our time, we were a group of young people that were actively involved in politics and we have opinions. Hard core opinions about what developing countries had to do with their youth development, particularly our country, the role of our country in youth development. At that time we felt that the leadership of the country was not taking youth development seriously. It was not putting it at the centre of the development program of the country.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

Let's say eight.

Mr Patrick Mphale

I would say eight.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

If I look at the totality of what we achieved then, and the activities that we're involved in and the contribution of the partnership to broader society, and the broader programs of youth development in the country, I would give it between an eight or a nine.

Mr Malose Kekana

Eight.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

I would give it an excellent score.

3.3.1 What worked well

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

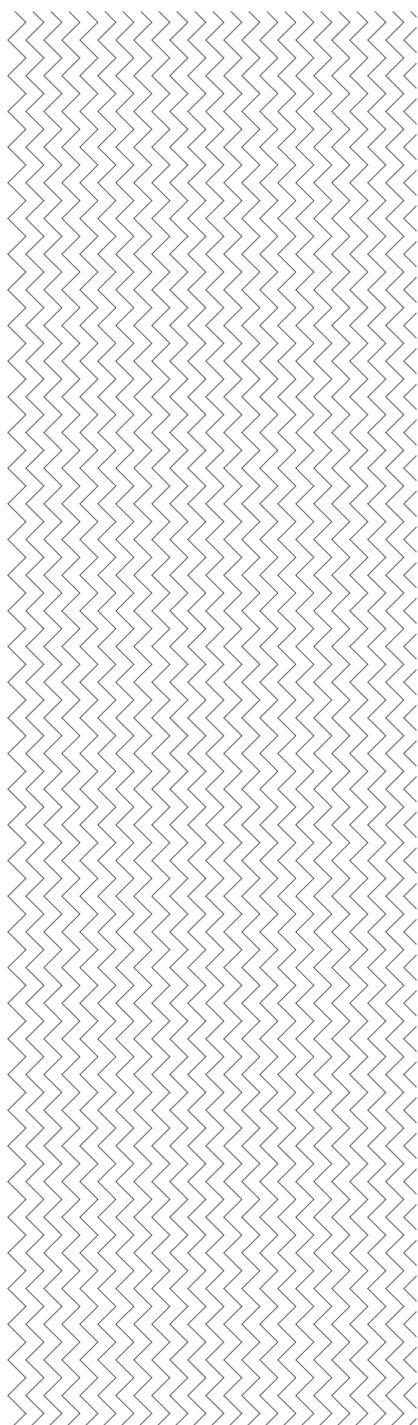
You know why? Because I didn't come from the clutches of smaller NGO's. The model of quite involved and we were able to use the project to safeguard proper principles of youth development. It came in at the time when we were under severe peer pressure to scale up hugely and we lost a lot of quality in the programmes that we were doing but because we were using the project of the Flemish Corporation then, we could guard some of that basic development and follow the principles of development, to make sure that whatever we were doing, I think it was in the education, social sector, environment, under the banner of the Flemish corporation, were properly controlled and quantitatively managed. I think the youth got more benefit from that intervention, than they would have gotten, in the bigger scheme, of other programs that were happening.

Mr Patrick Mphale

The first thing we did right, was that we developed a plan and based on that we were ready to execute the plan according to the deadlines and the timeframes. We had a good relationship with our Flemish counterparts. We visited them regularly, we had open discussions about the challenges that we were facing. Even though they were putting money into the project, they were not imposing any of their thinking on us. On the ground we did a lot of work. When we were doing arts and culture, there was an evaluation done, but also when we started the strengthening of civil society organizations. They were the ones who actually insisted that we should involve civil society organizations to help us determine what type of areas of corporation would form our agreement.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

One. If I go back to the beginning again, one of the first things that we did was to an action survey. That action survey was critical because we took people to the various municipalities to identify what was in existence in terms of servicing young people of the different municipalities, what was not in existence, what could be put in place, what could be improved, what could not be improved. The survey was funded through the partnership. It revealed that there was nothing across the board. So, for me that went very well just in terms of opening our eyes as South Africans to the fact that as much as we were talking about developing young people, at a local government level there was nothing that was happening, and there were no institutions that were structured. There were no people focusing on young people. It was a very bad situation because it was a very new situation. We then needed to start thinking about what it is that we're going to do to focus on young people in the various municipalities. Again, the partnership assisted us moving forward. There was a conference that was hosted in SomersetWest in Cape Town, which drew up guidelines for municipalities to focus on young people, what type of structures do you want to have, what type of systems do you want to have, where must the youth offices be based in their various municipalities, who was responsible for overseeing youth development, and all of that. This basically laid the foundation for the work that is being done at local government level. It increased the awareness amongst various municipalities about the fact that we needed to focus on young people.



Two. We needed to have a structured way of focusing on young people.

Three, these are the, in case you want to do tomorrow, the guidelines.

Four, for it to have effect you needed to position it in the office of the municipal manager, or in the office of the mayor. Those are the guidelines. The partnership therefore assisted in defining the terrain and defining the paradigm in terms of what needed to be done going forward. I think it added a lot of value to our society, a lot of value just in structuring what needed to be done going forward. Remember that the conference (was attended) by almost all the local municipalities.

Over 200 municipalities attended. Everyone began to understand that this is quite critical, and this is how you do it, because sometimes we assume that people know, and they don't know. If you give them the technical tools and assistance, then they'll know. For me, at the beginning of the partnership, that was one of the major things that we did. But also, in terms of the contribution, what worked, we also did a lot of changes. Taking young people from here, and officials from here to various communities in Flanders, to see how the Flemish were doing it and to see what kind of services are available for young people in the Flemish municipalities. Also to see what kind of programs would be made available and also to see the fact that there should be some kind of a commitment, budget-wise (were made) by the municipalities to cater for the needs of young people and just basically what programs do we need as a municipality, to allow for young people to grow. The Flanders also brought people here. We even achieved, what we called at the time, the pairing of municipalities, for instance, I can't remember now, but I think Bloemfontein was paired with Gent, if I'm not mistaken. But a variety of municipalities were paired together so they could, on their own provide each other with and exchange of technical expertise. There could be (an) exchange of experiences, there could be (an) exchange of a whole lot of other things that they wanted to exchange on, even personnel. You would find that a lot of other people came down to South Africa and others went back to Flanders. One of the things that the Flemish partnership also did, even before it went to the ambit of government, it started with the training of young people in life-skills. They (The Flemish) would cooperate with NGO's and have lots of exchanges of young people from here to Flanders and Flanders coming here. That was the other element, just before I forget

Mr Malose Kekana

Firstly, is that in the National Youth Project there was competition for resources and they were using a lot of resources. From the corporate side we do not get a lot of support for youth development, so there is quite a scarcity of resources for youth development initiatives. Is important that people are conscious about funding that base. (Secondly) the guidelines, or what is required, the standards and everything, in order to qualify and, or comply with a requirement. Those things in themselves helped (us) to change. Things like getting measures, SMART measures, because sometimes you just have a project statement. The requirements also helped to include audit reporting and setting of outcomes for the program itself. The requirements were from an external source such as the Flemish Government. Lastly, the consistency of support. People tell me they go out but we know that to change people's lives and to learn in terms of what works would take time. We made sure that there have been this consistent approach. It created a very critical and trustworthy body of knowledge, that can be used to improve upon or to mainstream, the kind of work that the NYDA is doing.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

I would give it an excellent score because I think that we never had that break in terms of concept conceptualization of the project and the practical implementation. We were the pioneers of it, under the perspective of the then youth commission, and when the youth commission and Umsobomvu Youth fund came together to form the national youth development agency. On this particular project there was really no break in understanding the concept. In fact, what I understand currently exists, is that it has been redefined, it has been redefined and the scope has been broadened.

Drawing very much into the lessons of the initial stages of the project and to make sure that it also addresses other issues that are currently the strategic focus of the NYDA.

3.3.2 What could have been done differently?**Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle**

I think we could have grown the program internally, within the National Youth Development Agency, and also build, manage, document best practice, share the learnings, build knowledge from the learnings of the project, and disseminate that knowledge. It was done to some extent, but I think if you compare it to a project we were running prior to this one called the Youth Build Programme, I still feel we could really emerged (with) a new model of how we could serve young people and deliver quality. More or less what is currently happening under the Youth Build. Puti is there, he can explain to you what the Youth Build does. We could have had a brand under the Flemish corporation, a brand for youth development, a proper youth development principles program. Maybe we lost that because we didn't really handle and document and share practice to the extent that we could have done.

Mr Patrick Mphale

I think the funding. The funding could have been more, we were not always happy with the amount of funding, given the type of work we were supposed to do. The second issue was, when we started this process of strengthening volunteerism in civil society organizations, the idea was to also to break into the private sector. In fact two or three organizations which were part of that working group were from the private sector. Unfortunately, by the time we completed the document, they had collapsed and we never actually made concrete follow up (to determine if) we were to get the private sector from a South African perspective to be involved in this project.

Some of the challenges were internal, within the NYDA. I'll go to a classic challenge that we experienced. At some stage one of the biggest things that we did (as part) of this program, was to forge a partnership with the Department of Public Works. The Department of Public Works had a program called Non-State Sector, specifically focusing on NPO's. We saw this an opportunity to collaborate with them. We agreed that they were going to actually give money to the NYDA, about 12 million, but that money was dependent on the NYDA approving a certain portion, about 2 million, of its own contribution. The Department of Public Works approved the money and our board was supposed to just give us a go ahead to sign the agreement and this is the allocation of the NYDA. That process took a good six months and that did nearly damage the relationship between us and the Department of Public Works. The internal processes of the NYDA, the approval processes, were a big challenge for this project. Particularly given the fact that the Flemish were very flexible. They would respond on time and it was us who were delaying to respond. Sometimes we were falling behind in terms of our own implementation plan.

The other challenge really was the issue of communication. The person who was managing the project was a Flemish but when he communicated with other people they were communicating in Flemish, so we could not read the emails. When the guys from Brussels were communicating to her, the project manager, they were communicating in Flemish. He was the poor manager, and was supposed to report to us but there was tension there because felt we were locked out of the conversation. There were certain things that we only picked up when in Brussels, that were not communicated to us properly when we were in South Africa. It was an issue of language.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

What could have gone better, I think maybe if we're still focusing on local government, I still think there's still some gaps even now. And maybe that could have been, if we had taken it a step further, and for instance have had a mechanism where we oversee the establishment of local youth units in municipalities, and monitor that they were established, and monitor their functioning and monitor their performance, and have a reporting process. I think for me that would have completed the picture, in terms of what we were doing. That's one of the key areas that for me I think if we were to do it would have worked better. Maybe secondly if we could have posted people on a much longer period to this various municipalities, maybe in Flanders and maybe Flemish people here, just for a more practical experience to understand exactly how things (were done), maybe you know from the design stages, how do you design policy, how do we design an intervention, how do you formulate a policy and update policy? How does it go through the various stages of the municipality? How do you make sure that whatever your intended intervention is, is budgeted for by the municipality? How do you match the budgets of the municipality with the intended interventions, and all of that sort of thing I think if we focused on that again it could have then improved our space by miles going forward. Maybe better coordination, because I think they are far and we are far, and yes there was coordination in-between. But I think maybe what helped was when the Flemish sent somebody here to be based to work with us on a more fulltime basis, and that improved the coordination a bit. I think maybe a mechanism like that could have worked better earlier. I think, also maybe more resources. If the Flemish could afford more resources, that could also have contributed extensively to a better scheme of what we wanted.

Maybe (they) could have looked at a longer term (visit), a sabbatical for somebody to be there and understand, that is the type of intervention that I (feel we) needed. (To understand) this is how it can be done and this is what needs to be done

Mr Malose Kekana

More money. Secondly, more knowledge (management), about youth development programs in developing countries. There is a need to look at breaking down silos, if you are doing work in Namibia or wherever, encourage of collaboration, to learn from different experiences.

Cross pollination and sharing of knowledge between donors to make sure there's peer learning. Have more resources directed towards sharing knowledge and using this platform better.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

Maybe I can say firstly that the, I think that the question that is important, which I also quickly want them to make an input on, is the benefits. The benefits that accrued.

3.4 THE BENEFITS OF THIS RELATIONSHIP

3.4.1 For the NYDA

Mr Thabang Molefe

There were a lot of benefits, but I will list a few organic benefits of the relationship. Firstly, the structure of the National Youth Development Agency. What made us to argue for the restructuring of the youth development institutions in the country, was based on the foundation and on the understanding that we got from the Belgium, the Flemish partnership. We had to move for two things, firstly, that there must be a uniform approach in terms of youth development in the country. It can't be that everyone and everything do youth development. One view at the time was to have a national youth ministry. The other view from the same group of ten people that went to Belgium, was to have an advocacy structure, but we must combine the Umsombomvo Youth Fund and the National Youth Commission into one, that they do one job. In the Flemish society we learned that there's a Ministry for Youth and Sport and work is done firstly, legally in the form of regulations and secondly, it is socially integrated into both the education system and the economic aspects of the country. That was the first benefit to create a uniform system for youth development in the country. The second benefit was that we must create, what I termed when I wrote the proposal at the time, an integrated, integration and mainstreaming model for the country, because in the Flemish society there is a model that exists, and they have tested it over a period of time.

They have contrasted the model to France, to Germany and all these other countries that are close to them. (We suggested that we) create an integration and mainstreaming model for the country. The third benefit was the reconfiguration of the youth development institutions in local governments, which led to what the Youth Commission and the National Youth Development Agency is doing now, i.e. establishing youth development institutions at local government level, in districts, in local municipalities and all of those places. I know that they've just launched a district office in OR Tambo where we are going with the president next week. They have launched so many other offices in local government, which is what we were looking for when we came back. We had a conference at Lord Charles when we came back, and I gave a report at the conference about our visit to Belgium. Then I provided, as a collective actually, we provided recommendations at that conference, and one of them was to create the National Youth Development Agency.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

The benefit of the Flemish (project) for me (was that) they signified some level of partnership that we don't get from many donors, who most of the time would want to come and tell you what they want to do, and they would not listen to your own interest as a country or a program are. It was not the case with the Flemish. They were always willing to understand, bargain. It was like a relationship based on equal footing, on the same level of partnership. It was not like one is bigger than the other. We were all in it for the common good, and we could discuss and see issues for what they were and agree on objectives depending on where we wanted to take the program. From that angle I think they show respect to the countries that they are supporting, and that respect then was reciprocated from the NYDA to the Flemish government. I think that is what has sustained the relationship over such a very long time. Even beyond anything else. I think that Flemish also learned a lot from their South African experiences, because when they come to this side, they would visit some of the projects and see how we are engaging with young people. They would take those learnings back, because they are also dealing with the same problems that we are dealing with here in this part of the world. At the same time, we also learned a lot of from their practices in Belgium. So, we had an opportunity to, over the last 20 years or so, to share across the continents lessons of how we deal with youth development matters. We learned a lot on how to deal with issues of governance, because they are a donor, they give funding and they want you to account in a certain way. In that way we had to grow into that area for them to comply, and to report properly, so that we manage the relationship at this point. Institutionally, the way they think, the way they are funding, I think it's just something that we have acquired as the NYDA and we really can be proud of that. From their side as well, I think they've also seen how we do policy on our side and also different movements of government and how they go about their own issues. That's like how different that can be for us this side, and still being able to negotiate something that can work for both parties. So, I think for me it was really a relationship off mutual learning, of understanding, and forever wanting to engage and see how best we can improve the situation for the young people.

Mr Patrick Mphale

The partnership (with the Flemish) was a benefit because that really helped us to reach more civil society organizations than we would have reached without their help. Another benefit was that whenever we went to Brussels we would take representatives from civil society organizations with to learn with us. As an organisation were also given opportunities to present papers in European conferences on the work that we are doing. So that was also a benefit for the NYDA. And obviously the funding that we got to supplement our own funding, enabled us to reach more Civil Society Organizations and have more impact on promoting volunteerism in the country.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

I think, look and I'm hoping that I'm correct even now but, Phuti will correct me if I'm wrong. The biggest benefit for me was the exchange of experiences because we got to see a different side of the world, a different side of the world that we didn't see. For instance, we were always sure that we are correct in saying youth development starts from 14 to 35. When we worked with the Flemish, they started three years old. Yes, they start working with young people at three years old. By the time they get to 14, they've been part of their volunteer programs, they've been part of the various phases of growth and development and assistance. So, if you're a parent, over school holidays you will send your kids to a centre and there are volunteers, there's other young people that will teach them to paint, skills like your colour coordination, and a whole lot of other skills that they start (to develop). Your artistic skills kick in at a very early age, so they start with development of young people from that age. We started, our policies said 14 to 35. So that experience helped us to see that it was not only about those that are 14, (but) what you do with the younger ones at that point. Although our policies have been changed, it opened our eyes to the fact that if you start earlier, maybe there's a better chance of getting young people to (be volunteers), because at 14 they're already teenagers. They've a brain of their own, they've got mouths of their own. I've got a twelve-year-old daughter, she's got a big mouth like no one else's business. At that age (14) they already have formulated some opinion about life and about certain things, maybe starting them earlier could be better. That's why I think that was the biggest benefit.

I think for the South African side (there was) also the benefit about developing systems of local government in as far as the young people are concerned and also exchanging experiences where we didn't have experiences and we didn't have expertise. In the good old days, for instance the days of struggle, volunteering was very big, but I think it sort of faded away. There are no structured volunteer programs, or they're very minimal. Whereas if you go to Europe, most of those communities, whether in Flanders or anywhere else in Europe, there's a huge volunteer core of young people who are already older, (e.g.) 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, who are volunteering (at) centres that train other young people. And we don't have that huge culture here. I think the partnership has already brought that to the surface as well and I think it's been a big benefit for us in society.

There was a time when we also focused on cultural centres, because the Flemish are very big on culture. There was a huge benefit there as well, where they funded some of the cultural centres and cultural activities in these centres. I remember there was one here in Soweto, one in the Free State, and one in Durban, which I remember very well. And those were funded to promote culture amongst young people. Those are things that I think, as South Africans, as we grow up, in some of those areas, but not all of them, we don't pay significant attention to art, but for them they're big issues. They're big ticket items. It's a day to day activity. Those young (people) that work in government and anywhere else have gone through all those different programs of society. So, I think that brought to the fore that experience and that journey. So, if you look at the program today, I think it's still focused amongst other things, on the volunteer program. I'm not sure (if it is still) on the cultural side anymore. Those are the benefits of that long journey of sharing experiences, and I think it has been a great addition to our own journey as well.

Mr Malose Kekana

The NYDA always had reputational issues in terms of people who were unhappy, that it was not doing enough, or people who are unhappy because they were playing politics. The willingness by the Flemish Government to associate their brand with the NYDA had a positive impact. They were a credible counterpart who were prepared to support the NYDA. That in itself speaks volumes. Given the higher quality of reporting the standards by which we measured in order to fulfil the contractual requirement had a positive impact on us. That association helped the NYDA's reputation. The second over and above financial, was at the time when we formed the NYDA, there were a lot of things in transition. A new government, a new president, a new minister of finance, but this relationship came from the National Youth Commission, it was one of the few things that was continuing into the NYDA. Because we had contractual relationships and commitments, that we had to meet it created a sense of stability for the NYDA. This partnership gave stability for the NYDA.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

I think really the benefit that accrued from the different role players is an important question. And I can quickly say that from our side, South Africa, we were able to build the capacity of our local governments to understand youth development and to deal with the youth development issues. Because at that time, even though we had the youth commission, we had the youth policy in existence, and we had national youth development structures, provincial youth commission, but we were lacking at the local government levels. So, this program assisted us to make a route in that particular level. And this happened through the training programs that went there, which also there was a lot of exchange on them between us and the Flemish side, where we sent a lot of young people to Flanders to look at youth development models being perused there, and they also spent time in various municipalities to understand how youth development programs were conceptualized and implemented at a local government level.

The Flemish also got exposed to how things were done in South Africa. They also sent their people to us and we promoted cross cultural training. Because at times when they come to South Africa they will be taken to communities and interact with our young people there, and also got exposed to other elements of the South African national life. And at the beginning, the partnership focused on actions survey, action survey research that was aimed at determining what was available at local government level for youth development. It also found that there was very little at that time being done across the country in various municipalities. It therefore assisted to open our eyes on this particular reality. I can't really say that the partnership, through that partnership a set of guidelines was developed for municipalities across the country, that will assist them to set up a youth development structures, given the realities of each and every municipality in the country. And in a way that also assisted to position youth development as a priority for local government. And yeah, really it was, it really had a lot of benefits that were quite critical and important for South Africa

3.4.2 The Flemish government

Mr Thabang Molefe

Besides the fact that we still continue to engage with the Flemish group that was responsible for us, I would not know about direct benefit, because I'm not staying that side. What I know is that they were exposed to how the developing world and developing countries' experience on youth development and that would have influenced their system in a manner that would have helped them to enhance some of that. Let me (give an) example, one of the problems of the time when we arrived in Belgium, in the Flemish Community, (was that) the Flemish Government some time ago took a decision that a family can give birth only to two people, there would be two young persons in a family, so a family would be a family of four, a father, mother and the two kids. At the time they had a seriously aging society, and young people were not as many as we would have in our country, and as dynamic as we would have in our own country. I mean diverse in terms of opinion, diverse in terms of cultural backgrounds, diverse in terms of their attitudes towards social enhancements like education, science, technology and all of those things. I think they gained something out of our own experience, because all of us we were from different social backgrounds. Some came from deep rural areas, some came from townships, like me, but others came from townships in Cape Town, which are different from the townships that we have in Johannesburg. I think they gained something. The last time I had an interaction with the Flemish Comrades, it was I think two months ago, they were grateful in terms of the information we provided them when we landed there. We also connected with other African countries like Botswana, and they got exposed to all these people, because they don't have partnerships with those countries. They got exposed to the social life of those people, to the social political issues of those countries. I don't know how they utilized that in their own country because I did not go back for a follow-up visit.

Mr Patrick Mphahlele

That's difficult to say for them, because I'm cannot speak for them, but I think their own International Development Corporation had certain targets to meet. Politically, within Belgium and within the EU, they got some brownie points for engaging with a developing country like South Africa, like all European countries and the UN are doing. So, it was part of their own development corporation targets.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

I think if I was Flemish, I think the benefit of contributing to a developing country. I think for me that is one of the bigger things, that they could tick that box that they have, financially and otherwise contributed extensively to a developing country but also contributing to a South Africa that was journeying out of a very difficult phase and a difficult period in to a normalized society, if you want to put it that way. And remembering the fact that a lot of those young people who were there didn't have the right skills, didn't have the right competencies, and very few of those stages in NYDA were defined and therefore it was difficult for it (the competencies) to exist in society. So, it was most important for the Flemish government to contribute to that developmental journey of the young people in one way or the other.

I remember that when I (worked for) a few years on the European research platform for young people, invited by the Flemish of course, and when we looked at history, you would find that (in) the history of a lot of these different countries, including the Flemish, you could trace their history from way back up until the current period, from the 14th century, the 12th century - the history of developing young people. I think because of where we came from, we could not easily trace that history and contribute meaningfully. It was easy to trace it post 1994, you know (even) post 1990, when we started to develop everyone in society. That was one of the biggest contributions that I saw in the process. I think also just contributing to us, contributing information, contributing different learnings to the South African society was the biggest scoop for them. Plus, also the friendship. Sometimes we take those things for granted, you know. Developing friends amongst nations was a big-ticket item, and I think that it's still ongoing even now. Our minister would visit their minister and actually there was a time, when Minister Pahad developed a very close bond and they became friends. Even ourselves, we've developed friends over time with the Flemish guys. Jan and all of those guys. Over time that has meant that it has gone beyond the realm of work into a friendship, into a brotherhood. And you know, I think that's important, we shouldn't discount that.

Mr Malose Kekana

Firstly, is (to have a) credible counter party in terms of their social development agenda. Secondly, the world can't be prosperous if people in emerging countries are not prosperous. Developed countries have a moral duty to support emerging countries such as ours, as newly freed countries, to make sure that we have credible democracies around the world, otherwise we shall have (an) increase in terrorism , increased youth unemployment, and it will make the world an unstable place. For developed countries to enjoy peace, they have to pay for peace.

If you look at South Africa, we probably have the least migrant youth because there are opportunities here. It is a win-win for developed countries and emerging countries to cooperate, and to make sure that there is peace.





3.5 WHY THIS RELATIONSHIP SURVIVED 20 YEARS DESPITE CHANGES?

Mr Thabang Molefe

The relationship survived because of many reasons, but I will tell a few. One of them is that both parties had an eagerness for research and development, an eagerness to support each other around the issues of the research and development. That is very fundamental for our country as a developing nation, because it helps us to look at new technologies, new ways of doing things. The interesting part about that relationship, which also became the foundation of it, is the history of the Flemish people and the Belgian society as a whole, how they came to stay in that area, that history. The dynamic between the French speaking people, the Dutch speaking people, and the Flemish people and how they are working together, given their difference in terms of their value systems, their cultural orientation and all those things. In South Africa one of our weaknesses has been to create that interesting social dynamic, to create social cohesion out of the dynamic nature of different cultures and value systems. For instance, I came to Belgium and when we had to take a train, there was no security there, so I did not feel a need to pay for a ticket. I went in to get into the train, and I was told to get out because they did not see me using my finger or anything for my social security and then paying for the train. Now, the point I'm making is that the value system of the Flemish people has been embedded into the operational activities of the country. From, what is known there as kindergarten and what we know is creche here in South-Africa, they are taught the value systems of the country, they are taught, you know everything that matters to their life. If you take it to a different level, the Department of Sport in the Flemish society, regulates when must people go and play. Almost everything there have regulations and standards. I think that that relationship would forever be there but we are not there, we are not even half-way as a country in dealing with some of the things that the Flemish society dealt with. Given their own history (with) antagonizing of racial problems when they came there. We have so much in common with them, but we must learn from them. They can also learn from ourselves and that's why there is that research component that focuses on the information and everything else around youth development. I think that is the essence, that's the gist, that's the core of why that relationship is continuous and why we will still continue to support it, even though we are no longer young people, we are no longer in the youth sector. We will still support it. I work at the Presidency today, and anything that talks about young people, we are the first ones to support it, and anything that talks about the Flemish society, I'm the chief of staff for one of the Deputy Ministers in the presidency, we will quickly support it because we know the benefit out of it, but only if the benefit can be optimised, so that people can benefit.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

I think that it is really how the teams worked together, there was leadership on the side of the Flemish government. I don't have to mention them, but I think Jan van Heer, Jan was such a great advocate of youth development. He is not just a member of the Flemish government, but also quite a senior member of the Flemish government who can motivate resources, who can actually represent the project to the Flemish Partners and see the benefits of it. I think part of it was that the project was led by someone that is quite senior in government on the other side. At the same time where the funding is going to, it should not be just an organization that is not strategically located. From the Youth Commission to the NYDA, it's an institution that is set in the Presidency. I think also that this added a lot of credence to the relationship between South-Africa and the Flemish government, that they were supporting a program in the Presidency. I think the strategic location of the institution, leadership of both parties or people that are managing the program (are important). I mean, right now you have the Deputy Director that would support the project. You got to have people that understand where we are trying to go. People that have been in the youth development space where they can start to appreciate their interest in terms of the Flemish nation.

Mr Patrick Mphahle

The first thing is from the South African perspective. The transition from the National Commission to NYDA was very smooth. I think if there was a split in two separate structures that would have made it more difficult. The transition up to the point where the NYDA was established, was very smooth. In South Africa it was also the political move on the side of the government to support it, the new commission fell directly under the Presidency. There was political support for this corporation and also in Belgium. In Belgium there was also huge political support. The political support anchored everything. Without that commitment and support, the NYDA would not have come this far. The people, particularly from the Flemish side (was important). There was a guy, Jan Vanheer, he was a real driving force behind this from the Flemish perspective. He was so much committed to the project, he started it and he's still part of it now. In South Africa there was my team, the management and the government's support, this very important in the relationship.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

I think there was, I can certainly speak for the time I was there, (and) which I still see even now, is the commitment of leadership, I think there was commitment to have it, with the commitment whatever the difficulties we had along the way, we were able to sit around the table and find common ground. It wasn't smooth sailing. Sometimes we differed on what needed to be done, on how it needed to be done, because we came from various backgrounds. We would for instance think that the priorities for South Africa were the following, and they would think, no you should focus on this. And we would say no, and they would say we find the following... We would say no, we understand that you are focused on that but the priorities for us, looking at our developmental stages, we think we're still here, and we still need to focus in this. Those exchanges were not necessarily smooth all the time. There would be differences, but we would find common ground. It is important to understand that there was always a spirit to cooperate, and that carried us through. That's how the partnership survived. We always looked beyond the little differences that we had in the boardroom and say, okay the partnership must go on, we must find a way of collaborating, we must find a way of ensuring that we chase a common goal, even if we differ on what needs to be chased. You know there was a willingness here to work together. We found that from the Flemish quite powerful and maybe if it was another nation, they would have said no if you don't want to do this, then you're packing. In fact I noticed that with the Dutch, they ended something in another program I was in. They said if you don't do this, then that's it. I'm telling you this is where we're going now.

Mr Malose Kekana

The culture of giving of the Flemish, there was quite a bit of latitude in terms of this cooperation. When the Americans give you money and with many other donor countries there they are very prescriptive. (The Flemish) was the least prescriptive. As a result there was no donor fatigue. There was a high level of trust, because of the culture and approach with which they had given (support). The open mindedness of the Flemish Government helped to make it an easy relationship.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

I think consistency. Consistency was the name of the game. As I said that I was the second national chairperson of the youth commission, when I came in in 2000. Before me, there was a youth commission as well led by, Maghlengi Bengo. And after me as well other people came in. But I think throughout the years, principles of youth development and key strategies that needed to be developed for you to development, there was really a consistency there. And as a result, I think that assisted in a great measure to ensure that despite the changes that were taking place in the country at the political level, that we continued to stay steadfast on the key critical focus areas of the relationship. It also had the support of the political principles because I do know that the youth development were also under the guidance of a minister in the presidency. So that also had great support from that particular perspective. So, it assisted to make sure that things did not change for worse, but they rather changed for the better. I can just conclude the point there by saying that also the Flemish were also not imposing their views on how things must be done. But rather, they were always open and amenable to engagement proposal that we were always bringing to the table. And that promoted a lot of mutual respect and so after that the partnership survived.

3.6 THE VALUE DERIVED FROM THIS RELATIONSHIP

3.6.1 The Flemish government

Mr Thabang Molefe

A lot. Our group of persons that went there, we have learned so much really. I'll personalize this, I'm not sure if I personalize it. I came (back) from the Flemish Community to South Africa and I told myself I'm going to focus on the process of creating strategic partnerships, because I realized in the partnership itself that nothing works in development unless you've got strategic partners that share your own vision, and the way in which you see things. So I after that I moved from just being a development practitioner to becoming a strategic partnership director. I became a Senior Manager Strategic Partnerships, I negotiated deals between private sector and government, between government and other governing institutions. The ten persons that went to Belgium, eight people have written so many articles about youth development integration, about youth development and mainstreaming, about strategic partnerships that can be created to add value.

We shall continue to do that, but now with education and training authorities in the country, with private sector. The first element of our engagement with them is around skills development that will lead to job creation. It's around youth and sport. Sport is very important is very important for our country because we had to demobilize South Africa after the 1994 period. Automatically young South Africans were demobilized from many kinds of social activities and now we've captured that part, we nailed and experienced that kind of thing. We are still engaging in those practical activities. I am still negotiating, even though I am the Chief of Staff of the minister. I am still engaging in partnerships, I still believe in working with private sector, working with civil society, the NGO's, MPO's. Today I was busy receiving, with the deputy minister, a memorandum of demands from the bikers in Gauteng. The bikers came together, they are booking a memorandum to say no to gender-based violence, no to youth that is being killed, no to women that are being abused by men, no to femicide, and all of that. We had to receive the memorandum. We learn so many things. I'm making this about myself because I went there to study about youth and economic integration. The idea of what is now known in South Africa as TVet colleges, a further education and training colleges, stem from that relationship with the Flemish society. I want someone to stand up and say they came up with the idea outside of the Flemish society. We went to Lord Charles Conference and we proposed it, even though government is not implementing it how we proposed it. I think I still have the document, where we proposed that we must have vocational education and that our system must not allow a person not to want, not to choose that I don't want to study. If you don't want to study, (you must) get arrested. Your country must rule, go to that extreme, if you don't want to study, get arrested. Your family must provide food for you, because I make a point in that concern that in that time, for a prisoner in South Africa the breakfast was about R45, lunch was about R60, and dinner was in the same region.

Mr Thabang Molefe

But today in South Africa dinner is at about R105, or something similar to that for a prisoner, and lunch is at, I think, R85 or something and so on and so forth.

Our argument was, punish those that have done wrong, show care and support to those that want to do good. Support the youth to do good, because that's the message we got from (the Flemish), we still pursue some of those things.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

I think contributing to (South Africa). Maybe I'm sounding like a broken record , a lot of big European countries choose areas of interest like education. I think for the Flemish government it was particularly about contributing to empowerment of the young people in African countries, and South-Africa, but also to benefit from this process. In fact, as I understand, at the beginning it was also to assist with policy development. How the Flemish work is that local government plays a very critical role in youth development in Flanders. The whole idea was that they would assist South-Africa to build local youth policies, so strong that development of the young people can build the competence of local government. It's just that the structure of government in South-Africa and in Flanders is quite different so it couldn't exactly work out that way, but they had something so good that we could still leverage that in SouthAfrica and bring youth development closer at local government level.

This was of great value because through this partnership that kind of knowledge were shared with people that have been running the program. They can now influence policy in South-Africa to reciprocate the model of the Flemish, because they know how they deal with youth development. It will be of great benefit for Flanders to show how they have influenced certain countries to pay attention to youth development. Those young people that have benefitted from the approach, even though we ended up taking, that is still a great value. Those young people that qualified as artisans, those people that got their skills in the extended public works program and those that went to get employment. There is still a great gratitude to the Flemish government, and the likes of Phuti can quantify in terms of a number what their contribution was over the long term.

I was not privy to their own strategic planning, but we knew that this was part of their bilateral agreement with South Africa. The politics of Belgium is a little bit complicated; you've got three communities. You've got the Flemish, the Germans and the French. Each of them has their own regional government. In South Africa under DIRCO we used to have meetings where we looked at the totality of the cooperation agreement between Belgium and South Africa, and the Flemish would just be a small part of that.

Mr Patrick Mphahle

I think the government was at some point at that time conceptualizing how it was going to deal with the situation of young people. Remember that the biggest number of people in this country is young people. We have a huge population of young people that were unskilled, uneducated, because of the past. I think (this) partnership contributed a lot in terms of just contributing to that developmental journey. The government could not do it (but) through this partnership we could. This is what happened with the Flemish coming.

Some of the initial training programs were on life skills, on, I won't say entrepreneurship skills, but just basically life skills. That was the biggest part that happened way back at the beginning. It contributed in assisting government to deal with the situation of young people and equipping young people. Some of those people journeyed through life and became other things in life which are quite important. For me, I think it assisted government to deal with the situation of young people in South Africa.

Two, government had also not thought through thoroughly the issue of how they would structure local government interventions for young people. I think this program again contributed a lot to the discourse within government about how you would structure young people's services in local government, and how you even structure local governments to cater to the needs of young people. (Thus) it assisted the Government's agenda, it assisted the government's journey to ensure that there is an ongoing focus on young people in different levels of government, particularly in local government.

Three, although it was not a lot, but it assisted with the funding as well of some of those activities. Just to make sure that there were some extra funds, because government funds are always very limited and they focus on what they need to focus on and you can't cover everything that you so desire to do. The Flemish contributions that came, assisted a lot.

Finally, they contributed to the expertise, in injecting expertise to the government in South Africa just in terms of the technical skills of what needed to be done, because when we were there, we were representing our government. Those skills that we gained in the process were not necessarily our personal skills, but we had to share them with the entire organization, and people had to learn extensively.

Mr Malose Kekana

The first thing is having credible counter parties to work with, which the NYDA was. Secondly to have programs that were not marred by corruption or anything like that. The third thing, both for the NYDA and the Flemish Government we were not doing this just as a donor program, there were young people's lives that they were changing. That is a major objective that any donor wants to achieve, is to make sure they are changing people's lives effectively.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

I can say that it provided them the space and platform to contribute to a developing South Africa and more importantly to the young people of South Africa. And from the South African side as well, it [inaudible] to gain some valuable insight on youth development because we learned a lot from the models that were being applied on their side and best [inaudible]. They also learned a lot on what was happening in South Africa. And I can say that specifically for the NYDA, through this we were really assisted in a great measure to build a significant body of knowledge through various researches that were part and parcel of the relationship. The different conferences that we had, that we hosted in South Africa, were quite very much informative.

We were then able to assist local governments from technical perspective point of view and to assist youth development structures as well in various localities. So, I think there was really a lot of benefits including skills transferred. I can tell you now that some of the young people that we took on the programs to Belgium and vice versa, are now occupying strategic and critical posts in some of the municipalities. I can make an example, some of the guys that were taken on the programs we had from the Metro, Manahung Metro, they are now working there in the Metro and they are occupying some critical positions. So, if you go to say how much this has really contributed and not only for the Flemish, also for enhancing youth development initiatives in South Africa.

3.6.2 The South African government

Mr Thabang Molefe

Government benefitted in different ways from the relationship. The first benefit was that we as a developing nation, and we got to learn from a country that have been on the road before us. You know, they passed through the same streets, the same shops with us. They've got everything to give us, you know as a country. They have the lessons to go forward. Secondly the country restructured its own youth development institution primarily because of the relationship between the Flemish government and South Africa. There is no other partnership between the state and another state, i.e. the South African government and another government, that has had such influence on the country like the Flemish one. The Flemish one is based on scientific models, there is research that influenced programs. It's not like politicians, they sit in the corner, they dream, they drink alcohol and then they dream I want this, I want that. (In the Flemish model) there is scientific evidence of activities that must be performed, and therefore money is put into that. There is so much money that the Flemish society provided to South Africa. When I was the adviser to the MEC of Gauteng, the Flemish society offered us money, about, R300 million or something like that, but we could not take the money because the provincial government was not yet (geared) towards the process of receiving funds from external donors. The money was for research and development, they wanted to give us the money because we had something called the Gauteng Academy.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

To the South African government, it was overall the contribution to the bigger goal of youth development, of employment, and skills development. I think that's really what it's all about, and then international collaboration obviously.

We reached more young people than we would have reached if we didn't have the support of the Flemish. We had more impact.

Mr Malose Kekana

The funding, in terms of support. Secondly the bi-lateral relationships at a political level.

3.6.3 The NYDA

Mr Malose Kekana

One is reputationally. It was good to have a strong partner that was willing to back the NYDA when it was going through changes in leadership and had reputational issues. Secondly it was important for the strategy. That in itself increased the programming fortitudes of the institution.

3.6.4 The beneficiaries

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

All the time it has always been about skills development, even when we were supporting the art centre. With the art centres it was more on capacity building of those centres so they deliver purposeful programs to the youth. (It was) in terms of building their administration systems, their reporting system, their policy approaches and skilling those people. For us at the NYDA it was more about strengthening policy and implementation models, and making sure that there is a proper flow of reporting and funding from donors to the NYDA.

The youth that have been part of this project have really benefitted from programs that were properly managed. It made some of them employable, I don't know if there was an impact study done to see how many of them since they left the program got jobs, but for getting the skills and probably started their own businesses, that's really how they benefited from the program.

Mr Patrick Mphale

When I left there, we had not yet started implementing, so, I will not know. I know that the volunteer management toolkit that was developed, had some impact because we piloted it before we rolled it out and the NPO's that were part of the pilots were very happy. It was the first to be developed in the country. We were specifically looking at how we could manage, evaluate and monitor the performance of their volunteers.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

It was at different levels. Some gained skills, a lot of the beneficiaries gained thinking skills, but also skills and expertise in various other areas. Some gained experience, especially those that worked in municipalities and were sent across. They gained expertise in terms of how you deal with the situations of young people from the other side being placed in a local government setting. A point that I want to come back to, I'm not sure I mentioned it in your previous question, was that what also became beneficial for the government, is the fact that through this program we could define the paradigm of what needed to happen in various structures of government, especially at local government level for young people. That was key.

For the beneficiaries, it's the skills, but also the experiences, the expertise in various participations that they had. I think if I categorize them, I am looking, one, at the officials that went across and interacted with this. As a result of this process they were able to know what to do for young people, what expertise, what skills, what expertise was there for them and the experiences that they needed to gain from this.

For young people themselves, I think the biggest benefit was the services that came from them, as a result of this corporation, because initially there were no services. So, the beneficiaries, especially young people in the various local settings, started to receive programs directed at them. First it was very small, but it is starting to trickle down and now to also have a scenario where the local governments focusing on them, to give them the benefits.

Mr Malose Kekana

The National Institutions program is one of the most important youth funded projects. To have this type of support to sustain the program (was a major benefit for young people). This is one of the programs that is low hanging fruit for the government to support the national youth service. This program has been going on for a long time and it is supported by donors like the Flemish. This program can have a huge impact in the lives of many young people and because of the support that the Flemish government gave, we will not be starting from scratch. We would not have been able to have that impact if the program and the support from the Flemish dropped.

That was the benefits, the value added to the beneficiaries of the project, that they got skills in strategic roles and then they're now are able to fill strategic roles. Were there situations where you really felt that this relationship was under threat?

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

Not really. As I said earlier on that our counterparts were not really imposing, but rather they were open for discussion and new ideas. Really, again from our side we had dedicated committed people to the program. And then we also had a great support from the youth sector in general, the local governments, municipalities that we had identified to be part of the program. People were really always open and coming forward to make sure that they do their bit to support the program. Most of the issues we differed on were resolved through discussions with the Flemish. For instance, we'd differ on research methodologies, but we'd ultimately find each other. Or we'll sometimes differ on the direction of the partnership, on what are the expected outcomes and focus, but we'll discuss those issues and come to an amenable situation that were to the mutual benefit of the two participating countries.

3.7 SITUATIONS WHERE THE RELATIONSHIP WAS UNDER THREAT

3.7.1 The situation and the resolution

Mr Thabang Molefe

The last ten years the South African Government has been seriously under strain. We had leadership challenges in the country, and that was the biggest threat to that relationship, because the vision was not shared. There was not a shared vision about issues. That was the biggest threat.

The African National Congress as a dynamic organisation, it has its own way of removing what it does not need and putting in what it needs. So, the newly elected leadership of the ANC, which ultimately found itself in the government, have a particular, a different form of a vision that continues with what was there before. That is how it's being resolved, it has not been resolved, it is being resolved.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlele

There were times when I thought the partnership was under stress during the transition period from the Youth Commission to the National Youth Development Agency. Trying to convince them that, them being the Flanders, that they need to align to the mandate of our office and government and the NYDA mandate. There was a bit of stress, which was really managed through quite smoothly, because eventually they could see that it's not about changing the initial project plan and going outside it, it was about scaling up and making sure that more people are added to the process. Culturally there was also stress on their side a couple of times. When you go to visit Flanders with the rest of the team members, that are not necessarily culturally aware of the way the Flanders did things there were joint misunderstandings, but nothing really hectic, we were able to work things out.





Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

Through constant reporting, communicating and reassurance. That was very important. We have this tendency of wanting to do things with the CEO on that side, but they know that they are working with you at your level of executive and they will work with you. But from time to time when things got tense, we would invite the CEO or even the Chairperson to the meeting from here in South-Africa. Obviously, the executive would have been briefed to make sure that when the person gets to the meeting he reassures the partners that even though the institution itself may be going through change, the interests of the Flanders will be safe and that the program will be done, and nothing will be concluded unilaterally. There will always be reassurance. That reassurance was quite important.

Mr Patrick Mphale

From the Flemish side, and also from the NYDA's side, there was always a political threat. Whenever there were elections in Belgium, they would actually panic and say if this party wins, then they will kick out this relationship. That's still even a threat, even today, particularly with the right wing parties in Europe gaining a lot of political power. So, there was always that threat that this relationship could be thrown out of the window if another political party won. In South-Africa as well, because the government ANC was supporting this, maybe with another government would not. This was a threat that we always recognized, that if the other political party can win this election and run the country, they'll probably do away with this. The other threat was within internal, within the ruling party. We experienced this as the NYDA, when the Government of Thabo Mbeki was still in power, there were programs that were running but when Zuma came to power some of those people were no longer able to support it. It was really a political threat, a political risk on both sides.

This one we could not resolve. It depended who won the elections and then you would give a sigh of relieve. For me that was the main thing. Every time we went to Belgium, Jan would tell us that we have to show impact, because the minister that they were reporting to also had to prove impact. They wanted to see what was the result so the minister could motivate in the cabinet for further funding to be approved.

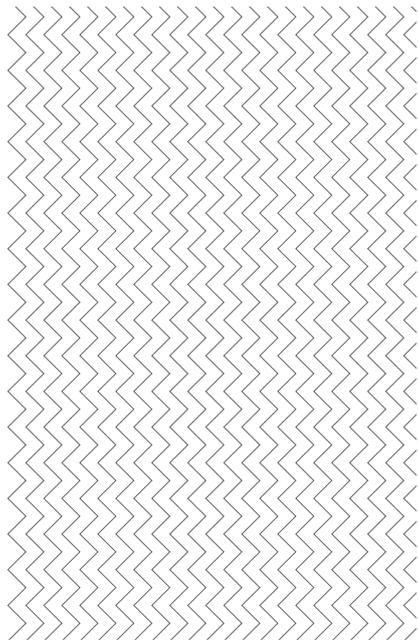
Mr Lwazi Mboyi

There were times when we differed. I remember there was one meeting in Durban, I'll never forget that meeting. I think on the research approach, and of course there were people on our side with views on what type of research (must be done), I mean how should we approach the research, and the Flemish were firm on how they think the research should be done. It was an argument of research experts, and you're sitting in this room and your head is going "uhm", and you're not sure. The researchers this side from South Africa, and the other ones from the other side. So there were difficult moments but I don't think at that time it came to a point where I felt (we are) now skating on thin ice. No, but yes, we had differences from time to time.

We'd have to keep on asking the right questions. Why are we doing the type of research and what works in the South African context. Why are we differing. Yes, we know that in Flanders you approach things in this way, but we think it won't work here because this is how we approach processes in South Africa. This is our own limited experience. Yes, you've got your own experience as well. So, how now do you find an each other? And after some time, you'd find that we did find each other. It never happened that we walked out of the room without finding each other. We'd always find (each other), even in difficult conversations we'd always find each other. Even if we throw cups at each other that's fine, but we'd find each other, although it never came to that, but that was the main point. We would look at the bigger picture, what is it that we wanted to achieve, what we were differing on was the how.

The Flemish have got their own systems, they've got their own approach. We have our own thinking of how things must go.

Here is an example, it was not necessarily part of this partnership but still with the Flemish. We would say for instance that part of our thinking is that whatever we do, we must build capacity of the South Africans so that they can run these plans going forward but with the Flemish model you find that they have a lot of reliance on experts. They've got an expert in their research team, then we have to work with an expert at the university. Maybe there (was) a bigger comfort (for them) in seeing another professor in that role, from one professor to another, so they would know the system is in good hands. But we'd say no, we have to bring in young researchers to this and make sure that as we do this, we also build the capacity of young South Africans in the end. Maybe the issue (on their side) was that the people that you were talking about didn't have that types of skills. (They would ask) what type of research experience do they have, and all of those kinds of things. (They felt) whereas if you go with a professor, we know he's an academic, he's done research 40 times, 50 times. He knows what to do, he knows how to start the process. So, these are the kind of things (we discussed on) how we approached the research. Do you just use experts or do bring in other people who are not necessarily great experts, but are younger researchers who can come into the journey? And also, the model of research. Do we do surveys for instance, do we just send out questionnaires, or do we do face to face interviews, or do we do what they call engagements, where it involves going to the communities, administering questionnaires, interviewing people and all of that. We would differ sometimes on methodology.



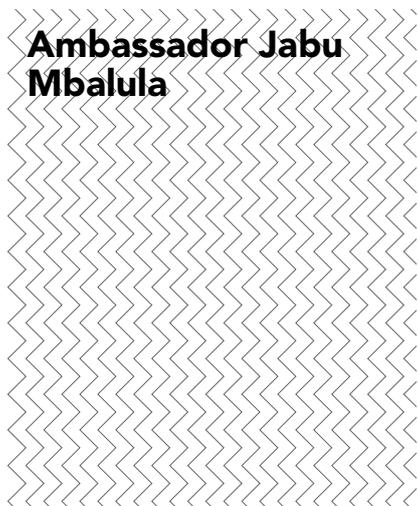
Not that we would differ on the content, no, but the methodology, maybe it would be the difference as to what type of methodology to pursue to achieve what we wanted to achieve. But it didn't ever come to a point, not even once, where you felt it was skating on thin ice.

I also think what helped it, was the fact that over time I developed a very close relationship with Jan. Jan was the coordinator on their side and I was coordinating with Jan. So, we'd sit with a list over a cup of coffee and discuss this, and outside the meeting and say, look our thinking is this and this. Sometimes I would travel to Brussels for various meetings and (we) would sit there and as part of preparing for the next big meeting, would look through what you want to do in the next round, and say, look this is what we were thinking and he would go back and consult. He would also go back and consult. So, by the time you got to that meeting at least that could be ironed out. It helped a lot. Just the personal relationship worked exceptionally well.



Mr Malose Kekana

Not really. Whenever there were uncertainties we always sat around the table to clear any issues that may have arisen, one never felt that this could end. The threat was when government in Flanders changed. That created uncertainties



Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

Not really. As I said earlier on that our counterparts were not really imposing, but rather they were open for discussion and new ideas. Really, again from our side we had dedicated committed people to the program. And then we also had a great support from the youth sector in general, the local governments, municipalities that we had identified to be part of the program. People were really always open and coming forward to make sure that they do their bit to support the program. Most of the issues we differed on were resolved through discussions with the Flemish. For instance, we'd differ on research methodologies, but we'd ultimately find each other. Or we'll sometimes differ on the direction of the partnership, on what are the expected outcomes and focus, but we'll discuss those issues and come to an amenable situation that were to the mutual benefit of the two participating countries.

3.8 THE BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS RELATIONSHIP THE PAST 20 YEARS

Mr Thabang Molefe

The obvious one is the youth development institutions and restructuring of those institutions. The second one is the intensification of the research process around youth development in the country. The third one is the reorganisation of government youth institutions, and their role and their participation. The fourth one, that is so huge, is the mobilization of young people to know their responsibilities and their roles. Post 1994 the South African society was demobilized, and then over a period of time there has been a huge remobilization of young people specifically towards their consciousness towards their problems, how they must deal with their problems and all of that. That has been an organic kind of achievement. I spoke about research, empirical evidence of activities. Before we went to the Flemish society, we had something called the Youth Development Framework in the country, which was not adopted by government as a policy. When we came back it was adopted as a policy, a cabinet resolution had happened. Two years or three or four years later, for the first time government did (pass) an act of parliament for youth development issues.

The government, through Parliament, started to have discussions of youth development activities every year. Before the 16th of June, government and parliament has got an arrangement about this debate on youth development. They then started to have children's parliament, they started with youth parliament, and woman's parliament, and the debate currently for instance, emanating out of that is that, since we have got a woman's parliament and there are women that want to focus on young women. The last one, are the social movements that we created out of that process. We started with an organization called The South African Youth Council, which was led at that time by Nobel Ngogo, who later became the chairperson of the National Youth Commission.

This has been the work that was done to mobilize the NPO's and the NGO's to participate in youth development activities and their role in that. There has been a lot of negotiations for funding and negotiations for program-based activities.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

I will always refer to the scale-up with the EPWP. I think it was the biggest achievement. The first year we were able to do 20 million with 2 000 volunteers and a hundred people. The 2000 volunteers actually contributed to increasing the investment in the program, from one million to twenty million Rands. I remember initiating the project, I would only work with maybe 20 - 50 volunteers. We call them volunteers because that was how the whole project was expanded, it was to expand volunteerism within South Africa. Part of expanding volunteerism was to remit the whole idea that volunteerism is about a schooled person giving their service and really not expecting anything in return, that's how they applied the concept in Europe. We had to show them that here, the volunteers had to be paid. They need to get their skills, they need to be assisted to get a job. That is why even though we call them volunteers, those are young people that would have to be skilled, and then probably be placed somewhere else. (As a result of this project) their funding was sustained, but we as South Africa, managed to leverage more funding from other government departments.

The other achievement would be the capacity building intervention to do training of trainers at those institutions where the volunteers were placed. Those people received specific training on how to work with young people and I think that was a very interesting part of the program as well. There was a lot of practitioners, youth practitioners, that we trained through that intervention. Then there were projects in the Western Cape where we dealt with youth that were abusing drugs, but they had been clean, and put into a program of some sort.

Mr Patrick Mphale

The fact that the programme is still running 20 years later, that on its own is an achievement. The second one is that if you go to North West and the Free State the centres that were supporting the programme are still there. They are still sustainable, they're still standing. Another thing was to identify opportunities for volunteerism and organisations which have volunteering opportunities and to develop My hands my heart Online database. When I left the NYDA there was almost twelve thousand NPO's that were part of that database. We had a number of seminars and conferences where we brought in civil society organizations to help us reflect on the challenges and what could be learned from what we have done. In other words, to bring people together and talk was another achievement.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

I think the partnership between the two countries for me, which has been an unbreakable partnership ever since it started. I think that for me was the biggest achievement. Underlying that, the development of young people, especially in our context in South Africa, in various phases, forms and shapes and all of that, because the relationship evolved over different phases and different focus areas, and in all of that the beneficiaries were young people. Whether it was in local government research or local government activities or volunteer programs, or arts and culture or whichever. But the biggest achievement were young people who were trained through these programs, and exchange experiences through these programs.

For me the second biggest achievement would be the government to government relations and people of South Africa and Flanders, but also the young people who directly benefited from this.

Thirdly, I think that the local governments themselves benefited in the program, we used to do a lot of local government work, (they) benefited extensively from the internal knowledge that they generated on this project, on this partnership, as a result of this partnership. That for me was also very fundamental.

I know that in recent years even the volunteer programs that are being run at the moment or that the partnership is focusing on, have been a great help to establish volunteer programs for young people to do the things that I spoke about earlier, or even volunteer in communities because remember that was where NYS came from. It's about how do we contribute to our own communities in our own society to make them better. The strengthening of that volunteering spirit and skill is a benefit to our society in general because those young people tend to work with various facets of volunteering, whether it's in construction or any other form of society or working with older people in various forms shapes and sizes. That skill has been embedded amongst young people and for me these are the biggest achievements. It's not something tangible that you can say we've built this camp but it is something that permeates to society as a skill that has been quiet for some.

Mr Malose Kekana

From a policy perspective, given the consistency of the support that has happened, South-Africa is in a very unique position to have (over) a very long period, been able to create a body of knowledge, that can be distilled to create programs, because things do take time. With a little bit of probing you will find that there is quite a rich knowledge base, more than you will probably find in many parts of the world. It is a very unique situation that the NYDA has find themselves in and if government trust the NYDA more, then the NYDA can make a huge contribution in the lives of many more young people based just on this program. It is a big seed that is waiting to be watered and to germinate.

3.9 BEST PRACTICES THAT RESULTED FROM THIS PROGRAMME

Mr Thabang Molefe

Education is the first best practice, how the Flemish Community connects education and work and education and what they call “speletjies”, they know playing is important. How their education system is linked to every aspect of youth development, that is an A for me. It’s something that we as a developing country need to master. Secondly, the relationship between job and school, job and everything else that happens. The third very important thing, that is key for me, is how the Flemish have infused their value system into every aspect of life of the Flemish society.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

The one thing that I would recommend my former colleagues is try to keep a small outfit, that would deliver quality. I’m quite jealous of the youth-built thing, and how it’s running out on its own. If you could have something similar where, I know that there’s always freedom to get more on the program, but if you can have at least one sector that is controlled and managed and you can showcase it to all the people that this is our best practice thing, I think that would really be helpful.

Mr Patrick Mphale

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Mr Patrick Mphale

If you look at some of the other development corporations, they would to say this is what we want you guys to do. In this situation we were not applying for funding. So we were not responding to have funding. The Flemish would, when we come to the end of the five year term ask us what would we want the next focus to be. They would then give us an opportunity to go and consult for almost six to eight months. For me that was really a best practice. The second one was the political support from both sides. The third one was to have someone dedicated like Jan, who had a vision then and still has a vision now. You need to have a driver from each of the sides. In South Africa it changed but at the board and at the management level of the NYDA there are still a lot of support. The other best practice from the South African perspective, was to always bring the beneficiaries of the program together, and ask them if we were doing the right thing, if it is this going according to plan, what else could we go and do, and then that will inform our next plan. Even the four blocks didn’t come just from past, it was through consultations. The other one was the insistence of the Flemish, particularly when we were going to Brussels, that we should always bring some civil society organizations with us to be part of it that they could be exposed to the way the Flemish did volunteerism.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

I know people will not like it but I don't care. I would go back to the local government. I think for me there's still a lot of work to be done there. I mean I look at some of the municipalities now. I still doubt that they have intent programs falling on young people, or if there are programs dedicated to young people. I still think somewhere along the way we lost the spirit of building proper programs for young people. We lost the spirit of building proper systems. We lost the spirit of building the types of services that we would want for young people in these various municipalities. I'm not so sure, yes in the bigger municipalities there would be budgets, I'm not sure about other municipalities.

You need an overall view of what's happening in the municipalities, because they are in the coal face of servicing local communities. So we really need to build it from there upwards, and make sure that the local municipalities are focused intently on the well-being of young people. I don't see it happening to a large extent. I might be wrong because I've been out of the sector for a while and I haven't looked at the local government sphere. Somebody needs to go back and do the research and see, because one thing we never did was to go back and look at whether progress has been made ever since we did the very first and second conferences, and developed the guidelines, and determine whether those guidelines were properly institutionalized. What came out of those guidelines (in the) form of programs for the various municipalities. I doubt that that has been done properly. So, and we are dealing with a lot of municipalities, close to three-hundred municipalities, somebody must go back at some point and look at some of these programs and see some these municipalities and determine if work is being done there and how that work is being done.

The NYDA has one of the few programs that has a standard of practice. To have a donor that is willing to support not just the program but also work around certain standards and to provide the best of practices.

One of the key issues around programs of this nature is that you need different funders that are prepared to support areas which others are not willing to. You might find that national government doesn't want to support research and policy work, they just want to fund programs on the ground. One of the effective practices around development, is having multiple funders that are prepared to support different areas and this is something that must be carried forward in all processes of the other programs as well. The last best particles are the partnership itself, that the partnership itself has been sustained over such a long period, in itself speaks to some success factors. Often partnerships are three years, five years, then they disappear. This one is one of the few that has lasted this long.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

Yes, definitely. Definitely. I can [inaudible] a few, one of which is that the issue on how people or how as youth development structures and government as a whole, what is it that can be done to involve young people in issues of local government. And I think that local government up to this day continues to be the sphere of government that is directly in touch with the people. And with the unemployment, poverty, inequality challenges that the country is facing and the young people being the most hard hit by unemployment statistics in the country currently, I do think that the project and the relationship provided us an opportunity to know how and what are the best ways and platforms and instruments that can be used to engage young people. Not just engage for academic purposes, but engage for real meaningful, practical outcomes. So that's the first thing.

The second thing is that I think that it also presented us with what could be the ideal structures that then can be established at the local government level to ensure that a real interface between young people and the local sphere of government. Thirdly, we need to have, you know, dedicated programs and budget for youth in local government level. It provided us with those. And fourthly, that youth development can be, and where really youth development can be located, in what space of influence within the local government. And lastly, to also encourage in the midst of this adversity that young people are facing, what could be done to encourage the spirit of service and volunteerism among young people? Because one of the important traits that the young of South Africa have, is that they have always whenever they are called upon, they have always not disappointed but came forward. So, we should be able, that amidst the adversity that is there, and the challenges that is facing young people, we should still be able to encourage them. To encourage them to participate in those programs that also advances the wellbeing of society as a whole through volunteerism. And then also service, you know. I'm quite elated that the NYDA has also stayed with the idea of service and that they are continuing to implement youth service initiatives in the country that can involve the participation of young people and ensure that they continue to make a meaningful impact.

3.10 A LAST MESSAGE TO THE NYDA ABOUT THIS RELATIONSHIP

Mr Thabang Molefe

Keep the relationship, strengthen the relationship, expand the horizon of the relationship. Expose more people to the relationship between the Flemish society and South Africa. Take more young people, get money elsewhere, but take more young people to stay for a year in the Flemish community, to understand how it operates. When they come back, they influence, become influencers in South Africa. Pursue the agenda of social cohesion in the country, utilizing some of the best practices that were seen in the Flemish society. We are falling behind in our country on uniting the country through the diverse nature of our value system, the diverse nature of our cultural practices.

Ms Nthuseng Mphahlehle

It is a beautiful project and I'm sure it will continue to be. I'm excited and at least it's now twenty years, and it has been a very interesting twenty years. I wish for them that they can have another twenty years of this partnership.

Mr Patrick Mphale

Bring in the private sector. This was our initial plan but it changed along the way because of the collapse of the private sector organizations that we asked. Bringing in the private sector is important from a sustainability point of view, the Flemish politics affects this relationship, and if that change there won't be funding. To sustain the program, you need to get the private sector involved.

Mr Lwazi Mboyi

They must continue the partnership, but define it in a meaningful manner that assists to build further skills in our young people and never to lose sight of that. They must assess what the most important needs are amongst young people to contribute to the broader society, and enhance the skills space in that.

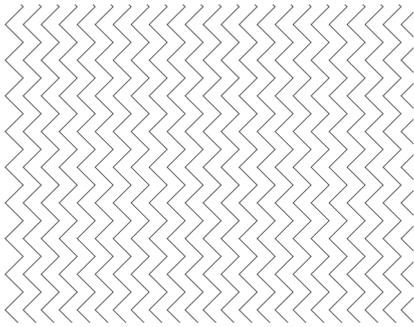
I think maybe just one thing that we could also look at. I think amongst officials in the NYDA and officials in Flanders, the exchanges between the officials in the various areas that they sought to find needs to be formalized. Maybe look at the concept of Sabbatical for officials that work for the NYDA and all those that work for the Flemish who want to come down for some time and be part of the various communities. I think that's very important.

I know that the EU, which is the European Union, was looking at building other partnerships, going forward with Africa and South Africa. I think this is an important part of those conversations and to see how do young people here benefit. I also think that maybe as part of this program, which some of us explored, is that we also need to look at volunteering and exchanges between South African youth and youth from other parts of the African continent, maybe target one or two countries that you can now work with. Just share experiences, work with those experiences and make sure that you've got proper exchanges.

Government functions on the basis of symbolism, they need to be acknowledged and be seem to be doing well. The world, including especially areas around the Flemish government is increasingly becoming right or centre right. We're seeing nationalism playing itself out, especially in Europe. It would be very important for the NYDA to actually profile this relationship as a way of the symbolic value of a geopolitics movement. People need very good and successful enterprises on institutions, such as the program supported by the Flemish government. And there are not many examples like that. So, if we just write reports and we don't talk about that few people will know about it. It's very important for organisations such as the NYDA, to be seen, there needs to be a lot said about this relationship that will encourage others. There are more nationalistic tendencies and with it comes cuts in donor funding for programs like this because people feel they want to do more for their own people the first thing that that will be cut is funding. There is a regression against progressive politics and it is important that we profile this kind of programmes.







We must speak more about this collaboration, and what makes things work emerging developing countries. When people talk about foreign direct investment they tend to think about Ford and Volkswagen and BMW and this type of policy-based investment in skills and human development often receives less attention. On youth development itself, it has been a huge uphill battle. The NYDA is ten years old and they must just let people know that there are good things happening in the NYDA.

Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

I would say that they must continue with the project and not only with the Flemish government but with the entirety of the strategic bilateral relations that the South African government has, with the big market, because in so doing, we'll continue the culture of connecting young South Africans with the spirit of internationalism. Because I think even ourselves, what we did and pioneered at the time, but greatly inspired by even the young people that came before us, a long time before us. The generation of 1976 went into exile and they were part of the greater force against apartheid regime, and that ultimately brought down the apartheid system down into its knees. So, youth development taking place within the context of the strategic bilateral relations that the South African government has with the entirety of the world, is quite also critical to continue that spirit of connecting young people with the spirit of internationalism. I do know of a number of young people that were part and parcel of critical platforms, one of which is the World Federation of youth, the former police commissioner, the late Jackie Selebi, Mr. Eddie Fundi, who was an outstanding diplomat and both of which are late and may their soul rest in peace, participated to the best of their ability in structures like that, and put forward the course of South Africans, and South African youth in particular. So, we can learn a lot, especially now that we are in the era of the fourth industrial revolution, exposing young people more and more to their counterparts everywhere else in the world. And assist us to even build innovation among young people. The spirit of innovation, it can assist that build and continuously build and reconnect young South Africans with the spirit of internationalism.



VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTIONS 4

This section contains the verbatim, with light editing focused on grammar and not on content, of the interviews conducted and the video provided. The transcription of the video only contains the statements of the people involved in the NYDA and not that of the beneficiaries that also participated.

4.1 INTERVIEWS

4.1.1 Mr Thabang Molefe

Former Youth Leader and Activist

14 September 2019

Telephonic

1. How long have you been involved in this project in the NYDA/Flemish project?

We started in 2000, 2001, 2002 I got involved with the National Youth Commission. At the time I had just written a paper for the country about the establishment of what is now known as a special program, Unity. At the time the discussion paper was about the institutionalization of youth development in South-Africa. I had just written that for the African National Congress Youth League, and then there was a debate that was continuing. The National Youth Commission was at the centre of that debate. Mr Mbuli was then the CEO of the National Youth Commission. We had a discussion and he said it may be wise for you to go and experience what other countries are doing around youth development. One of those countries was Belgium, particularly the Flemish Community in Belgium. I agreed and in 2004, if I remember well, that's when we went, a group of about ten or fifteen individuals that went into the program.

2. What was your role in this project?

Because I came from a local government, and when we got into the arrangement, i.e. into the program, I was given the task to do research, to focus on the youth and the economic integration in the Flemish community. That was my role, that's why I got a mentor from the city, I forgot his name.

3. If you have to give the NYDA/Flemish project a score out of 10, where 10 is excellent and 1 is pathetic, what would you give it?

I would give it a ten actually. I would give them a ten because of, in our time, we were a group of young people that were actively involved in politics and we have opinions. Hard core opinions about what developing countries had to do with their youth development, particularly our country, the role of our country in youth development. At that time, we felt that the leadership of the country was not taking youth development seriously. It was not putting it at the centre of the development program of the country.

4. The benefits of this relationship

4.1 For the NYDA

There were a lot of benefits, but I will list a few organic benefits of the relationship. Firstly, the structure of the National Youth Development Agency. What made us to argue for the restructuring of the youth development institutions in the country, was based on the foundation and on the understanding that we got from the Belgium, the Flemish partnership. We had to move for two things, firstly, that there must be a uniform approach in terms of youth development in the country. It can't be that everyone and everything do youth development. One view at the time was to have a national youth ministry. The other view from the same group of ten people that went to Belgium, was to have an advocacy structure, but we must combine the Umsumbomvo Youth Fund and the National Youth Commission into one, that they do one job. In the Flemish society we learned that there's a Ministry for Youth and Sport and work is done firstly, legally in the form of regulations and secondly, it is socially integrated into both the education system and the economic aspects of the country. That was the first benefit to create a uniform system for youth development in the country. The second benefit was that we must create, what I termed when I wrote the proposal at the time, an integrated, integration and mainstreaming model for the country, because in the Flemish society there is a model that exists, and they have tested it over a period of time. They have contrasted the model to France, to Germany and all these other countries that are close to them. (We suggested that we) create an integration and mainstreaming model for the country. The third benefit was the reconfiguration of the youth development institutions in local governments, which led to what the Youth Commission and the National Youth Development Agency is doing now, i.e. establishing youth development institutions at local government level, in districts, in local municipalities and all of those places. I know that they've just launched a district office in OR Tambo where we are going with the president next week. They have launched so many other offices in local government, which is what we were looking for when we came back. We had a conference at Lord Charles when we came back, and I gave a report at the conference about our visit to Belgium. Then I provided, as a collective actually, we provided recommendations at that conference, and one of them was to create the National Youth Development Agency.

4.2 The Flemish government

Besides the fact that we still continue to engage with the Flemish group that was responsible for us, I would not know about direct benefit, because I'm not staying that side. What I know is that they were exposed to how the developing world and developing countries' experience on youth development and that would have influenced their system in a manner that would have helped them to enhance some of that. Let me (give an) example, one of the problems of the



time when we arrived in Belgium, in the Flemish Community, (was that) the Flemish Government some time ago took a decision that a family can give birth only to two people, there would be two young persons in a family, so a family would be a family of four, a father, mother and the two kids. At the time they had a seriously aging society, and young people were not as many as we would have in our country, and as dynamic as we would have in our own country. I mean diverse in terms of opinion, diverse in terms of cultural backgrounds, diverse in terms of their attitudes towards social enhancements like education, science, technology and all of those things. I think they gained something out of our own experience, because all of us we were from different social backgrounds. Some came from deep rural areas, some came from townships, like me, but others came from townships in Cape Town, which are different from the townships that we have in Johannesburg. I think they gained something. The last time I had an interaction with the Flemish Comrades, it was I think two months ago, they were grateful in terms of the information we provided them when we landed there. We also connected with other African countries like Botswana, and they got exposed to all these people, because they don't have partnerships with those countries. They got exposed to the social life of those people, to the social political issues of those countries. I don't know how they utilized that in their own country because I did not go back for a follow-up visit.

5. Why did this relationship survive despite so many changes over the past twenty years?

The relationship survived because of many reasons, but I will tell a few. One of them is that both parties had an eagerness for research and development, an eagerness to support each other around the issues of the research and development. That is very fundamental for our country as a developing nation, because it helps us to look at new technologies, new ways of doing things. The interesting part about that relationship, which also became the foundation of it, is the history of the Flemish people and the Belgian society as a whole, how they came to stay in that area, that history. The dynamic between the French speaking people, the Dutch speaking people, and the Flemish people and how they are working together, given their difference in terms of their value systems, their cultural orientation and all those things. In South Africa one of our weaknesses has been to create that interesting social dynamic, to create social cohesion out of the dynamic nature of different cultures and value systems. For instance, I came to Belgium and when we had to take a train, there was no security there, so I did not feel a need to pay for a ticket. I went in to get into the train, and I was told to get out because they did not see me using my finger or anything for my social security and then paying for the train. Now, the point I'm making is that the value system of the Flemish people has been embedded into the operational activities of the country. From, what is known there as kindergarten and what we know is creche here in South-Africa, they are taught the value systems of the country,

they are taught, you know everything that matters to their life. If you take it to a different level, the Department of Sport in the Flemish society, regulates when must people go and play. Almost everything there have regulations and standards. I think that that relationship would forever be there but we are not there, we are not even half-way as a country in dealing with some of the things that the Flemish society dealt with. Given their own history (with) antagonizing of racial problems when they came there. We have so much in common with them, but we must learn from them. They can also learn from ourselves and that's why there is that research component that focuses on the information and everything else around youth development. I think that is the essence, that's the gist, that's the core of why that relationship is continuous and why we will still continue to support it, even though we are no longer young people, we are no longer in the youth sector. We will still support it. I work at the Presidency today, and anything that talks about young people, we are the first ones to support it, and anything that talks about the Flemish society, I'm the chief of staff for one of the Deputy Ministers in the presidency, we will quickly support it because we know the benefit out of it, but only if the benefit can be optimised, so that people can benefit.

6. What was the value that this relationship added?

6.1 The beneficiaries of the project

A lot. Our group of persons that went there, we have learned so much really. I'll personalize this, I'm not sure if I personalize it. I came (back) from the Flemish Community to South Africa and I told myself I'm going to focus on the process of creating strategic partnerships, because I realized in the partnership itself that nothing works in development unless you've got strategic partners that share your own vision, and the way in which you see things. So, I after that I moved from just being a development practitioner to becoming a strategic partnership director. I became a Senior Manager Strategic Partnerships, I negotiated deals between private sector and government, between government and other governing institutions. The ten persons that went to Belgium, eight people have written so many articles about youth development integration, about youth development and mainstreaming, about strategic partnerships that can be created to add value. We shall continue to do that, but now with education and training authorities in the country, with private sector. The first element of our engagement with them is around skills development that will lead to job creation. It's around youth and sport. Sport is very important is very important for our country because we had to demobilize South Africa after the 1994 period. Automatically young South Africans were demobilized from many kinds of social activities and now we've captured that part, we nailed and experienced that kind of thing. We are still engaging in those practical activities. I am still negotiating, even though I am the Chief of Staff of the minister. I am still engaging in partnerships, I still believe in working with private sector, working with civil society, the NGO's, MPO's. Today I was busy receiving, with the deputy



minister, a memorandum of demands from the bikers in Gauteng. The bikers came together, they are booking a memorandum to say no to gender-based violence, no to youth that is being killed, no to women that are being abused by men, no to femicide, and all of that. We had to receive the memorandum. We learn so many things. I'm making this about myself because I went there to study about youth and economic integration. The idea of what is now known in South Africa as TVet colleges, a further education and training colleges, stem from that relationship with the Flemish society. I want someone to stand up and say they came up with the idea outside of the Flemish society. We went to Lord Charles Conference and we proposed it, even though government is not implementing it how we proposed it. I think I still have the document, where we proposed that we must have vocational education and that our system must not allow a person not to want, not to choose that I don't want to study. If you don't want to study, (you must) get arrested. Your country must rule, go to that extreme, if you don't want to study, get arrested. Your family must provide food for you, because I make a point in that concern that in that time, for a prisoner in South Africa the breakfast was about R45, lunch was about R60, and dinner was in the same region. But today in South Africa dinner is at about R105, or something similar to that for a prisoner, and lunch is at, I think, R85 or something and so on and so forth. Our argument was, punish those that have done wrong, show care and support to those that want to do good. Support the youth to do good, because that's the message we got from (the Flemish), we still pursue some of those things.

6.2 The South African government from this relationship

Government benefitted in different ways from the relationship. The first benefit was that we as a developing nation, and we got to learn from a country that have been on the road before us. You know, they passed through the same streets, the same shops with us. They've got everything to give us, you know as a country. They have the lessons to go forward. Secondly the country restructured its own youth development institution primarily because of the relationship between the Flemish government and South Africa. There is no other partnership between the state and another state, i.e. the South African government and another government, that has had such influence on the country like the Flemish one. The Flemish one is based on scientific models, there is research that influenced programs. It's not like politicians, they sit in the corner, they dream, they drink alcohol and then they dream I want this, I want that. (In the Flemish model) there is scientific evidence of activities that must be performed, and therefor money is put into that. There is so much money that the Flemish society provided to South Africa. When I was the adviser to the MEC of Gauteng, the Flemish society offered us money, about, R300 million or something like that, but we could not take the money because the provincial government was not yet (geared) towards the process of receiving funds from external donors. The money was for research and development, they wanted to give us the money because we had something called the Gauteng Academy.

7. Were there situations where you feel this relationship was under threat?

7.1 The situation

The last ten years the South African Government has been seriously under strain. We had leadership challenges in the country, and that was the biggest threat to that relationship, because the vision was not shared. There was not a shared vision about issues. That was the biggest threat.

7.2 How was it resolved

The African National Congress as a dynamic organisation, it has its own way of removing what it does not need and putting in what it needs. So, the newly elected leadership of the ANC, which ultimately found itself in the government, have a particular, a different form of a vision that continues with what was there before. That is how it's being resolved, it has not been resolved, it is being resolved.

8. What were the biggest achievements of this relationship over the past 20 years?

The obvious one is the youth development institutions and restructuring of those institutions. The second one is the intensification of the research process around youth development in the country. The third one is the reorganisation of government youth institutions, and their role and their participation. The fourth one, that is so huge, is the mobilization of young people to know their responsibilities and their roles. Post 1994 the South African society was demobilized, and then over a period of time there has been a huge remobilization of young people specifically towards their consciousness towards their problems, how they must deal with their problems and all of that. That has been an organic kind of achievement. I spoke about research, empirical evidence of activities. Before we went to the Flemish society, we had something called the Youth Development Framework in the country, which was not adopted by government as a policy. When we came back it was adopted as a policy, a cabinet resolution had happened. Two years or three or four years later, for the firsttime government did (pass) an act of parliament for youth development issues. The government, through Parliament, started to have discussions of youth development activities every year. Before the 16th of June, government and parliament has got an arrangement about this debate on youth development. They then started to have children's parliament, they started with youth parliament, and woman's parliament, and the debate currently for instance, emanating out of that is that, since we have got a woman's parliament and there are women that want to focus on young women. The last one, are the social movements that we created out of that process. We started with an organization called The South African Youth Council, which was led at that time by Nobel Ngogo, who later became the chairperson of the National Youth Commission. This has been the work that was done to mobilize the NPO's and the NGO's to participate in youth development activities and their role in that. There has been a lot of negotiations for funding and negotiations for program-based activities.



9. Were there any best practices in this corporation that you feel should be noted?

Education is the first best practice, how the Flemish Community connects education and work and education and what they call "speletjies", they know playing is important. How their education system is linked to every aspect of youth development, that is an A for me. It's something that we as a developing country need to master. Secondly, the relationship between job and school, job and everything else that happens. The third very important thing, that is key for me, is how the Flemish have infused their value system into every aspect of life of the Flemish society.

10. A last message to the NYDA about this relationship

Keep the relationship, strengthen the relationship, expand the horizon of the relationship. Expose more people to the relationship between the Flemish society and South Africa. Take more young people, get money elsewhere, but take more young people to stay for a year in the Flemish community, to understand how it operates. When they come back, they influence, become influencers in South Africa. Pursue the agenda of social cohesion in the country, utilizing some of the best practices that were seen in the Flemish society. We are falling behind in our country on uniting the country through the diverse nature of our value system, the diverse nature of our cultural practices.

4.1.2 Ms. Nthuseng Mphahlele

Former Executive Director: Operations at
NYDA 12 September 2019 Telephonic interview

1. How long have you been involved in the NYDA Flemish project?

I got involved in the project when the NYDA was commissioned. But I'm not sure completely, it was around 2009, up until probably 2016. This was when it first came to NYDA from the Youth Commission and there was a project manager that was appointed by the Flemish government to work under the Youth Commission. So, when the merger happened, that resource was reporting to me because at the time I was the head of the National Youth Service program.

2. In what role have you been involved in the programme?

I was head of the National Youth Service Program. It was basically to give direction to the project and to make sure that the project is aligned to the mandate of the organization of the NYDA. When the project came to the NYDA it was focusing more on Arts and Culture, empowerment of NGO's and youth that were working in that space. When they came into the NYDA we were at a point (where) we were redefining a new strategic direction for the National Youth Development Agency. At that time, we were still thinking about how do we grow the National Youth Service Program (so) that we have many young people that are employable after the intervention.

We had to negotiate with the Flemish government to drop the arts and culture partnership because it got quite small and controlled and to align, for instance, with the National Department of Public Works, NDWP so that we can begin to scale up and have impact. In that sense we got a good relationship going and an understanding of the Flemish side, as well that for the project to become sustainable, it doesn't have to be funded by the Flemish Market budget, but we can also try to now integrate (it) within our own program in government, and then we can grow in that way.

3. If you have to give the NYDA/ Flemish relationship a score out of ten, where 10 is excellent and 1 is pathetic, what would you score it?

Let's say eight.

3.1 What worked well?

You know why? Because I didn't come from the clutches of smaller NGO's. The model of quite involved and we were able to use the project to safeguard proper principles of youth development. It came in at the time when we were under severe peer pressure to scale up hugely and we lost a lot of quality in the programmes that we were doing but because we were using the project of the Flemish Corporation then, we could guard some of that basic development and follow the principles of development, to make sure that whatever we were doing, I think it was in the education, social sector, environment, under the banner of the Flemish corporation, were properly controlled and quantitatively managed. I think the youth got more benefit from that intervention, than they would have gotten, in the bigger scheme, of other programs that were happening.

3.2 What could have been done better?

I think we could have grown the program internally, within the National Youth Development Agency, and also build, manage, document best practice, share the learnings, build knowledge from the learnings of the project, and disseminate that knowledge. It was done to some extent, but I think if you compare it to a project, we were running prior to this one called the Youth Build Programme, I still feel we could really emerge (with) a new model of how we could serve young people and deliver quality. More or less what is currently happening under the Youth Build. Puti is there, he can explain to you what the Youth Build does. We could have had a brand under the Flemish corporation, a brand for youth development, a proper youth development principles program. Maybe we lost that because we didn't really handle and document and share practice to the extent that we could have done.



4. What were the benefits of this relationship for the different role players?

The benefit of the Flemish (project) for me (was that) they signified some level of partnership that we don't get from many donors, who most of the time would want to come and tell you what they want to do, and they would not listen to your own interest as a country or a program are. It was not the case with the Flemish. They were always willing to understand, bargain. It was like a relationship based on equal footing, on the same level of partnership. It was not like one is bigger than the other. We were all in it for the common good, and we could discuss and see issues for what they were and agree on objectives depending on where we wanted to take the program. From that angle I think they show respect to the countries that they are supporting, and that respect then was reciprocated from the NYDA to the Flemish government. I think that is what has sustained the relationship over such a very long time. Even beyond anything else. I think that Flemish also learned a lot from their South African experiences, because when they come to this side, they would visit some of the projects and see how we are engaging with young people. They would take those learnings back, because they are also dealing with the same problems that we are dealing with here in this part of the world. At the same time, we also learned a lot of from their practices in Belgium. So, we had an opportunity to, over the last 20 years or so, to share across the continents lessons of how we deal with youth development matters. We learned a lot on how to deal with issues of governance, because they are a donor, they give funding and they want you to account in a certain way. In that way we had to grow into that area for them to comply, and to report properly, so that we manage the relationship at this point. Institutionally, the way they think, the way they are funding, I think it's just something that we have acquired as the NYDA and we really can be proud of that. From their side as well, I think they've also seen how we do policy on our side and also different movements of government and how they go about their own issues. That's like how different that can be for us this side, and still being able to negotiate something that can work for both parties.

So, I think for me it was really a relationship off mutual learning, of understanding, and forever wanting to engage and see how best we can improve the situation for the young people.

5. Why did this relationship survive despite changes over the past 20 years?

I think that it is really how the teams worked together, there was leadership on the side of the Flemish government. I don't have to mention them, but I think Jan van Heer, Jan was such a great advocate of youth development. He is not just a member of the Flemish government, but also quite a senior member of the Flemish government who can motivate resources, who can actually represent the project to the Flemish Partners and see the benefits of it. I think part of it was that the project was led by someone that is quite senior in government on the other side. At the same time where the funding is going to, it should not be just an organization that is not strategically located.

From the Youth Commission to the NYDA, it's an institution that is set in the Presidency. I think also that this added a lot of credence to the relationship between South-Africa and the Flemish government, that they were supporting a program in the Presidency. I think the strategic location of the institution, leadership of both parties or people that are managing the program (are important). I mean, right now you have the Deputy Director that would support the project. You got to have people that understand where we are trying to go. People that have been in the youth development space where they can start to appreciate their interest in terms of the Flemish nation.

6. What value did this relationship add for the different role players?

6.1 The Flemish government

I think contributing to (South Africa). Maybe I'm sounding like a broken record, a lot of big European countries choose areas of interest like education. I think for the Flemish government it was particularly about contributing to empowerment of the young people in African countries, and South Africa, but also to benefit from this process. In fact, as I understand, at the beginning it was also to assist with policy development. How the Flemish work is that local government plays a very critical role in youth development in Flanders. The whole idea was that they would assist South-Africa to build local youth policies, so strong that development of the young people can build the competence of local government. It's just that the structure of government in South-Africa and in Flanders is quite different so it couldn't exactly work out that way, but they had something so good that we could still leverage that in South-Africa and bring youth development closer at local government level. This was of great value because through this partnership that kind of knowledge were shared with people that have been running the program. They can now influence policy in South-Africa to reciprocate the model of the Flemish, because they know how they deal with youth development. It will be of great benefit for Flanders to show how they have influenced certain countries to pay attention to youth development. Those young people that have benefitted from the approach, even though we ended up taking, that is still a great value. Those young people that qualified as artisans, those people that got their skills in the extended public works program and those that went to get employment. There is still a great gratitude to the Flemish government, and the likes of Phuti can quantify in terms of a number what their contribution was over the long term.

6.2 The South African government

To the South African government, it was overall the contribution to the bigger goal of youth development, of employment, and skills development. I think that's really what it's all about, and then international collaboration obviously.



6.3 The NYDA

A lot of empowerment because institutionally we grew, going that side, seeing how do they do things, their best practice models. I think we benefit on both sides, from their side, also from our side. That was the biggest value I gained when I was working on the partnership. But also, exposure to international donor funding and understanding the diversity and the differences of working for the same goals but in different contexts was beneficial for us.

6.4 The beneficiaries of the relationship

All the time it has always been about skills development, even when we were supporting the art centre. With the art centres it was more on capacity building of those centres so they deliver purposeful programs to the youth. (It was) in terms of building their administration systems, their reporting system, their policy approaches and skilling those people. For us at the NYDA it was more about strengthening policy and implementation models, and making sure that there is a proper flow of reporting and funding from donors to the NYDA. The youth that have been part of this project have really benefitted from programs that were properly managed. It made some of them employable, I don't know if there was an impact study done to see how many of them since they left the program got jobs, but for getting the skills and probably started their own businesses, that's really how they benefited from the program.

7. **Were there situations where you felt that this relationship was really under threat?**

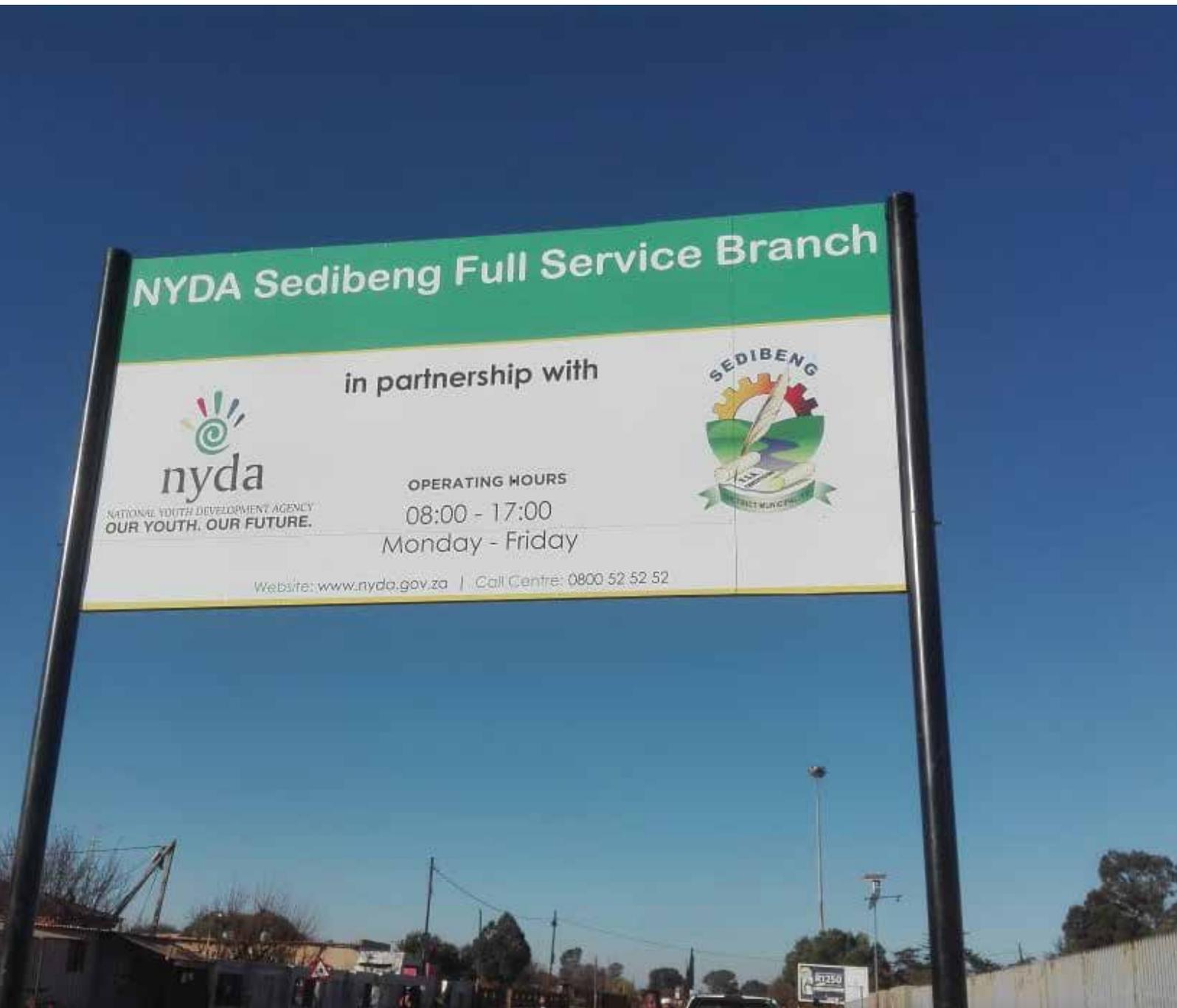
7.1 The situation

There were times when I thought the partnership was under stress during the transition period from the Youth Commission to the National Youth Development Agency. Trying to convince them that, them being the Flanders, that they need to align to the mandate of our office and government and the NYDA mandate. There was a bit of stress, which was really managed through quite smoothly, because eventually they could see that it's not about changing the initial project plan and going outside it, it was about scaling up and making sure that more people are added to the process. Culturally there was also stress on their side a couple of times. When you go to visit Flanders with the rest of the team members, that are not necessarily culturally aware of the way the Flanders did things there were joint misunderstandings, but nothing really hectic, we were able to work things out.

7.2 The resolution

Through constant reporting, communicating and reassurance. That was very important.





We have this tendency of wanting to do things with the CEO on that side, but they know that they are working with you at your level of executive and they will work with you. But from time to time when things got tense, we would invite the CEO or even the Chairperson to the meeting from here in South-Africa. Obviously, the executive would have been briefed to make sure that when the person gets to the meeting he reassures the partners that even though the institution itself may be going through change, the interests of the Flanders will be safe and that the program will be done, and nothing will be concluded unilaterally. There will always be reassurance. That reassurance was quite important.

8. What were the biggest achievements of this relationship over the past 20 years?

I will always refer to the scale-up with the EPWP. I think it was the biggest achievement. The first year we were able to do 20 million with 2 000 volunteers and a hundred people. The 2000 volunteers actually contributed to increasing the investment in the program, from one million to twenty million Rands. I remember initiating the project, I would only work with maybe 20 - 50 volunteers. We call them volunteers because that was how the whole project was expanded, it was to expand volunteerism within South Africa. Part of expanding volunteerism was to remit the whole idea that volunteerism is about a schooled person giving their service and really not expecting anything in return, that's how they applied the concept in Europe.

We had to show them that here, the volunteers had to be paid. They need to get their skills; they need to be assisted to get a job. That is why even though we call them volunteers, those are young people that would have to be skilled, and then probably be placed somewhere else. (As a result of this project) their funding was sustained, but we as South Africa, managed to leverage more funding from other government departments.

The other achievement would be the capacity building intervention to do training of trainers at those institutions where the volunteers were placed. Those people received specific training on how to work with young people and I think that was a very interesting part of the program as well. There was a lot of practitioners, youth practitioners, that we trained through that intervention. Then there were projects in the Western Cape where we dealt with youth that were abusing drugs, but they had been clean, and put into a program of some sort.

9. Are there any best practices from this relationship?

The one thing that I would recommend my former colleagues is try to keep a small outfit, that would deliver quality. I'm quite jealous of the youth-built thing, and how it's running out on its own. If you could have something similar where, I know that there's always freedom to get more on the program, but if you can have at least one sector that is controlled and managed and you can showcase it to all the people that this is our best practice thing, I think that would really be helpful.



10. A message to the leadership of the NYDA about this relationship

It is a beautiful project and I'm sure it will continue to be. I'm excited and at least it's now twenty years, and it has been a very interesting twenty years. I wish for them that they can have another twenty years of this partnership.

4.1.3 Mr Patrick Mphale

Former General Manager of Skills and NYS at NYDA

12 September 2019

In person

1. How long have you been involved with the project?

I was involved with the project from 2009 to 2014. When I was involved with the project it was (during) the merger between the National Youth Commission and Umsombomvu to form the NYDA. This project was part of the National Youth Service Program, and it was led by the program manager called Tina Cornelly, who was reporting directly to me at the time. The focus at the time of the merger was on arts and culture. It was probably two or three years later when we had to review our corporation agreement and we put together a team of civil society organizations and some private sector organizations, and we did a lot of brainstorming sessions to determine and decide what the focus of the corporation should be. This culminated into the document called Promoting Volunteerism amongst Civil Society Organizations. That was what we did, we identified what we called building blocks of the corporation. The first one was what we called capacity building, because this project was going to focus on civil society organizations who were working with volunteers. The other one was knowledge generation, which was more about to manage research. The third one was marketing and communication and fourth one, the last one, I believe it was advocacy. When I left the NYDA towards the end of 2015 we just started to implement some of that. One of the building blocks that we had already started to implement at that time was the capacity building, because by the time I left we'd produced what was called the volunteer tool kit.

2. What was your role in this project?

I was a senior manager; the program manager was reporting directly to me. There was a steering committee that was established between the Flemish government and us as NYDA. We met twice a year. They would come to South African for bilateral talks, to review progress, look at the challenges, and maybe come up with solutions and make recommendations. Once a year we would also go to Brussels for maybe four to five days to review, report back on the progress that we've made based on the plan.

We had a five-year plan we had broken into annual plans. I was part of the delegation that hosted them when they were here, and was also part of the delegation that went to Brussels to report back, so I was an integral part of the planning and implementation of the project.

**3. If you have to give the NYDA/Flemish project a score out of 10, where 10 is excellent and 1 is pathetic, what would you give it?
I would say eight.**

3.1 What worked well?

The first thing we did right, was that we developed a plan and based on that we were ready to execute the plan according to the deadlines and the timeframes. We had a good relationship with our Flemish counterparts. We visited them regularly, we had open discussions about the challenges that we were facing. Even though they were putting money into the project, they were not imposing any of their thinking on us. On the ground we did a lot of work. When we were doing arts and culture, there was an evaluation done, but also when we started the strengthening of civil society organizations. They were the ones who actually insisted that we should involve civil society organizations to help us determine what type of areas of corporation would form our agreement.

3.2 What could have been better?

I think the funding. The funding could have been more, we were not always happy with the amount of funding, given the type of work we were supposed to do. The second issue was, when we started this process of strengthening volunteerism in civil society organizations, the idea was to also to break into the private sector. In fact, two or three organizations which were part of that working group were from the private sector. Unfortunately, by the time we completed the document, they had collapsed and we never actually made concrete follow up (to determine if) we were to get the private sector from a South African perspective to be involved in this project.

Some of the challenges were internal, within the NYDA. I'll go to a classic challenge that we experienced. At some stage one of the biggest things that we did (as part) of this program, was to forge a partnership with the Department of Public Works. The Department of Public Works had a program called Non-State Sector, specifically focusing on NPO's. We saw this an opportunity to collaborate with them. We agreed that they were going to actually give money to the NYDA, about 12 million, but that money was dependent on the NYDA approving a certain portion, about 2 million, of its own contribution. The Department of Public Works approved the money and our board was supposed to just give us a go ahead to sign the agreement and this is the allocation of the NYDA. That process took a good six months and that did nearly damage the relationship between us and the Department of Public Works. The internal processes of the NYDA, the approval processes, were a big challenge for this project. Particularly given the fact that the Flemish were very flexible. They would respond on time and it was us who were delaying to respond. Sometimes we were falling behind in terms of our own implementation plan.



The other challenge really was the issue of communication. The person who was managing the project was a Flemish but when he communicated with other people they were communicating in Flemish, so we could not read the emails. When the guys from Brussels were communicating to her, the project manager, they were communicating in Flemish. He was the poor manager, and was supposed to report to us but there was tension there because felt we were locked out of the conversation. There were certain things that we only picked up when in Brussels, that were not communicated to us properly when we were in South Africa. It was an issue of language.

4. The benefits of this relationship

4.1 For the NYDA

The partnership (with the Flemish) was a benefit because that really helped us to reach more civil society organizations than we would have reached without their help. Another benefit was that whenever we went to Brussels, we would take representatives from civil society organizations with to learn with us. As an organisation were also given opportunities to present papers in European conferences on the work that we are doing. So that was also a benefit for the NYDA. And obviously the funding that we got to supplement our own funding, enabled us to reach more Civil Society Organizations and have more impact on promoting volunteerism in the country.

4.2 The Flemish government

That's difficult to say for them, because I'm cannot speak for them, but I think their own International Development Corporation had certain targets to meet. Politically, within Belgium and within the EU, they got some brownie points for engaging with a developing country like South Africa, like all European countries and the UN are doing. So, it was part of their own development corporation targets.

5. Why did this relationship survive over the past 20 years?

The first thing is from the South African perspective. The transition from the National Commission to NYDA was very smooth. I think if there was a split in two separate structures that would have made it more difficult. The transition up to the point where the NYDA was established, was very smooth. In South Africa it was also the political move on the side of the government to support it, the new commission fell directly under the Presidency. There was political support for this corporation and also in Belgium. In Belgium there was also huge political support. The political support anchored everything. Without that commitment and support, the NYDA would not have come this far. The people, particularly from the Flemish side (was important). There was a guy, Jan Van Heer, he was a real driving force behind this from the Flemish perspective. He was so much committed to the project, he started it and he's still part of it now. In South Africa there was my team, the management and the government's support, this very important in the relationship.

6. What value did this relationship add?

6.1 The Flemish government

I was not privy to their own strategic planning, but we knew that this was part of their bilateral agreement with South Africa. The politics of Belgium is a little bit complicated; you've got three communities. You've got the Flemish, the Germans and the French. Each of them has their own regional government. In South Africa under DIRCO we used to have meetings where we looked at the totality of the cooperation agreement between Belgium and South Africa, and the Flemish would just be a small part of that.

6.2 The South African government

We reached more young people than we would have reached if we didn't have the support of the Flemish. We had more impact.

6.3 The beneficiaries

When I left there, we had not yet started implementing, so, I will not know. I know that the volunteer management toolkit that was developed, had some impact because we piloted it before we rolled it out and the NPO's that were part of the pilots were very happy. It was the first to be developed in the country. We were specifically looking at how we could manage, evaluate and monitor the performance of their volunteers.

7. Were there situations where this relationship was under threat?

7.1 The situation

From the Flemish side, and also from the NYDA's side, there was always a political threat. Whenever there were elections in Belgium, they would actually panic and say if this party wins, then they will kick out this relationship. That's still even a threat, even today, particularly with the right-wing parties in Europe gaining a lot of political power. So, there was always that threat that this relationship could be thrown out of the window if another political party won. In South-Africa as well, because the government ANC was supporting this, maybe with another government would not. This was a threat that we always recognized, that if the other political party can win this election and run the country, they'll probably do away with this. The other threat was within internal, within the ruling party. We experienced this as the NYDA, when the Government of Thabo Mbeki was still in power, there were programs that were running but when Zuma came to power some of those people were no longer able to support it. It was really a political threat, a political risk on both sides.



7.2 The resolution

This one we could not resolve. It depended who won the elections and then you would give a sigh of relieve. For me that was the main thing. Every time we went to Belgium, Jan would tell us that we have to show impact, because the minister that they were reporting to also had to prove impact. They wanted to see what was the result so the minister could motivate in the cabinet for further funding to be approved.

8. What were the biggest achievements of this program?

The fact that the programme is still running 20 years later, that on its own is an achievement. The second one is that if you go to North West and the Free State the centres that were supporting the programme are still there. They are still sustainable, they're still standing. Another thing was to identify opportunities for volunteerism and organisations which have volunteering opportunities and to develop My hands my heart Online database. When I left the NYDA there was almost twelve thousand NPO's that were part of that database. We had a number of seminars and conferences where we brought in civil society organizations to help us reflect on the challenges and what could be learned from what we have done. In other words, to bring people together and talk was another achievement.

9. Are there any best practices from this relationship?

If you look at some of the other development corporations, they would to say this is what we want you guys to do. In this situation we were not applying for funding. So, we were not responding to have funding. The Flemish would, when we come to the end of the five-year term ask us what would we want the next focus to be. They would then give us an opportunity to go and consult for almost six to eight months. For me that was really a best practice. The second one was the political support from both sides. The third one was to have someone dedicated like Jan, who had a vision then and still has a vision now. You need to have a driver from each of the sides. In South Africa it changed but at the board and at the management level of the NYDA there are still a lot of support. The other best practice from the South African perspective, was to always bring the beneficiaries of the program together, and ask them if we were doing the right thing, if it is this going according to plan, what else could we go and do, and then that will inform our next plan. Even the four blocks didn't come just from past, it was through consultations. The other one was the insistence of the Flemish, particularly when we were going to Brussels, that we should always bring some civil society organizations with us to be part of it that they could be exposed to the way the Flemish did volunteerism.

10. A message to the leadership of the NYDA leadership about this relationship

Bring in the private sector. This was our initial plan but it changed along the way because of the collapse of the private sector organizations that we asked. Bringing in the private sector is important from a sustainability point of view, the Flemish politics affects this relationship, and if that change there won't be funding. To sustain the program, you need to get the private sector involved.

4.1.4 Lwazi Mboyi

Former CEO of the National Youth Commission and Former Executive Director at NYDA

16 September 2019

In person

1. How long have you been involved in this relationship?

I was with the National Youth Commission for about eight years. So that's the extent to which I was involved with the project. But even after I left the commission, I still had engagements with the project from time to time depending on the requests and everything. So, I really have been involved for more than 10 years.

2. In what role were involved in this relationship?

I was the CEO of the Nation Youth Commission then, and the National Youth Commission was a structure that had the partnership with the Flemish Community, under the broad offices of Government. We reported to the Presidency, which is still the case now with the NYDA. That was my official role, and they (the Flemish project manager) reported directly to my office, then the CEO. The relationship started may be just a year before I joined, or a year or two before I joined. I mean the initial meetings started just before I joined, and then I joined immediately after that. I think the first meetings were in 1996 and 7. Those were first meetings to explore the potential partnership. From 1998 I was taken aboard, and we put together the first clear partnership. In terms of the draft documents, in terms of the nature of the partnership, areas of corporation involved. I led the partnership on behalf of the Commission at the time. You could technically say on behalf of everyone else really, because it was vested in my office. But I was also involved in the negotiations on an ongoing basis on the nature of the partnership, on what goes into the partnership package and what programs we would focus on. As time went on, we had a staff member that was dedicated to running the partnership, and she reported directly to me.

3. If you have to give this partnership a score out of ten, where 10 is excellent and 1 is pathetic, what would you score it?

If I look at the totality of what we achieved then, and the activities that we're involved in and the contribution of the partnership to broader society, and the broader programs of youth development in the country, I would give it between an eight or a nine.

3.1 What worked well?

One. If I go back to the beginning again, one of the first things that we did was to an action survey. That action survey was critical because we took people to the various municipalities to identify what was in existence in terms of servicing young people of the different municipalities, what was not in existence, what could be put in place, what could be improved, what could not be improved. The survey was funded through the partnership. It revealed that there was nothing across the board. So, for me that went very well just in terms of opening our eyes as South Africans to the fact that as much as we were talking about developing young people, at a local government level there was nothing that was happening, and there were no institutions that were structured. There were no people focusing on young people. It was a very bad situation because it was a very new situation.

We then needed to start thinking about what it is that we're going to do to focus on young people in the various municipalities. Again, the partnership assisted us moving forward. There was a conference that was hosted in Somerset-West in Cape Town, which drew up guidelines for municipalities to focus on young people, what type of structures do you want to have, what type of systems do you want to have, where must the youth offices be based in their various municipalities, who was responsible for overseeing youth development, and all of that. This basically laid the foundation for the work that is being done at local government level. It increased the awareness amongst various municipalities about the fact that we needed to focus on young people.

Two. We needed to have a structured way of focusing on young people.

Three, these are the, in case you want to do tomorrow, the guidelines.

Four, for it to have effect you needed to position it in the office of the municipal manager, or in the office of the mayor. Those are the guidelines. The partnership therefore assisted in defining the terrain and defining the paradigm in terms of what needed to be done going forward. I think it added a lot of value to our society, a lot of value just in structuring what needed to be done going forward. Remember that the conference (was attended) by almost all the local municipalities.

Over 200 municipalities attended. Everyone began to understand that this is quite critical, and this is how you do it, because sometimes we assume that people know, and they don't know. If you give them the technical tools and assistance, then they'll know. For me, at the beginning of the partnership, that was one of the major things that we did. But also, in terms of the contribution, what worked, we also did a lot of changes. Taking young people from here, and officials from here to various communities in Flanders, to see how the Flemish were doing it and to see what kind of services are available for young people in the Flemish municipalities. Also to see what kind of programs would be made available and also to see the fact that there should be some kind of a commitment, budget-wise (were made) by the municipalities to cater for the needs of young people and just basically what programs do we need as a municipality, to allow for young people to grow. The Flanders also brought people here. We even achieved, what we called at the time, the pairing of municipalities, for instance, I can't remember now, but I think Bloemfontein was paired with Gent, if I'm not mistaken. But a variety of municipalities were paired together so they could, on their own provide each other with and exchange of technical expertise.

There could be (an) exchange of experiences, there could be (an) exchange of a whole lot of other things that they wanted to exchange on, even personnel. You would find that a lot of other people came down to South Africa and others went back to Flanders. One of the things that the Flemish partnership also did, even before it went to the ambit of government, it started with the training of young people in life-skills. They (The Flemish) would cooperate with NGO's and have lots of exchanges of young people from here to Flanders and Flanders coming here. That was the other element, just before I forget.

3.2 What could have been better?

What could have gone better, I think maybe if we're still focusing on local government, I still think there's still some gaps even now. And maybe that could have been, if we had taken it a step further, and for instance have had a mechanism where we oversee the establishment of local youth units in municipalities, and monitor that they were established, and monitor their functioning and monitor their performance, and have a reporting process. I think for me that would have completed the picture, in terms of what we were doing. That's one of the key areas that for me I think if we were to do it would have worked better.

Maybe secondly if we could have posted people on a much longer period to this various municipalities, maybe in Flanders and maybe Flemish people here, just for a more practical experience to understand exactly how things (were done), maybe you know from the design stages, how do you design policy, how do we design



an intervention, how do you formulate a policy and update policy? How does it go through the various stages of the municipality? How do you make sure that whatever your intended intervention is, is budgeted for by the municipality? How do you match the budgets of the municipality with the intended interventions, and all of that sort of thing I think if we focused on that again it could have then improved our space by miles going forward? Maybe better coordination, because I think they are far and we are far, and yes there was coordination inbetween. But I think maybe what helped was when the Flemish sent somebody here to be based to work with us on a more full-time basis, and that improved the coordination a bit. I think maybe a mechanism like that could have worked better earlier. I think, also maybe more resources. If the Flemish could afford more resources, that could also have contributed extensively to a better scheme of what we wanted.

Maybe (they) could have looked at a longer term (visit), a sabbatical for somebody to be there and understand, that is the type of intervention that I (feel we) needed. (To understand) this is how it can be done and this is what needs to be done.

4. What do you feel were the biggest benefits of this relationship for the NYDA?

4.1 For the NYDA

I think, look and I'm hoping that I'm correct even now but, Phuti will correct me if I'm wrong. The biggest benefit for me was the exchange of experiences because we got to see a different side of the world, a different side of the world that we didn't see. For instance, we were always sure that we are correct in saying youth development starts from 14 to 35. When we worked with the Flemish, they started three years old. Yes, they start working with young people at three years old. By the time they get to 14, they've been part of their volunteer programs, they've been part of the various phases of growth and development and assistance. So, if you're a parent, over school holidays you will send your kids to a centre and there are volunteers, there's other young people that will teach them to paint, skills like your colour coordination, and a whole lot of other skills that they start (to develop). Your artistic skills kick in at a very early age, so they start with development of young people from that age.

We started, our policies said 14 to 35. So that experience helped us to see that it was not only about those that are 14, (but) what you do with the younger ones at that point. Although our policies have been changed, it opened our eyes to the fact that if you start earlier, maybe there's a better chance of getting young people to (be volunteers), because at 14 they're already teenagers.





They've a brain of their own, they've got mouths of their own. I've got a twelve-year-old daughter, she's got a big mouth like no one else's business. At that age (14) they already have formulated some opinion about life and about certain things, maybe starting them earlier could be better. That's why I think that was the biggest benefit.

I think for the South African side (there was) also the benefit about developing systems of local government in as far as the young people are concerned and also exchanging experiences where we didn't have experiences and we didn't have expertise. In the good old days, for instance the days of struggle, volunteering was very big, but I think it sort of faded away. There are no structured volunteer programs, or they're very minimal. Whereas if you go to Europe, most of those communities, whether in Flanders or anywhere else in Europe, there's a huge volunteer core of young people who are already older, (e.g.) 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, who are volunteering (at) centres that train other young people. And we don't have that huge culture here. I think the partnership has already brought that to the surface as well and I think it's been a big benefit for us in society. There was a time when we also focused on cultural centres, because the Flemish are very big on culture.

There was a huge benefit there as well, where they funded some of the cultural centres and cultural activities in these centres. I remember there was one here in Soweto, one in the Free State, and one in Durban, which I remember very well. And those were funded to promote culture amongst young people. Those are things that I think, as South Africans, as we grow up, in some of those areas, but not all of them, we don't pay significant attention to art, but for them they're big issues. They're big ticket items. It's a day to day activity. Those young (people) that work in government and anywhere else have gone through all those different programs of society. So, I think that brought to the fore that experience and that journey. So, if you look at the program today, I think it's still focused amongst other things, on the volunteer program. I'm not sure (if it is still) on the cultural side anymore. Those are the benefits of that long journey of sharing experiences, and I think it has been a great addition to our own journey as well.

4.2 For the Flemish government

I think if I was Flemish, I think the benefit of contributing to a developing country. I think for me that is one of the bigger things, that they could tick that box that they have, financially and otherwise contributed extensively to a developing country but also contributing to a South Africa that was journeying out of a very difficult phase and a difficult period in to a normalized society, if you want to put it that way. And remembering the fact that a lot of those young people who were there didn't have the right skills, didn't have the right competencies,



and very few of those stages in NYDA were defined and therefore it was difficult for it (the competencies) to exist in society. So, it was most important for the Flemish government to contribute to that developmental journey of the young people in one way or the other.

I remember that when I (worked for) a few years on the European research platform for young people, invited by the Flemish of course, and when we looked at history, you would find that (in) the history of a lot of these different countries, including the Flemish, you could trace their history from way back up until the current period, from the 14th century, the 12th century - the history of developing young people. I think because of where we came from, we could not easily trace that history and contribute meaningfully. It was easy to trace it post 1994, you know (even) post 1990, when we started to develop everyone in society.

That was one of the biggest contributions that I saw in the process. I think also just contributing to us, contributing information, contributing different learnings to the South African society was the biggest scoop for them. Plus, also the friendship. Sometimes we take those things for granted, you know. Developing friends amongst nations was a big-ticket item, and I think that it's still ongoing even now. Our minister would visit their minister and actually there was a time, when Minister Pahad developed a very close bond and they became friends. Even ourselves, we've developed friends over time with the Flemish guys. Jan and all of those guys. Over time that has meant that it has gone beyond the realm of work into a friendship, into a brotherhood. And you know, I think that's important, we shouldn't discount that.

5. Why did this relationship survive, despite all the changes in 20 years?

I think there was, I can certainly speak for the time I was there, (and) which I still see even now, is the commitment of leadership, I think there was commitment to have it, with the commitment whatever the difficulties we had along the way, we were able to sit around the table and find common ground. It wasn't smooth sailing. Sometimes we differed on what needed to be done, on how it needed to be done, because we came from various backgrounds. We would for instance think that the priorities for South Africa were the following, and they would think, no you should focus on this. And we would say no, and they would say we find the following. We would say no, we understand that you are focused on that but the priorities for us, looking at our developmental stages, we think we're still here, and we still need to focus in this.

Those exchanges were not necessarily smooth all the time. There would be differences, but we would find common ground. It is important to understand that there was always a spirit to cooperate, and that carried us through.

That's how the partnership survived. We always looked beyond the little differences that we had in the boardroom and say, okay the partnership must go on, we must find a way of collaborating, we must find a way of ensuring that we chase a common goal, even if we differ on what needs to be chased. You know there was a willingness here to work together. We found that from the Flemish quite powerful and maybe if it was another nation, they would have said no if you don't want to do this, then you're packing. In fact, I noticed that with the Dutch, they ended something in another program I was in. They said if you don't do this, then that's it. I'm telling you this is where we're going now.

6. What value did this relationship add?

6.1 The South African government

I think the government was at some point at that time conceptualizing how it was going to deal with the situation of young people. Remember that the biggest number of people in this country is young people. We have a huge population of young people that were unskilled, uneducated, because of the past. I think (this) partnership contributed a lot in terms of just contributing to that developmental journey. The government could not do it (but) through this partnership we could. This is what happened with the Flemish coming. Some of the initial training programs were on life skills, on, I won't say entrepreneurship skills, but just basically life skills. That was the biggest part that happened way back at the beginning. It contributed in assisting government to deal with the situation of young people and equipping young people. Some of those people journeyed through life and became other things in life which are quite important. For me, I think it assisted government to deal with the situation of young people in South Africa.

Two, government had also not thought through thoroughly the issue of how they would structure local government interventions for young people. I think this program again contributed a lot to the discourse within government about how you would structure young people's services in local government, and how you even structure local governments to cater to the needs of young people. (Thus) it assisted the Government's agenda, it assisted the government's journey to ensure that there is an ongoing focus on young people in different levels of government, particularly in local government.

Three, although it was not a lot, but it assisted with the funding as well of some of those activities. Just to make sure that there were some extra funds, because government funds are always very limited and they focus on what they need to focus on and you can't cover everything that you so desire to do. The Flemish contributions that came, assisted a lot.



Finally, they contributed to the expertise, in injecting expertise to the government in South Africa just in terms of the technical skills of what needed to be done, because when we were there, we were representing our government. Those skills that we gained in the process were not necessarily our personal skills, but we had to share them with the entire organization, and people had to learn extensively.

6.2 The beneficiaries of the project

It was at different levels. Some gained skills, a lot of the beneficiaries gained thinking skills, but also skills and expertise in various other areas. Some gained experience, especially those that worked in municipalities and were sent across. They gained expertise in terms of how you deal with the situations of young people from the other side being placed in a local government setting. A point that I want to come back to, I'm not sure I mentioned it in your previous question, was that what also became beneficial for the government, is the fact that through this program we could define the paradigm of what needed to happen in various structures of government, especially at local government level for young people. That was key.

For the beneficiaries, it's the skills, but also the experiences, the expertise in various participations that they had. I think if I categorize them, I am looking, one, at the officials that went across and interacted with this. As a result of this process they were able to know what to do for young people, what expertise, what skills, what expertise was there for them and the experiences that they needed to gain from this. For young people themselves, I think the biggest benefit was the services that came from them, as a result of this corporation, because initially there were no services. So, the beneficiaries, especially young people in the various local settings, started to receive programs directed at them. First it was very small, but it is starting to trickle down and now to also have a scenario where the local governments focusing on them, to give them the benefits.

7. Were there situations where you felt that this partnership was really under threat?

7.1 The situation

There were times when we differed. I remember there was one meeting in Durban, I'll never forget that meeting. I think on the research approach, and of course there were people on our side with views on what type of research (must be done), I mean how should we approach the research, and the Flemish were firm on how they think the research should be done. It was an argument of research experts, and you're sitting in this room and your head is going "uhm", and you're not sure. The researchers this side from South Africa, and the other ones from the other side.

So, there were difficult moments but I don't think at that time it came to a point where I felt (we are) now skating on thin ice. No, but yes, we had differences from time to time.

7.2 The resolution

We'd have to keep on asking the right questions. Why are we doing the type of research and what works in the South African context. Why are we differing. Yes, we know that in Flanders you approach things in this way, but we think it won't work here because this is how we approach processes in South Africa. This is our own limited experience. Yes, you've got your own experience as well. So, how now do you find each other? And after some time, you'd find that we did find each other. It never happened that we walked out of the room without finding each other. We'd always find (each other), even in difficult conversations we'd always find each other. Even if we throw cups at each other that's fine, but we'd find each other, although it never came to that, but that was the main point. We would look at the bigger picture, what is it that we wanted to achieve, what we were differing on was the how. The Flemish have got their own systems, they've got their own approach. We have our own thinking of how things must go.

Here is an example, it was not necessarily part of this partnership but still with the Flemish. We would say for instance that part of our thinking is that whatever we do, we must build capacity of the South Africans so that they can run these plans going forward but with the Flemish model you find that they have a lot of reliance on experts. They've got an expert in their research team, then we have to work with an expert at the university. Maybe there (was) a bigger comfort (for them) in seeing another professor in that role, from one professor to another, so they would know the system is in good hands. But we'd say no, we have to bring in young researchers to this and make sure that as we do this, we also build the capacity of young South Africans in the end. Maybe the issue (on their side) was that the people that you were talking about didn't have that types of skills. (They would ask) what type of research experience do they have, and all of those kinds of things. (They felt) whereas if you go with a professor, we know he's an academic, he's done research 40 times, 50 times. He knows what to do, he knows how to start the process. So, these are the kind of things (we discussed on) how we approached the research. Do you just use experts or do bring in other people who are not necessarily great experts, but are younger researchers who can come into the journey? And also, the model of research. Do we do surveys for instance, do we just send out questionnaires, or do we do face to face interviews, or do we do what they call engagements, where it involves going to the communities, administering questionnaires, interviewing people and all of that. We would differ sometimes on methodology. Not that we would differ on the content, no, but the methodology, maybe it would be the difference as to what type of



methodology to pursue to achieve what we wanted to achieve. But it didn't ever come to a point, not even once, where you felt it was skating on thin ice.

I also think what helped it, was the fact that over time I developed a very close relationship with Jan. Jan was the coordinator on their side and I was coordinating with Jan. So, we'd sit with a list over a cup of coffee and discuss this, and outside the meeting and say, look our thinking is this and this. Sometimes I would travel to Brussels for various meetings and (we) would sit there and as part of preparing for the next big meeting, would look through what you want to do in the next round, and say, look this is what we were thinking and he would go back and consult. He would also go back and consult. So, by the time you got to that meeting at least that could be ironed out. It helped a lot. Just the personal relationship worked exceptionally well.

8. What were the biggest achievements of this relationship?

I think the partnership between the two countries for me, which has been an unbreakable partnership ever since it started. I think that for me was the biggest achievement. Underlying that, the development of young people, especially in our context in South Africa, in various phases, forms and shapes and all of that, because the relationship evolved over different phases and different focus areas, and in all of that the beneficiaries were young people. Whether it was in local government research or local government activities or volunteer programs, or arts and culture or whichever. But the biggest achievement were young people who were trained through these programs, and exchange experiences through these programs.

For me the second biggest achievement would be the government to government relations and people of South Africa and Flanders, but also the young people who directly benefited from this.

Thirdly, I think that the local governments themselves benefited in the program, we used to do a lot of local government work, (they) benefited extensively from the internal knowledge that they generated on this project, on this partnership, as a result of this partnership. That for me was also very fundamental.

I know that in recent years even the volunteer programs that are being run at the moment or that the partnership is focusing on, have been a great help to establish volunteer programs for young people to do the things that I spoke about earlier, or even volunteer in communities because remember that was where NYS came from. It's about how do we contribute to our own communities in our own society to make them better. The strengthening of that volunteering spirit and skill is a benefit to our society in general because those young people tend to work with various facets of volunteering, whether it's in construction or any other form of society or working with older people

in various forms shapes and sizes. That skill has been embedded amongst young people and for me these are the biggest achievements. It's not something tangible that you can say we've built this camp but it is something that permeates to society as a skill that has been quiet for some.

9. Are there any best practices from this relationship?

I know people will not like it but I don't care. I would go back to the local government. I think for me there's still a lot of work to be done there. I mean I look at some of the municipalities now. I still doubt that they have intent programs falling on young people, or if there are programs dedicated to young people. I still think somewhere along the way we lost the spirit of building proper programs for young people. We lost the spirit of building proper systems. We lost the spirit of building the types of services that we would want for young people in these various municipalities. I'm not so sure, yes in the bigger municipalities there would be budgets, I'm not sure about other municipalities. You need an overall view of what's happening in the municipalities, because they are in the cold face of servicing local communities. So, we really need to build it from there upwards, and make sure that the local municipalities are focused intently on the well-being of young people. I don't see it happening to a large extent. I might be wrong because I've been out of the sector for a while and I haven't looked at the local government sphere. Somebody needs to go back and do the research and see, because one thing we never did was to go back and look at whether progress has been made ever since we did the very first and second conferences, and developed the guidelines, and determine whether those guidelines were properly institutionalized. What came out of those guidelines (in the) form of programs for the various municipalities. I doubt that that has been done properly. So, and we are dealing with a lot of municipalities, close to three-hundred municipalities, somebody must go back at some point and look at some of these programs and see some these municipalities and determine if work is being done there and how that work is being done.

10. A last message to the leadership of NYDA about this NYDA relationship

They must continue the partnership, but define it in a meaningful manner that assists to build further skills in our young people and never to lose sight of that. They must assess what the most important needs are amongst young people to contribute to the broader society, and enhance the skills space in that.

I think maybe just one thing that we could also look at. I think amongst officials in the NYDA and officials in Flanders, the exchanges between the officials in the various areas that they sought to find needs to be formalized. Maybe look at the concept of Sabbatical for officials that work for the NYDA and all those that work for the Flemish who want to come down for some time and be part of the various communities. I think that's very important.



I know that the EU, which is the European Union, was looking at building other partnerships, going forward with Africa and South Africa. I think this is an important part of those conversations and to see how do young people here benefit. I also think that maybe as part of this program, which some of us explored, is that we also need to look at volunteering and exchanges between South African youth and youth from other parts of the African continent, maybe target one or two countries that you can now work with. Just share experiences, work with those experiences and make sure that you've got proper exchanges.

4.1.5 Mr Malose Kekana

Former CEO of Umsobomvu Youth Fund and of the NYDA
16 September 2019
Telephonic

1. Time involved in the project From 2008 until January 2010.

2. Role in the project

Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Development Agency. My role was to supervise the people that worked on the projects funded by donors, such as the Flemish partners.

3. A score out of 10 for the relationship Eight.

3.1 What worked well?

Firstly, is that in the National Youth Project there was competition for resources and they were using a lot of resources. From the corporate side we do not get a lot of support for youth development, so there is quite a scarcity of resources for youth development initiatives. Is important that people are conscious about funding that base. (Secondly) the guidelines, or what is required, the standards and everything, in order to qualify and, or comply with a requirement. Those things in themselves helped (us) to change. Things like getting measures, SMART measures, because sometimes you just have a project statement. The requirements also helped to include audit reporting and setting of outcomes for the program itself. The requirements were from an external source such as the Flemish Government. Lastly, the consistency of support. People tell me they go out but we know that to change people's lives and to learn in terms of what works would take time. We made sure that there has been this consistent approach. It created a very critical and trustworthy body of knowledge, that can be used to improve upon or to mainstream, the kind of work that the NYDA is doing.

3.1 What could have been done better?

More money. Secondly, more knowledge (management), about youth development programs in developing countries. There is a need to look at breaking down silos, if you are doing work in Namibia or wherever, encourage of collaboration, to learn from different experiences. Cross pollination and sharing of knowledge between donors to make sure there's peer learning. Have more resources directed towards sharing knowledge and using this platform better.

4. The benefits of this relationship

4.1 For the NYDA

The NYDA always had reputational issues in terms of people who were unhappy, that it was not doing enough, or people who are unhappy because they were playing politics. The willingness by the Flemish Government to associate their brand with the NYDA had a positive impact. They were a credible counterpart who were prepared to support the NYDA. That in itself speaks volumes. Given the higher quality of reporting the standards by which we measured in order to fulfil the contractual requirement had a positive impact on us. That association helped the NYDA's reputation. The second over and above financial, was at the time when we formed the NYDA, there were a lot of things in transition. A new government, a new president, a new minister of finance, but this relationship came from the National Youth Commission, it was one of the few things that was continuing into the NYDA. Because we had contractual relationships and commitments, that we had to meet it created a sense of stability for the NYDA. This partnership gave stability for the NYDA.

4.2 For the Flemish government

Firstly, is (to have a) credible counter party in terms of their social development agenda. Secondly, the world can't be prosperous if people in emerging countries are not prosperous. Developed countries have a moral duty to support emerging countries such as ours, as newly freed countries, to make sure that we have credible democracies around the world, otherwise we shall have (an) increase in terrorism, increased youth unemployment, and it will make the world an unstable place. For developed countries to enjoy peace, they have to pay for peace. If you look at South Africa, we probably have the least migrant youth because there are opportunities here. It is a win-win for developed countries and emerging countries to cooperate, and to make sure that there is peace.



5. Why did this relationship survive despite changes over the past 20 years?

The culture of giving of the Flemish, there was quite a bit of latitude in terms of this cooperation. When the Americans give you money and with many other donor countries there, they are very prescriptive. (The Flemish) was the least prescriptive. As a result, there was no donor fatigue. There was a high level of trust, because of the culture and approach with which they had given (support). The open mindedness of the Flemish Government helped to make it an easy relationship.

6. What value did this relationship add?

6.1 The Flemish government

The first thing is having credible counter parties to work with, which the NYDA was. Secondly to have programs that were not marred by corruption or anything like that. The third thing, both for the NYDA and the Flemish Government we were not doing this just as a donor program, there were young people's lives that they were changing. That is a major objective that any donor wants to achieve, is to make sure they are changing people's lives effectively.

6.2 The South African government

The funding, in terms of support. Secondly the bi-lateral relationships at a political level.

6.3 The NYDA

One is reputationally. It was good to have a strong partner that was willing to back the NYDA when it was going through changes in leadership and had reputational issues. Secondly it was important for the strategy. That in itself increased the programming fortitudes of the institution.

6.4 The beneficiaries

The National Institutions program is one of the most important youth funded projects. To have this type of support to sustain the program (was a major benefit for young people). This is one of the programs that is low hanging fruit for the government to support the national youth service. This program has been going on for a long time and it is supported by donors like the Flemish. This program can have a huge impact in the lives of many young people and because of the support that the Flemish government gave, we will not be starting from scratch. We would not have been able to have that impact if the program and the support from the Flemish dropped.



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7. Were there any situations where you felt this relationship was really under threat?

Not really. Whenever there were uncertainties, we always sat around the table to clear any issues that may have arisen, one never felt that this could end. The threat was when government in Flanders changed. That created uncertainties.

8. The biggest achievements of this relationship over the past 20 years

From a policy perspective, given the consistency of the support that has happened, South-Africa is in a very unique position to have (over) a very long period, been able to create a body of knowledge, that can be distilled to create programs, because things do take time. With a little bit of probing you will find that there is quite a rich knowledge base, more than you will probably find in many parts of the world. It is a very unique situation that the NYDA has found themselves in and if government trust the NYDA more, then the NYDA can make a huge contribution in the lives of many more young people based just on this program. It is a big seed that is waiting to be watered and to germinate.

9. Best practices from this relationship

The NYDA has one of the few programs that has a standard of practice. To have a donor that is willing to support not just the program but also work around certain standards and to provide the best of practices.

One of the key issues around programs of this nature is that you need different funders that are prepared to support areas which others are not willing to. You might find that national government doesn't want to support research and policy work, they just want to fund programs on the ground. One of the effective practices around development, is having multiple funders that are prepared to support different areas and this is something that must be carried forward in all processes of the other programs as well. The last best practices are the partnership itself, that the partnership itself has been sustained over such a long period, in itself speaks to some success factors. Often partnerships are three years, five years, then they disappear. This one is one of the few that has lasted this long.

10. A message to the leadership of the NYDA

Government functions on the basis of symbolism, they need to be acknowledged and be seen to be doing well. The world, including especially areas around the Flemish government is increasingly becoming right or centre right. We're seeing nationalism playing itself out, especially in Europe. It would be very important for the NYDA to actually profile this relationship as a way of the symbolic value of a geo-politics movement. People need very good and successful enterprises on institutions, such as the program supported by the Flemish government. And there are not many examples like



that. So, if we just write reports and we don't talk about that few people will know about it. It's very important for organisations such as the NYDA, to be seen, there needs to be a lot said about this relationship that will encourage others. There are more nationalistic tendencies and with it comes cuts in donor funding for programs like this because people feel they want to do more for their own people the first thing that that will be cut is funding. There is a regression against progressive politics and it is important that we profile this kind of programmes.

We must speak more about this collaboration, and what makes things work emerging developing countries. When people talk about foreign direct investment they tend to think about Ford and Volkswagen and BMW and this type of policy-based investment in skills and human development often receives less attention. On youth development itself, it has been a huge uphill battle. The NYDA is ten years old and they must just let people know that there are good things happening in the NYDA.

4.1.6 Ambassador Jabu Mbalula

Former Chairperson of National Youth Commission

1. How long were you involved in this Flemish project?

I was appointed the chairperson of the National Youth Commission from 2000 until 2006. Right at the beginning of my term already, there already has been interaction between the youth commission and the government in Belgium to start on this project. And I also immediately got myself immersed into it. And so, I can safely say I was involved with it for the solid six years I was in charge of the National Youth commission.

2. What role were you involved in?

Yes, I was the chairperson of the youth commission at the time. Meaning that I had to oversee the entire operations of the organization, its finances and more importantly its programs, which included this relationship. And further to that, I also had a direct relationship with the project itself. At times, I also had to participate in some of the bilateral meetings that took place between us and the Flemish government, in which I had to give guidance and leadership on how the project has to be unfolded and how we saw it unfolding from the South African side. The CEO of the youth commission at the time was also working very close with the project manager on the project at the time and both of them, reported directly to me.

3. If you have to give the NYDA Flemish project a score out of 10, where 10 is excellent and one is pathetic, what would you score it?

I would give it an excellent score because I think that we never had that break in terms of concept conceptualization of the project and the practical implementation.

We were the pioneers of it, under the perspective of the then youth commission, and when the youth commission and Umsobomvu Youth fund came together to form the national youth development agency. On this particular project there was really no break in understanding the concept. In fact, what I understand currently exists, is that it has been redefined, it has been redefined and the scope has been broadened.

Drawing very much into the lessons of the initial stages of the project and to make sure that it also addresses other issues that are currently the strategic focus of the NYDA.

4. Were there things that you feel that could have been done better?

Maybe I can say firstly that the, I think that the question that is important, which I also quickly want them to make an input on, is the benefits. The benefits that accrued.

Yes. I think really the benefit that accrued from the different role players is an important question. And I can quickly say that from our side, South Africa, we were able to build the capacity of our local governments to understand youth development and to deal with the youth development issues. Because at that time, even though we had the youth commission, we had the youth policy in existence, and we had national youth development structures, provincial youth commission, but we were lacking at the local government levels. So, this program assisted us to make a route in that particular level. And this happened through the training programs that went there, which also there was a lot of exchange on them between us and the Flemish side, where we sent a lot of young people to Flanders to look at youth development models being perused there, and they also spent time in various municipalities to understand how youth development programs were conceptualized and implemented at a local government level. The Flemish also got exposed to how things were done in South Africa. They also sent their people to us and we promoted cross cultural training. Because at times when they come to South Africa they will be taken to communities and interact with our young people there, and also got exposed to other elements of the South African national life.

And at the beginning, the partnership focused on actions survey, action survey research that was aimed at determining what was available at local government level for youth development. It also found that there was very little at that time being done across the country in various municipalities. It therefore assisted to open our eyes on this particular reality. I can't really say that the partnership, through that partnership a set of guidelines was developed for municipalities across the country, that will assist them to set up a youth development structures, given the realities of each and every municipality in the country. And in a way that also assisted to position youth development as a priority for local government. And yeah, really it was, it really had a lot of benefits that were quite critical and important for South Africa.



5. Why did this relationship survive despite so many changes over the past 20 years?

I think consistency. Consistency was the name of the game. As I said that I was the second national chairperson of the youth commission, when I came in in 2000. Before me, there was a youth commission as well led by, Maghlengi Bengo. And after me as well other people came in. But I think throughout the years, principles of youth development and key strategies that needed to be developed for you to development, there was really a consistency there. And as a result, I think that assisted in a great measure to ensure that despite the changes that were taking place in the country at the political level, that we continued to stay steadfast on the key critical focus areas of the relationship. It also had the support of the political principles because I do know that the youth development was also under the guidance of a minister in the presidency. So that also had great support from that particular perspective. So, it assisted to make sure that things did not change for worse, but they rather changed for the better. I can just conclude the point there by saying that also the Flemish were also not imposing their views on how things must be done. But rather, they were always open and amenable to engagement proposal that we were always bringing to the table. And that promoted a lot of mutual respect and so after that the partnership survived.

6. What value did this relationship add for the Flemish government?

I can say that it provided them the space and platform to contribute to a developing South Africa and more importantly to the young people of South Africa. And from the South African side as well, it [inaudible] to gain some valuable insight on youth development because we learned a lot from the models that were being applied on their side and best [inaudible]. They also learned a lot on what was happening in South Africa. And I can say that specifically for the NYDA, through this we were really assisted in a great measure to build a significant body of knowledge through various researches that were part and parcel of the relationship. The different conferences that we had, that we hosted in South Africa, were quite very much informative. We were then able to assist local governments from technical perspective point of view and to assist youth development structures as well in various localities. So, I think there was really a lot of benefits including skills transferred. I can tell you now that some of the young people that we took on the programs to Belgium and vice versa, are now occupying strategic and critical posts in some of the municipalities. I can make an example, some of the guys that were taken on the programs we had from the Metro, Manahung Metro, they are now working there in the Metro and they are occupying some critical positions. So, if you go to say how much this has really contributed and not only for the Flemish, also for enhancing youth development initiatives in South Africa.

That was the benefits, the value added to the beneficiaries of the project, that they got skills in strategic roles and then they're now are able to fill strategic roles. Were there situations where you really felt that this relationship was under threat?

Not really. As I said earlier on that our counterparts were not really imposing, but rather they were open for discussion and new ideas. Really, again from our side we had dedicated committed people to the program. And then we also had a great support from the youth sector in general, the local governments, municipalities that we had identified to be part of the program. People were really always open and coming forward to make sure that they do their bit to support the program. Most of the issues we differed on were resolved through discussions with the Flemish. For instance, we'd differ on research methodologies, but we'd ultimately find each other. Or we'll sometimes differ on the direction of the partnership, on what are the expected outcomes and focus, but we'll discuss those issues and come to an amenable situation that were to the mutual benefit of the two participating countries.

7. Are there any best practices that you feel should be taken forward?

Yes, definitely. Definitely. I can [inaudible] a few, one of which is that the issue on how people or how as youth development structures and government as a whole, what is it that can be done to involve young people in issues of local government. And I think that local government up to this day continues to be the sphere of government that is directly in touch with the people. And with the unemployment, poverty, inequality challenges that the country is facing and the young people being the most hard hit by unemployment statistics in the country currently, I do think that the project and the relationship provided us an opportunity to know how and what are the best ways and platforms and instruments that can be used to engage young people. Not just engage for academic purposes, but engage for real meaningful, practical outcomes. So that's the first thing. The second thing is that I think that it also presented us with what could be the ideal structures that then can be established at the local government level to ensure that a real interface between young people and the local sphere of government. Thirdly, we need to have, you know, dedicated programs and budget for youth in local government level. It provided us with those. And fourthly, that youth development can be, and where really youth development can be located, in what space of influence within the local government. And lastly, to also encourage in the midst of this adversity that young people are facing, what could be done to encourage the spirit of service and volunteerism among young people?

Because one of the important trades that the young of South Africa have, is that they have always whenever they are called upon, they have always not disappointed but came forward. So, we should be able, that amidst the adversity that is there, and the challenges that is facing young people, we should still be able to encourage them. To encourage them to participate in those programs that also advances the wellbeing of society as a whole through volunteerism. And then also service, you know. I'm quite elated that the NYDA has also stayed with the idea of service and that they are continuing to implement youth service initiatives in the country that can involve the participation of young people and ensure that they continue to make a meaningful impact.



8. Is there a message that you would like to send to the NYDA leadership about this project?

I would say that they must continue with the project and not only with the Flemish government but with the entirety of the strategic bilateral relations that the South African government has, with the big market, because in so doing, we'll continue the culture of connecting young South Africans with the spirit of internationalism. Because I think even ourselves, what we did and pioneered at the time, but greatly inspired by even the young people that came before us, a long time before us. The generation of 1976 went into exile and they were part of the greater force against apartheid regime, and that ultimately brought down the apartheid system down into its knees. So, youth development taking place within the context of the strategic bilateral relations that the South African government has with the entirety of the world, is quite also critical to continue that spirit of connecting young people with the spirit of internationalism.

I do know of a number of young people that were part and parcel of critical platforms, one of which is the World Federation of youth, the former police commissioner, the late Jackie Selebi, Mr. Eddie Fundi, who was an outstanding diplomat and both of which are late and may their soul rest in peace, participated to the best of their ability in structures like that, and put forward the course of South Africans, and South African youth in particular. So, we can learn a lot, especially now that we are in the era of the fourth industrial revolution, exposing young people more and more to their counterparts everywhere else in the world. And assist us to even build innovation among young people. The spirit of innovation, it can assist that build and continuously build and reconnect young South Africans with the spirit of internationalism.

4.2 The video

4.2.1 Lwazi Mboyi Former CEO of the National Youth Commission and Former Executive Director at NYDA

Look, when the Flemish came into South Africa, I think we were at a particular point in our journey, and I think we were at a point, really at the beginning stages of trying to improve the quality of lives of our young people. And I think post that, there has been numerous programs in place that have aimed to improve the quality of lives of young people in South Africa. Inclusive of those that came through the support of their Flemish. For instance, at that time there wouldn't have been any focus by local government on young people, but through this partnership and the mechanisms that have been set in place then, that were set in place then, there has been a journey by local governments now to focus intently on young people. Employing local youth officers, and a whole lot of other things. So, there will be programs that are at a local level that are dedicated to young people. We can debate whether those programs are effective or not, but the fact of the matter is at least as a start there has been a structured in place and has been a mechanism of looking at young people at a local level.

4.2.2 Ankie Motsoahae-Maepa Executive Director: National Youth Service
The National Youth Service program, is a program of the South African government. We are coordinating it on behalf of the government. The main objective of the program in the broad context of the development agenda of South Africa, is to ensure that we promote social cohesion and nation building. You would know that we come from a very sad history and so the South African government, saw it fit that there is a program that will seek to unite South Africans, whilst at the same time it looks at the plight of young people and ways of just ensuring that something is done, to engage young people but to deal with and address the problems that impact them. The program is anchored on two programs, two broad programmatic areas. The first one is the volunteer program. The second one is what is popularly known as category one program. But really the skills program where young people are engaged in activities that will ensure that upon exit, they have skills. That's the first thing, accredited skills for that matter. They have participated in volunteer services within the communities, but also their chances of employability have been enhanced. So that is what we call category one of our national youth service program.

4.2.3 Waseem Carrim CEO of NYDA
So I think the Flemish government was one of the first international governments to support youth development post 1994. And we really value that relationship, the investment that they've made. And I think, you know, South Africa was still building its policies in terms of what it wanted to be as a country. And social cohesion through national youth service was one of the priorities at the time. And I think the cooperation has led to South Africa learning from its international counterparts. It's had financial support through the years. Many young people have participated in the various activities that have taken place. And it's really given us a framework with which to develop our own youth service, working with our own youth service policies. So, it's certainly had a measurable impact. And I think it's influenced to a great degree the volunteer space in the South African landscape currently.

4.2.4 Sifiso Mtsweni Executive Chairperson of NYDA
Well, I think we've come some way with the partnership. We're happy with it and I think we would want the partnership to be strengthened in order to live that long again. For us what is important is that the youth of South Africa is to derive, you know, real value out of the program. But the country itself, must also derive value in terms of, you know, our volunteers and what is it that they can offer to our country. So, I see this partnership becoming stronger, you know, lasting even way beyond the years that it has. And that even beyond our time as the board, it's one of those things that will actually



hand over to different generations that will actually come into this institution and make sure and really want to also say to the Flemish government that, you know, on behalf of the young people in this country, we appreciate the support, we appreciate the partnership and we continue to call on them to really, you know, not give up. South Africa is a country that is alive with possibilities, is a country that is, you know, has a lot of potential and it just needs that potential to be harnessed and make sure that really out of this partnership, we create a better society in our country.



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