

A framework for a National Youth Service in Sierra Leone

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|----------|---|
| COC | Code of Conduct |
| FBO | Faith-based Organisation |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GES | Ghana Education Service |
| HIV/AIDs | Human Immuno –Deficiency Virus/Aquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| INGO | International Non-governmental Organisation |
| KAP | Knowledge Attitude and Practice |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| M & E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MEST | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| MOFED | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development |
| MOHS | Ministry of Health and Sanitation |
| MYES | Ministry of Youth, Employment and Sport |
| NAYCOM | National Youth Commission |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NSS | National Service Scheme (Ghana) |
| NYS | National Youth Service |
| NYSV | National Youth Service Volunteer |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNHDR | United Nations Human Development Report |
| SRH | Sexual and Reproductive Health |
| STI | Sexually Transmitted Infection |
| TechVoc | Technical vocational |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| VIONET | Volunteer Involving Organisations Network |
| VSO | Voluntary Service Overseas |
| VPE | Volunteer Peer Educator |
| WASCE | West African Senior School Certificate Examination |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |

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Executive Summary

A National Youth Service for Sierra Leone has been under discussion for many years as a means to enhance national cohesion, to provide opportunities for young people to gain valuable work experience and to further development goals. Provision was made for such a scheme in the National Youth Policy and the Youth Commission Act of 2009 (section 10b).

This proposed framework for a National Youth Service for Sierra Leone was commissioned by the National Youth Commission. It has been developed by Restless Development with logistical and technical support from UNDP. The framework has been informed by a feasibility study which solicited the views of a wide range of stakeholders within Sierra Leone using a range of research methods. It also takes in to consideration comparative schemes in a number of other countries, and considers the applicability of the learnings from those schemes to the Sierra Leone context.

Part one of this report summarises the contexts in which the National Youth Service would be established, referring particularly to the situation of young people in Sierra Leone. It then goes on to outline the research methodology used in the feasibility study.

Part two conceptualises a youth service for Sierra Leone, both in terms of its aims and objectives and also in terms of the core principles on which it would rest. It outlines the benefits and disadvantages of different models for a National Youth Service.

Part three outlines the proposed framework for a pilot National Youth Service. It makes suggestions around the main features of the service including recruitment of National Youth Service Volunteers (NYSVs), training and the support package offered. It also provides a broad estimate of the costing of such a pilot scheme and a discussion of financing options.

Part four draws conclusions and makes recommendations about the next steps in the development of the National Youth Service project.

The intention is that this report will provide a framework, proposed model and a series of recommendations regarding the next steps in the realisation of the scheme, which NAYCOM and its partners can use to pilot the National Youth Service and then to scale up.

Part 1: Background, Contexts and Study Methodology

1.1 Introduction

This report was commissioned by the National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) of Sierra Leone in Partnership with UNDP to appraise options towards establishing Sierra Leone's first National Youth Service (NYS). This is in cognisance of the Government of Sierra Leone's vision to give young people the opportunity to gain practical work experience by serving in programmes contributing towards national development and assisting in the creation of job opportunities as outlined in Section 10(b) of the Youth Commission Act (2009).

This report sets out a draft 'Framework for a National Youth Service in Sierra Leone' organised in to the following four sections:

- Background, Contexts and Study Methodology
- Conceptualising the National Youth Service
- A Proposed Model for the National Youth Service
- Conclusions and Recommendations

The main research for this report was conducted between 15th July and 30th September 2012 and incorporated consultations with a broad range of stakeholders including government ministries, donors, INGOs, national NGOs, higher education institutions, current students and focus groups in Freetown, Bo, Kenema and Makeni, as well as desk-based research.

1.2 The situation of youth in Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone National Youth Policy and the Youth Commission Act 2009 define youth as those between 15 and 35 years of age (GOSL, 2003). This group constitute about 34 percent of Sierra Leoneans or around 2 million of the estimated 5.8 million population. The total number of the population below the age of 35 years is around 73 percent (GOSL, 2008), the majority of which are under 15 years.

This civil war which took place between 1992 and 2002 cost 50,000 lives, destroyed infrastructure and reversed many of the development gains made in the previous decades. While the investment and rebuilding that has taken place in the ten years since the end of the war has brought about many positive changes, Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 180 out of 187 countries on the 2011 UN Human Development Index (UNHDR, 2011).

The legacy of the civil war lies behind many of the disadvantages and exclusion faced by young people in Sierra Leone today. The economy is hampered by limited private sector development, weak local purchasing and poor infrastructure and these, among other factors, mean it is failing to grow at generate the jobs demanded by the large and growing youth population. Only 4% of young people are fully employed, while one in three urban and one in six rural 20-24 year olds are economically inactive (i.e. not contributing to household income) (World Bank, 2009). Education and training opportunities for youth are also limited: 63% of people aged 25-35 have never attended school and today the adult literacy rate is just 39% for those over 10 years of age (World Bank, 2009).

Given this context, the need to invest in and support young people to address the particular disadvantages they face is critical. The creation of a National Youth Service is an important step, not only because of the practical opportunities it creates, but also as a symbolic statement of support for the youth of the country. A National Youth Service embodies a belief both in the contribution young people can make to development and in the importance of investing in their skills and experience.

1.3 Purpose of study

The feasibility study was commissioned by the National Youth Commission in August 2012. The purpose of the study was to work with multiple stakeholders to develop a viable framework for the creation of a National Youth Service in Sierra Leone. The framework has been informed by three inputs: the opinion and views of a wide range of stakeholders within Sierra Leone (government, higher education institutions and students, NGOs, development partners, young people); an understanding of the Sierra Leone social and economic context; and an in-depth knowledge of the successes and challenges of national youth services developed elsewhere in Africa and around the world.

Synthesising this information, the authors set out the justification and rationale for a national youth service, weighing up arguments for alternative approaches, and then outline a potential model for Sierra Leone rooted in learnings from other youth services and informed by stakeholder opinion.

1.4 Methodology

The feasibility study was conducted by the National Youth Commission with technical support from Restless Development and UNDP. The methodology was developed with input by all parties and the study undertaken in line with the agreed Terms of Reference (TOR) (see appendix 3). The study was led by a technical expert from Restless Development with prior experience of developing Kenya's flagship national youth service scheme. The methodology comprised desk research, tools development, field research and data analysis and interpretation. The desk research sought to assess best practices from countries in Africa which have implemented a national youth service, their key objectives and relevance of this to Sierra Leone. The tools developed for the study included focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and questionnaires.

Desk Research: Different papers and documents were identified as relevant and were therefore examined. These included government policies, legislation, strategies, plans, government agency strategies, programmes and plans, institutional and individual research and analyses papers as well as NGO descriptions and evaluations (a list of all materials is included in appendix 1).

Field Research: The research team conducted meetings with relevant stakeholders in Bo, Makeni, Kenema and Freetown. During the field research stage, 26 meetings were held with key informants (KIs) both in the provinces and Freetown over a period of 9 days (see appendix 2 for a list of all stakeholders consulted). The KIs were held with government officials from relevant ministries and departments at national, provincial and district levels. Other interviews were conducted with nongovernmental actors, including international development agencies with youth programmes; international and national NGOs.

In addition to KIIs, 10 focus group discussions were held with representatives of student bodies and the administration of a selection of institutions of higher learning in each locality. Participants in the focus group discussions were selected purposely to maintain representation in terms of gender and to give a cross-section of relevant views and sectors.

Data analysis and interpretation: Data analysis was undertaken at end of the fieldwork. Interview responses and focus group discussion were transcribed, information gathered was compared with desk research before developing findings.

Final consultative meeting: The provisional findings of the feasibility study were presented back to the National Youth Commission and other key stakeholders at a multi-stakeholder workshop at the end of the consultancy. Representatives from national government, student bodies, higher education representatives and the private sector were present and gave their views and opinions which have been incorporated into this framework report.

Conceptualising a National Youth Service for Sierra Leone

This section sets out some of the key concepts and principles behind a National Youth Service (NYS) for Sierra Leone. It looks at the goals and objectives of a service as conceived by the stakeholders consulted through the research process and sets out the arguments for and against some of the alternative options for the service, drawing comparisons with different models from around the world.

2.1 A Youth Service for What?

Clarifying the goals and objectives of a national youth service from the point of view of all involved is important for achieving support and buy-in from different stakeholders including the National Youth Service Volunteers (NYSVs) who will be enrolled in the service. Historical lessons from other countries suggest clear goals and objectives are integral to the success and sustainability of an NYS scheme.

The stakeholders consulted were asked to outline their vision for the goals and objectives of a NYS for Sierra Leone. These various viewpoints congregated under particular themes and headings which are summarized below.

Goals

- **Promoting national cohesion** - To inculcate and promote national integration and cohesion across geographic and ethnic divides through participatory engagements that contribute to national development.
- **Furthering development goals** – To create a corps of personnel able to respond to the current development needs and priorities of the country.
- **Enhancing the employability of young people** - To provide young people with an opportunity to develop critical thinking, discover their creative potential, learn different skills and gain employability skills and job experience.

Objectives

- **Promoting positive perceptions about young people** – To bring about positive changes to perceptions about young people and the contribution they can make to society.
- **Bridging social and cultural divides** - To provide opportunities for young people to live and work in different environments; develop shared values and principles and therefore bridge the ethnic, geographic and religious divide.
- **Contributing valuably to priority sectors** – To add value to and further the goals of priority sectors of the economy and/or public service.
- **Developing skills and talent** – To provide young people with a valuable work experience and the opportunity to

Fig 2: Stakeholder viewpoints on what the purpose of a NYS should be...

“Help young people prepare for real life, not just exams”

“Change mindsets, heartsets, skill sets”

“This is an opportunity for Sierra Leone and building a nation”

“Broaden horizons”

“Formal employment would defeat the object”

“Change perception of young people and behaviors, young people are being managed by the environment”

“One year civic payback”

“Provide clear guidance for young people”

“Attitudinal change”

cultivate hard and soft skills that enhance their employability or self-employability.

- **Inculcating values** - To instil values of volunteerism and working towards toward the collective good through participation in activities that contribute to reducing poverty and transforming society.
- **Instilling discipline and work ethic** - To instil discipline, promote a healthy work ethic and enable young people to gain a better understanding of real life and the challenges of adulthood.

Stakeholders therefore see a range of intersecting goals and objectives for a NYS in Sierra Leone. The opportunity to give young people practical work experience and enhance their employability was seen as being as much an aim as the opportunity to instil in young people values such as a positive work ethic and a spirit of civic 'pay back' through volunteerism. At the same time, the NYS is seen as an opportunity to boost development by generating a volunteer force that can make a positive contribution to a priority sector or sectors. Finally, stakeholders envisage a higher goal of enhancing a spirit of nationalism and promoting inter-community cohesion.

During discussions, a number of stakeholders cautioned against an overemphasis on the NYS as a means of enhancing longer term employment either directly (i.e. NYSVs continue in their

Fig 3: Stakeholder viewpoints on how an NYS should work...

"One that has clear purpose from the outset"
"The NYS needs to be attractive to young people and employers"
"Not another 'Project' "
"NAYCom playing a key role to gain buy in and build strategic partnerships"
"It should be supported by NGOs to avoid political bias"
"One that manages expectations"
A strong monitoring & evaluation system"
" A NYS that encourages women to enter the programme"
"Develop entrepreneurship skills"
"Provide structured engagement of young people"

youth service role in a salaried capacity) or indirectly (i.e. the skills and experience gained allowing them to secure employment with another employer). It was felt that the wider constraints of the economy and the shortage of aggregate demand for labour mean that such outcomes cannot be guaranteed so the expectation of NYSVs in this regard should be managed realistically both in the promotion/advertising of the service and once NYSVs have enrolled.

2.2 Founding principles of comparative national youth services

The consultants examined the successes and challenges of NYS that have been set up in other countries in particular in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Jamaica to distil some lessons that can be applied to the Sierra Leone context, while keeping in mind the varying economic, social and political contexts of the comparison countries.

In terms of goals of the comparative services, we see some significant differences. For instance, whereas Nigeria's NYS was specifically set up to foster national integration after the Biafra civil war (Iwalewa, 2006), Ghana's was created to instil a sense of patriotism through service. Over the years these goals have incorporated the aspect of giving young people an opportunity to get job experience, but it was not necessarily a founding aim. The goals of the Kenyan NYS on the other hand were to improve food security and develop skilled manpower and a reserve force. What is worth noting is that the Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya models all required beneficiaries to go through a compulsory paramilitary

training at some stage, however it is only Kenya that has managed to sustain this practice. Reasons cited were that Kenya’s model is sustainable whereas Nigeria and Ghana had to end this aspect of the service due to the costs involved.

2.3 Should the NYS be compulsory or voluntary?

The question of whether the NYS should be compulsory or voluntary was one of the key discussions emerging from stakeholder consultations. Of the other models examined, Nigeria and Ghana have compulsory NYS schemes, whereas in Kenya and Jamaica the NYS is voluntary. There are benefits and advantages to both approaches. Some of these are captured below:

Fig 4: The benefits and disadvantages of compulsory and voluntary models

| Compulsory | | Voluntary | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Benefits | Disadvantages | Benefits | Disadvantages |
| Helps to bridge inequalities by ensuring all young people can benefit from the scheme | Requires greater financial resources because of larger numbers of NYSVs involved and therefore may not be so sustainable | Builds a culture of volunteerism and public service | Requires selection process which will exclude some young people and may particularly affect those who are more disadvantaged (eg by disability, gender) unless positive discrimination introduced |
| Greater levels of inclusion may enhance public buy-in and better promote national cohesion | Risk that some young people do not agree with compulsory nature and enter scheme against their will and in poor spirit | Can be managed at a more financially sustainable level | May be misconstrued as ‘exclusive’ and ‘only for the elite’ if not managed well |
| | | Ensures only highly motivated NYSVs participate | |

One important drawback of a compulsory scheme is that it would require greater resources from the outset as it would be reaching a larger number of youth, and may therefore be less easily sustainable in the medium to long term. It may be necessary, therefore, to begin with a voluntary model in the first instance, allowing a compulsory model to be introduced at a later date if that is the desired long term goal.

Some lessons around sustainability of the different models can be gleaned by a historical look at other African NYS. Many African governments after independence instituted voluntary NYS without clear goals and many of them didn’t stand the test of time from issues arising from finances and political goodwill. Success factors include goodwill by the governments of the countries in terms of budgetary allocations and where the NYS was legislated as an act of parliament. Learning from other countries, **enshrining the NYS in legislation** may a good step to ensuring political buy in whether or not the scheme is compulsory.

2.4 Which young people should be targeted?

The Terms of Reference (TOR) upon which this framework is based prescribe the target groups to be reached through the pilot phase of the scheme as follows:

- In Phase 1 (years 1 to 3) the service will be open to only university graduates
- In Phase 2 (years 4 and 5) university graduates and technical or vocational (TechVoc) institutions will be eligible
- In Phase 3 (from year 6 onwards) university graduates and TechVoc institutions and graduates from senior secondary schools will be eligible

While the model proposed in section 3 below is based on the target group in Phase 1 of the scheme proposed in the TOR, given the strength and diversity of stakeholder opinion on this issue it seems valuable to include here a brief discussion of the benefits and disadvantages of extending the scheme to other groups either from the outset or in the future.

University and technical/vocational (TechVoc) graduates – A focus on university and or technical/vocational graduates will ensure a high calibre of volunteer who is in a better position to take up white collar roles (e.g. teaching assistance, clerical or administrative work). For example, under the Nigerian model – which focuses on graduates - the ‘Youth Corps’ are a highly respected work force including medical and science graduates known for their ability to contribute usefully to local development. A key disadvantage of a focus purely on graduates is the risk of a perception of elitism among the public, as graduates are a small minority of youth most of whom come from more privileged backgrounds. Arguably, graduates from academic or TechVoc institutions are also less in need of the training/skills building opportunities offered by a NYS since they are by definition in a better position to find employment than young people with fewer qualifications. Many graduates particularly those graduating from high-demand disciplines will quickly find employment upon graduation. A voluntary scheme could therefore focus on unemployed graduates who are finding it hard to bridge the gap between their studies and formal work.

Secondary school and junior secondary school students – Extending the scheme to secondary and junior secondary school leavers would obviously incorporate a far larger body of young people. This group is arguably in greater need of the experience and skills-building opportunities offered by a NYS but on the other hand would be more limited than graduates in what they would be able to contribute to different sectors. The question would also arise of what criteria would be used to select volunteers from this far larger group and how to avoid favoritism or corruption. On the other hand, incorporation of this group would create a greater sense of inclusion as opposed to elitism in the scheme.

Out of school youth – This group is arguably the neediest of all since it may include youth who have no education or very few years of education and who are therefore among the most challenged in terms of employment or self-employment prospects and the most at risk of poverty and further disadvantage. Young people in this category would be more likely to be able to take up blue collar (manual, non-skilled) roles than white collar roles which may or may not be in line with the goals of the NYS. Again issues would potentially emerge with regard to how volunteers could be selected in a fair and equitable way.

Target groups reached by other NYS schemes are shown below for comparison.

Fig 5: Comparison of target groups from different NYS schemes

| Model | Target | Impact |
|---------|----------------------------|---|
| Kenya | Secondary school graduates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High quality service men and women ✓ Job creation skills for servicemen/women offered ✓ Choice for employers(government & private sector) ✓ Labour export opportunities ✓ Sustainability plans in place |
| Ghana | All university graduates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Highly regarded and respected ✓ Choice for employers ✓ Technical skills offered ✓ Sustainability plans in place |
| Nigeria | All university graduates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High level of service success rate ✓ Choice for employers |
| Jamaica | Secondary school graduates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High School graduates ✓ Jointly supported by government, FBOs, CSOs |

Bearing these issues in mind, some points to take in to account therefore when considering target groups for the NYS are:

- **Different interventions for different groups** – Different target groups bring different levels of skills, experience and literacy levels which obviously influence the roles they can play and the mechanisms through which they can contribute to national development. There should not be a catch-all model for all groups but rather tailored interventions that maximize the benefits for each target group. These may all fall under a single NYS scheme or be separated in to different programmes.
- **Cost implications** – The involvement of different target groups may have different cost implications depending on this size of the target group, and how much of that target group is targeted. Graduates are the smallest of the proposed target groups while out-of-school youth are the largest. If only a proportion of each group is to be reached, ensuring a transparent and fair selection process will be critical to maintain the public legitimacy of the scheme (see section 3.2.3 for more discussion).
- **Leveraging benefits for other groups** – One suggestion proposed by stakeholders was that the scheme could be used to indirectly benefit a wider group of young people. For example, if graduates were the primary target group, part of their role as NYSVs could be to engage, say, secondary school students or out of school graduates in their activities and programmes. This is a model used by Restless Development in its programmes (as outlined in Fig 6 below).

Fig 6: Building peer capacity – the example of Youth Action Clubs

Each year Restless Development trains up to 200 young Sierra Leoneans secondary school leavers (WASCE holders) aged 18-28 years to be Volunteer Peer Educators (VPEs) in rural communities under the Youth Empowerment Programme. VPEs are placed for eight months in often remote rural communities where they implement a programme of peer-to-peer education focused on changing young people's behaviour with regard to their sexual and reproductive health (SRH). The programme targets young people both in school and out of school with SRH and life skills messages and training delivered through primarily non-formal methods (song, drama, discussions etc).

To leverage the benefits of the programme for a larger number of young people, VPEs support an association called a Youth Action Club composed of Peer Leaders who are both in and out of school youth. Peer Leaders are trained by VPEs to deliver the VPEs' programmes and to plan and implement special events. Peer Leaders are therefore capacitated and mentored to in effect take over the programme delivery when the VPEs leave their placements. Through these activities they enlarge their skills and experience, become positive role models and many go on to apply to become VPEs themselves.

2.5 Employment sectors and placement models

Questions around what form the placements will take and in what employment sectors volunteers will be placed are essential parameters that will have a fundamental bearing on both the nature and the impact of the NYS and therefore require extensive consideration and debate. Stakeholders consulted put forward a wide range of views on these issues, some of which are captured below as the broad alternatives are presented and discussed.

Multiple sectors versus a focus on priority sectors

If the NYS is to contribute to development priorities, a careful assessment of the sectors most suitable and most able to absorb volunteers is required. This should be rooted in an analysis of overall development and sector priorities but should also be informed by a realistic understanding of the value addition that NYSVs could potentially bring. The education sector was identified by many as a high priority sector, with the possibility of NYSVs taking up assistant teaching or similar roles to address the shortage of skilled teaching capacity. Other suggestions put forward included agriculture, mining, the uniformed services, governance and decentralization, tourism, environment, the private sector or community service.

There is also a question of whether to focus on one sector or a limited number of sectors, or to open it up more widely. Both models exist in other countries. The advantage of a narrow sectoral focus is a greater potential impact in that sector and the potential for uniformity and economies of scale when it comes to training of the volunteers, monitoring and evaluation etc. A wider sectoral focus provides more experience options for the volunteers and potentially enhances public support and buy-in as more sectors benefit from the service.

Private sector engagement

As a major driver and growth area of the economy, the private sector has a high potential to offer valuable experience to NYSVs and also has arguably greater potential to absorb many of the volunteers in full time employment at the end of the NYS placement (80% of formal employment is within the private sector). Other advantages of engaging with the private sector, as demonstrated by models from other countries particularly Ghana, include the possibility of placement organizations contributing towards the costs of the scheme (eg. paying some or all of the volunteers' expenses) and the opportunity for a wide diversity of placement options that offer better skills-matching for graduates of different disciplines.

Uniform versus tailored placements

NYS models from different countries tend to use standardized roles for a sector (eg. classroom assistants in the education sector), individualized roles tailored to the specific needs of placement organizations (see Fig 7 below for some examples) or a combination of the two. The advantages of standardized placements are that they allow for a greater combined impact, greater ease of measurement of that impact and they also allow uniformity in the training and orientation of volunteers. There is less preparation work required by NYS staff in working with placement organizations to devise tailored placements. On the other hand, tailored placements mean that volunteers can respond to the specific needs of their placement organizations which may vary even within a single sector (e.g. individual schools may require support in different areas). It also allows the possibility for skills matching between placements and volunteers. For example science graduates could be engaged in science teaching, engineers could be brought in to support infrastructure development etc.

While each of these issues needs to be debated in depth and decisions taken, the recommendation of this study is that, during the pilot phase, it would be best to focus on a small number of standardized roles within one or two sectors. This allows the implementation of the model to be fine tuned and perfected. As the scheme grows and/or more sectors are incorporated, a greater diversity of roles can be developed.

Fig 7: Examples of placements from the South Africa programme

- Initiatives which involve unemployed young people in a year-long programme where they receive education and training and deliver a service such as the building of low cost housing;
- A church programme where young people provide a service once a week serving soup to homeless people;
- A programme that involves young people in three days of activity to clean a river or to remove alien vegetation;
- A programme which involves young people in higher education running a tutoring programme once a week for students in historically disadvantaged schools;
- A class of students in a further education institution reading to the elderly once a month;
- A medical school graduate who does a year's service in a rural community which otherwise has very little access to medical care.

2.6 Conclusion

This section has set out the aims and objectives of a National Youth Service for Sierra Leone as envisaged by a cross-section of stakeholders and has drawn comparisons with other example schemes from Africa and beyond. It has examined some of the other core principles on which a NYS should rest - whether it should be compulsory, which target groups it should reach and which employment sectors it should engage – and outlined the key arguments raised by stakeholders for one scenario or another. As the NYS moves forward to the next stage of development, these core principles should be discussed in further detail and agreed with all stakeholders as they will fundamentally determine the character of the service.

Part 3: A Proposed Model for a National Youth Service for Sierra Leone

This section presents a suggested model for a NYS for Sierra Leone, examining each of the key elements of the scheme in turn. The model proposed has been informed by discussions with stakeholders and an appreciative inquiry of the successful models of NYS schemes in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Jamaica.

The model is based on the stipulation in the Terms of Reference (TOR) of **a three year pilot NYS involving 1,000 graduates**. However it also takes in to account the future scale up of the scheme envisaged under the TOR and, where applicable, allows for that growth to be absorbed.

The model considers each of the following elements of the scheme in turn:

- The management structure at national and local level
- A strategy for recruitment, selection and training of volunteers in the specified categories
- A support package for volunteers in the field
- Placement set up and deployment of volunteers
- Publicity, promotion and advertising of the service
- A monitoring and evaluation system
- Financing options and approximate costings

3.1 The management structure at national and local level

The management structure or NYS Secretariat oversees the delivery of the NYS at all levels, from setting the strategy and direction at the level of the board to on-the-ground implementation at the level of field-based staff.

Some of the lessons learned from other NYS schemes which need to be taken in to account when considering the design of the management structure include the following:

Multi-stakeholder representation at board level – A key lesson derived from the experience of other countries is the importance of harnessing the commitment of all key representative bodies to the success of the scheme. A key mechanism for achieving this is to ensure multi-stakeholder representation at the level of the board. The governing board should therefore be composed of high level representatives from relevant ministries and commissions (MYES, MEST including the Tertiary Education Commission, MOHS, MOFED, NAYCOM), the vice-chancellors of relevant tertiary institutions as well as youth representatives including the National Youth Council, student representative bodies and representatives of the alumni of the scheme. Board members could also include representatives from volunteer-championing organizations (such as VSO, Peace Corps, VIONET etc) to provide advisory support to the Board. The Chief Executive Officer should also be represented on the board.

Neutrality The body overseeing the implementation of the scheme must be seen to exercise strong leadership and management and exhibit qualities of integrity, transparency and commitment to the collective good of the graduates and communities. The stakeholders

consulted made it very clear that the NYS should be devoid of political interference. In other countries, partisan interests have had an adverse affect on ability of the NYS to fulfill its mandate.

Scale-ability – The management structure should be scale-able so that more specialized staff can be taken on as the scheme grows. A core structure of essential staff is required for the pilot phase. As the scheme increases in scale and more NYSVs are engaged, additional specialists can be brought in to perform specific functions required by the larger operation.

Leanness and efficiency – Another lesson from other NYS examples is the importance of avoiding bureaucracy by maintaining as lean a structure as possible. This ensures maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Proposed key functions within the NYS Secretariat

The following functional levels are recommended to be incorporated in to the Secretariat.

A Governing Board whose functions are inter alia 1) to provide strategy and direction for the NYS; 2) to oversee the general allocation of resources and assets and provide financial oversight; 3) to monitor, oversee and ensure the quarterly progress of the NYS; 4) to advise and support in the area of resource mobilisation for the scheme and 5) to make key appointments including the Chief Executive Officer.

A Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for the overall quality of the programme and is the liaison between the implementation function and the governance function. He/she accounts to the Board on financial management, human resources/staff performance and monitoring and evaluation.

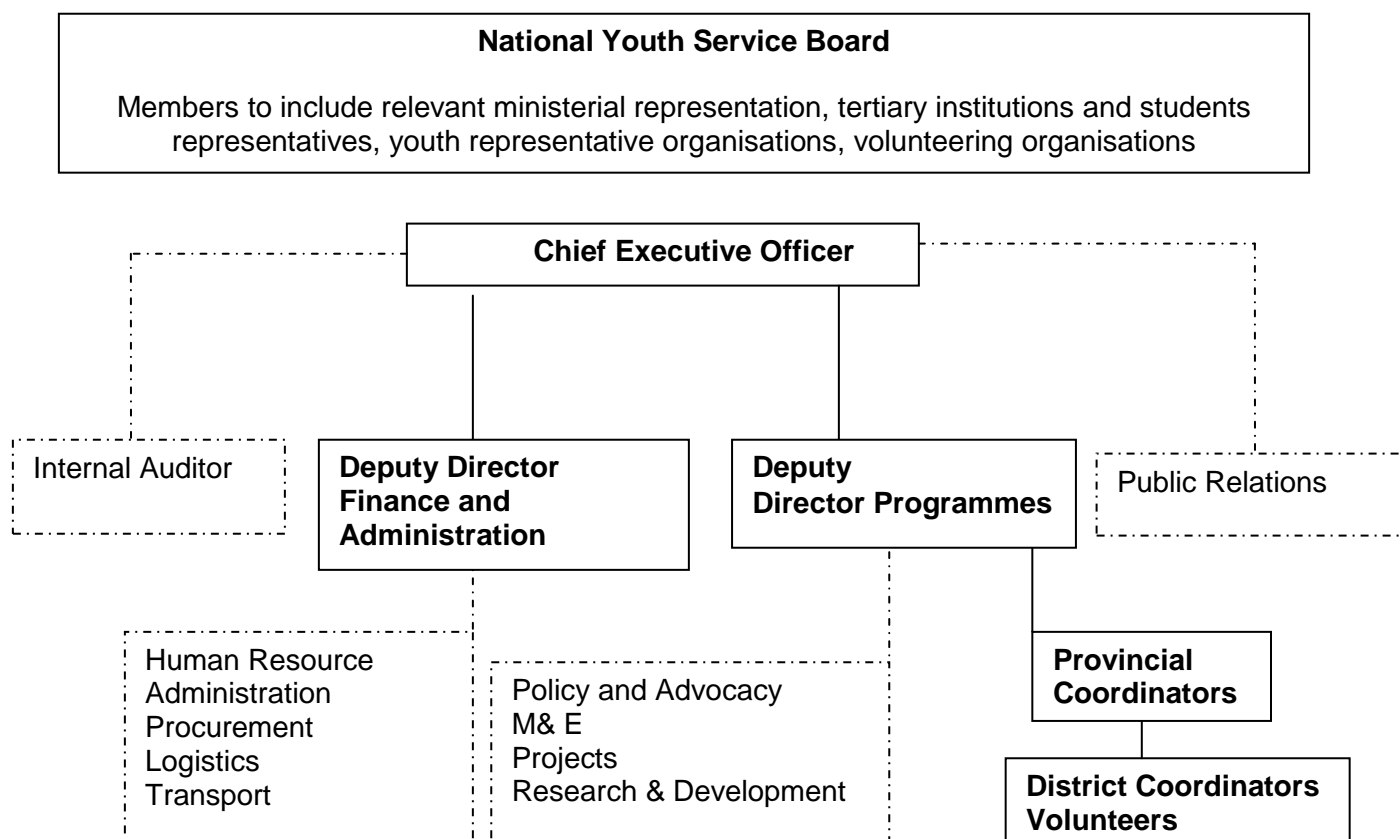
A Directorate level which it is recommended in the pilot phase to be composed of a minimum of two core positions: a Deputy Director of Finance and Administration and a Deputy Director of Programmes. They have responsibility for effective implementation of the programme in their respective areas. The Finance and Administration functions include the efficient, transparent, cost-effective and accountable use of funds and resources, while the programmes functions include the effective and high quality implementation of programmes. Each Deputy Director will manage a team of support staff which will grow in scale in proportion to the size of the scheme.

Field-based staff – Given the national scope of the NYS, having regionally-based field staff is essential for effective implementation. In the pilot phase, field staff may focus on a select number of districts. As the scheme grows in scale, this may increase to incorporate all districts. The suggestion is to have coordinators at both district and regional level, the latter providing support to a number of district-level coordinators. Core tasks of the field-based staff are placement sensitization and liaison, field support to NYSVs and monitoring and evaluation.

Proposed organogram

The following is a proposed organogram for the management structure of the NYS. The core posts required as a minimum in the pilot phase are in bold, while the additional posts which may be added as the scheme grows are dashed.

Fig 8: Suggested organogram for the NYS Secretariat



3.2 A strategy for recruitment, selection and training of volunteers in the specified categories

3.2.1 Placement development

Once the sector or sectors for NYS deployment have been identified (whether it is education, agriculture, health or a combination of sectors), it will be necessary to invest time in placement development to design suitable, appropriate, realistic and task-orientated placements that contribute to relevant ministerial strategies/sector plans and overall development goals.

Guiding principles in the design of placement roles should include:

Value-addition to the sector – If the NYS is to contribute effectively to national development goals, it is important that, firstly, NYS placements aims and objectives are aligned to sector plans and, secondly, that volunteer roles complement and do not duplicate existing roles within the sector. The NYSVs envisaged in the pilot phase (i.e. graduates) will come from a diverse range of academic backgrounds and, while the training they receive will prepare them as well as possible for the role, most will not be able to bring a level of technical skill to a sector such as health or education as fully trained staff who've undergone sector-specific training. In the

education sector, for example, suitable value-addition roles might be providing additional classroom support for students with special education needs, or helping to deliver a specific part of the curriculum (e.g. literacy support) or extra-curricular learning (e.g. sexual and reproductive health or life skills). In the health sector, suitable roles for NYSVs might be providing non-clinical support to the delivery of services such as stock management, information management or monitoring and evaluation.

Development of skills – For NYSVs to maximize the benefit of their volunteering experience it will be important that attention is given to the development of recognizable skills that will increase their employability in the future. Such skills and experience might include hard skills such as IT knowledge, training experience as well as soft skills such as time management or communication skills. Placements should be designed to maximize the potential for developing such skills and the monitoring and evaluation systems should include provision for recording the development of such skills.

Measurable impact – Being able to show a tangible impact of the NYS is important not only to enhance the legitimacy of the scheme in the public eye, but will also be critical in gaining the enthusiasm and motivation of current and future NYSVs. Placements should be designed to allow volunteers to make a tangible impact and monitoring systems should allow that impact to be measured and the results shared with NYSVs. For example, schools-based placements might look at the impact of volunteer placements on the educational outcomes of students or health-based programmes might measure, for example, increase in patient satisfaction, depending on the nature of the NYS placements.

Placement descriptions

As an output of the placement development phase, placement descriptions including overall goals and objectives of the role, specific tasks and responsibilities and expected outcomes as well as support and supervisory arrangements should be developed. These should be shared as part of the recruitment process, allowing potential service men/women to “self-select” i.e. assess whether they will fit in the role or not.

3.2.2 Placement duration

The placement duration in NYS models from other countries examined as part of this study range from 6 months (Nigeria) to 2 years (Kenya). The length of placements offered by any scheme is determined by a number of factors including the resources available.

Ideally, it is recommended that placements last a minimum of 9 months. This is considered the minimum length of time for volunteers to make an impact in their placement. If placements are to be undertaken in schools, 9 months would allow placements to last for an entire academic year which is felt to be a suitable duration to allow students to benefit fully from the volunteer's contribution.

Some stakeholders suggested the possibility of non-continuous NYS placements running each year through university holidays (i.e. during the long break from June to October), as opposed to the more standard model of a continuous placement to be taken up after graduation. While this

alternative model is likely to present a greater administrative burden and may have higher cost implications, it is also worth considering as a possible future innovation/alternative for the scheme, as it allows students to make full and productive use of their holidays.

3.2.3 Selection and recruitment of volunteers

The pilot phase of the project is envisaged to establish a voluntary (i.e. non-compulsory) scheme aimed at an initial 1,000 new or recent graduates. Given its voluntary nature and the restricted number of volunteers involved, selection and recruitment procedures may be different in the pilot phase than in a fully scaled up model, particularly if this becomes compulsory in the future. However, in both cases, selection and recruitment should aim to incorporate the following elements:

- Campus-based advertising and sensitization - Generating enthusiasm and motivation among prospective NYSVs will be integral to the success of the scheme. An information campaign clarifying the goals and objectives and benefits of the scheme through posters, seminars and presentations, should be ongoing on all relevant university campuses (see section 3.5 below).
- Limited application window – While sensitization about the scheme should continue throughout the year, for administrative ease, the window for prospective candidates to apply to the scheme should be a limited time window, for example in the two months preceding the selection process. Any candidate who misses the application window may be considered for the following year’s scheme. Below, the selection cycles for other NYS schemes are detailed by way of comparison.
- Defined criteria for selection – Even if the NYS becomes compulsory at a future stage, there will nevertheless remain a need to maintain an element of selection to guarantee the scheme’s success and ensure resources are invested in the most cost-effective way.

Fig 9: Selection processes in comparative NYS schemes

| Model | Selection periods | Approximate no. | Key considerations | Challenges |
|---------|--|-----------------|---|--|
| Kenya | Twice per year | 6,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regional representation ➤ Orphans given special preference ➤ Clear recruitment schedule ➤ Be prepared to serve in any part of Kenya. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High volume of applications impacting on capacity to process in time ➤ Vested interest leading to favouritism |
| Nigeria | Three enrolment tiers March, July and November | 90,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Must be a graduate of university/college ➤ Be prepared to serve in any other state other than state of origin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Follow up on impact training, deployment and monitoring ➤ Vested interests in placement ➤ Insecurity |

| | | | | |
|---------|-------------------|--------|--|--|
| | | | ➤ Streamlined training and placement process | |
| Jamaica | Apply at any time | 600 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have completed secondary education ➤ Possess basic literacy skills. ➤ Possess a minimum of two subjects at school leaver level ➤ Be unemployed or not attending school. | Inadequately prepared for the jobs they were expected to do on their placements |
| Ghana | | 50,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Must be a graduate of university/college ➤ Be prepared to serve in any other state other than state of origin | Streamlined training and placement process Vested interest in Placement especially private sector |

Selection criteria should be determined by the Steering Group, but might include:

- Academic qualifications
- District of origin (to ensure full national representation a district quota system could be introduced)
- Gender (possible introduction of positive discrimination in favour of female applicants)
- Level of motivation/interest/commitment to goals of the scheme

The selection process

Stakeholders consulted emphasised the need for a free, fair and transparent recruitment and selection process. Findings from Kenya indicated that the recruitment and selection process was under threat due to external forces (nepotism, ethnicity, favouritism) and both Nigeria and Ghana have experienced similar challenges during posting of their service men/women. To avoid these issues, a cross section of stakeholders should ideally be engaged in the selection process. Suggestions for the composition of the selection panel are given below.

Fig 10: Suggested composition of selection panel

| Selection Panel | Pros | Cons |
|--|---|---|
| To comprise of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Youth Officers ➤ Youth Representatives ➤ Previous volunteer ➤ Placement representatives ➤ Community elder/opinion leaders ➤ NYS personnel | Properly managed allows for central oversight and learning from the pilot phase | Risks to transparency and accountability of selection process |

Selection tools

Selection of candidates could use some or all of the following tools:

Application form - The basic tool for selection should be an application form which includes the opportunity for prospective candidates to demonstrate their motivation and commitment to the scheme. If resources are limited, the application form may be the only tool for selection.

References – Academic and character references should also be provided as part of the selection process.

Assessment centre - If additional resources are available, a second step in the selection process could be introduced through which shortlisted candidates are invited to participate in a inter-active selection process through which they can demonstrate in more depth their skills and motivation through a number of group and individual tasks.

3.2.4 Volunteer training

In their feedback stakeholders and beneficiaries recognised that the approach and emphasis of the training package is critical to the success and credibility of the NYS. Therefore it is important that a volunteer under the NYS is provided with a high quality training experience.

The primary role of training is, of course, to equip the NYSVs with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their placements. However, it has been acknowledged in the NYS operating in South Africa, Ghana and Jamaica that the training programme is also an opportunity to instill key values in volunteers, nurturing a spirit of commitment to volunteerism, to community service and to each other. The training period is an opportunity to develop volunteers' sense of themselves as citizens and active participants in society with an ability to assist the community. In addition the training should encompass respect for diversity and cooperation and help each participant to prepare for and make the transition to his or her next endeavour, whether education or work.

Fig 11: Approach to training in the South African National Youth Service

“Effective training should balance the complementary goals of project skills development and personal development, enabling both to happen. Training is an on-going activity; it does not end with orientation. Participants, where required, are linked to essential support services. This implies that the programme has a strong referral network. The programme develops personal and social skills, including self-discipline, independence and competence. Staff should preferably have competence in basic counselling, crisis intervention and referral to services.”

Training duration and schedule

It was strongly felt by stakeholders that the training programme should be of sufficient length and scope to equip NYSVs adequately for their volunteering experience. The recommendation is that the training programme should ideally run for a minimum of six weeks and ideally more. This will give sufficient time to cover all the key areas both in the core curriculum and in the special curriculum relating to the placement itself. In terms of training schedule, the programme could be run either as a single block or, alternatively, run throughout the university term, fitting around the scheduled curriculum.

Training content

The **core curriculum** (two weeks minimum) for all volunteers could include the following topics:

Orientation

- Introduction to the NYS scheme, its mission and goals
- The value of volunteering for national development
- Citizenship and being an active citizen

Personal development and growth

- Developing your leadership potential
- Personal development and career planning
- Making the most of your NYS placement
- What next after volunteering?

Skills development

- IT skills
- Peace building and conflict resolution
- Language tuition (if applicable)

General preparation for volunteering

- Working with communities
- Overcoming challenges in your placement
- Staying healthy in your placement including basic first aid
- Project planning and proposal writing (especially relevant for special projects see below)

The **special curriculum** (four weeks minimum) is placement specific. For example, training for classroom assistants could include elements such as:

- Specific curriculum training (eg Sexual and Reproductive Health)
- Lesson planning
- Teaching skills
- Behaviour management/classroom control
- Basic counselling skills
- Child protection

Training delivery

The delivery of the training package should be a collaboration between the NYS Secretariat or appointed training providers and placement organisations. One obvious way to divide the training schedule would be for the NYS Secretariat/appointed training provider to cover the core curriculum and the placement organisation to undertake the placement-specific part of the training but other configurations are also possible.

Ongoing training and professional development

Training should not end when volunteers start placements but rather opportunities for further training and professional development should continue throughout the placement period as suggested in the South African model described above. Some of the tools and mechanisms for ensuring this could include:

Induction/orientation: Each volunteer should benefit from a one week induction/orientation from their placement organisation during their first week in placement. This could include meeting other staff, learning about the various functions of the organisation performed by different units, and being provided with information about the placement organisation's history, aims and objectives etc as well as clarity of the roles and functions the NYSV will perform within the organisation.

Volunteer's manual: All participants should receive a reference manual summarizing the key elements of the training programme as well as detailing the vision, mission and goals of the NYS programme, contractual arrangements, placements tasks and any other relevant NYS guidance.

On the job training: It is the responsibility of the placement organization to provide on the job training for volunteers in placement. Ideally the nature of this training should be spelled out in the contract signed between the placement organization and the volunteer (see 3.4 below) to clarify expectations on both sides.

Refresher training: If resources allow, all volunteers should benefit from refresher training midway through their placement. Bringing a group of NYSVs together for a further training allows their knowledge to be topped up in key areas, but is also an opportunity for NYSVs to share feedback from their placement, troubleshoot any issues or challenges arising and to benefit from interaction with other NYSVs undergoing similar experiences.

Fig 12: Restless Development Training Package

Restless Developments VPE training is ideally organized as follows:

- Foundation training at the start of the programme and lasting 2 to 3 weeks
- Top-up training after the first two months of placement lasting 1 week
- Mid-Term training half way the placement period lasting 1 or 2 weeks
- Debrief and Certification ceremony at the end of the placements lasting 1 week

Trainings are organized and implemented by Regional Coordinators and Field Officers. Partner organisations such as Marie Stopes Sierra Leone and stakeholders are invited to deliver some of the sessions

Trainings are focused on building knowledge on sexual reproductive health, life skills, civic participation, Code of Conduct and on building skills on facilitation, peer advice, working with community leaders, referrals, monitoring, budgeting. The debrief focuses assessing implementation and impact and receiving feedback from VPEs.

Fig 13: Partnerships for sharing and learning between VSO and Ghanaian Government

As partners in education, the National Service Scheme (NSS) and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Ghana continue to address the shortage of classroom teachers to ensure efficient and effective teaching. In view of this, a strategic partnership to promote holistic teacher training has been established between NSS, VSO, Ghana Education Service (GES) and UNICEF. This led to the development of a multi-disciplinary handbook to be used to strengthen the capacity of personnel as well as support the training of volunteers who will be deployed to teach in rural schools.

The Teaching Skills Training Handbook covers issues on volunteering, pedagogy, inclusion, HIV-ALERT and W.A.S.H (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). Volunteers are given these basic teaching skills training before and during their period of service.

Special projects

In addition to their core work, if resources allow, NYS volunteers could also be given the option to undertake a special project at their own initiative in response to a particular need they identify in their placement. Special project funding could be awarded on a competitive basis based on a written application, thereby encouraging NYSVs to develop their project planning/proposal writing skills.

The advantage of such a scheme is that it would help to nurture innovation, initiative and resourcefulness among the NYSVs and challenge them to understand and be responsive to their environments they work in. Awards could come from a special project fund and awarded on an annual basis. Peace Corps have a similar scheme as detailed in the below box.

Fig 14: Peace Corps Secondary Projects

Peace Corps is an independent U.S. government agency that provides trained volunteers for countries requesting assistance around the world. In addition to their core work – which in Sierra Leone currently focuses on teaching support in Secondary Schools – Peace Corps volunteers are also encouraged to identify and implement independent projects in the communities they work.

Each volunteer undertakes a community assessment using a participatory analysis technique from which they, with the involvement of community members, identify areas of need and devise projects to address those needs. Peace Corps funding is available to support many of those projects, otherwise volunteers are encouraged to raise funds from other NGOs or from within the community. Typical projects include refurbishing a school, stocking a library or resource centre, setting up an out-of-school literacy programme, building a well or a latrine among others.

These projects build volunteer’s skills in needs assessment, project design and implementation as well as proposal writing and fundraising.

3.3 A support package for volunteers in the field

Stakeholders were consulted with regard to the kind and level of support NYSVs should receive while placed in the field. The basic package agreed by most would consist of the following:

- Stipend/volunteers' allowance to cover out-of-pocket expenses such as meals and transport
- Accommodation within the community in the form of host homes
- Some kind of cover for medical expenses incurred during placement

It was generally agreed that the stipend should be set at such a level that it is clearly a voluntary allowance (i.e. just covering expenses) rather than a salary. Requiring the community to house the volunteer – a practice employed by Restless Development and other volunteering organizations – helps to increase community buy-in for the initiative and awareness/appreciation of the contribution the volunteer can make. Medical expenses could be paid either as an additional allowance or in the form of retrospective compensation to be paid on production of receipts.

The support package that Restless Development provides for its VPEs is detailed below for information.

Fig 15: Restless Development VPE support package

Restless Development VPEs receive the following support while in the field:

- Volunteer stipend – SLLe 300,000 per month
- Medical cover – SLLe 15,000 per month as a medical allowance and a medical insurance at SLLe 100,000 for the entire placement period
- Bike for transport – bike maintenance allowance 10,000 per placement
- Transport refund for journeys to Restless Development events – e.g. monthly meetings

All volunteers are housed for free by the community

3.4 Deployment and support of volunteers during placement

Code of conduct for volunteers

All NYSVs should sign up to a code of conduct (COC) on being awarded a place on the scheme. The COC is an agreement between the NYSV and the NYS which clarifies roles and responsibilities of the volunteer and expectations regarding their conduct throughout the placement. It should be made clear to the NYSVs that any breach of the COC will be taken

seriously and should outline clear procedures for disciplinary action that may be taken depending on the level of the breach.

Placement contracts

An example of good practice from other organizations is to engage volunteers and placement organizations in the signing of contracts to clarify expectations on the part of all parties. The contract could include details of the role and tasks of the volunteers, support arrangements, leave entitlement and obligations of both volunteer and placement organization.

Support visits

Ideally, NYSVs should receive a minimum of one support visit from field based staff (District Coordinators) throughout their placement and ideally more frequent visits. During these visits, volunteers should be given time to give feedback in confidence if necessary and discuss any challenges they are facing in their placement. It is also an opportunity for the field staff to meet with placement organizations and gather their feedback on the progress of the placement. These visits are also an opportunity for field officers to collect routine monitoring and evaluation data (see section 3.6 below).

End of placement support

At the end of the placement, NYSVs should be given support by the NYS scheme to take their next step whether it is in to employment, further study or something else.

Important mechanisms of support could include:

Recognition of service

- Reference letters that are nationally authorised so as to encourage employers to employ young people that have completed service (all participants);
- Awarding of a nationally recognized/accredited qualification, or part thereof (programmes containing a significant education and training component);
- Educational awards (to pay for an education or training programme or to pay back loans) or loans for small businesses as well as appropriate support (unemployed or youth in conflict with the law);
- Education credits for their service. Criteria for this will be set by the relevant quality assurance structure, and this will require new forms of assessment practice if the different components of the service programme are to be assessed (further education and training, and higher education).

Careers guidance and signposting

- NYS should also strive to offer NYSVs careers guidance once they have completed their placements. This may be simply through written materials, or an opportunity to attend a careers guidance meeting or, even better, to receive one-to-one careers counseling.
- Part of the careers guidance should also be providing information about other opportunities available (training, volunteering) and signposting NYSVs on to other service providers and training organizations.

3.5 Publicity, promotion and advertising of the service

Since this is a new initiative, marketing of the service will be vital to ensure prospective volunteers are informed and enthused about joining, particularly in the run up to and around the launch of the service. An effective marketing campaign will also serve to galvanise public support for the campaign and enhance the buy-in of all stakeholders.

Purpose of publicity campaign:

- To inform prospective NYVs about the aims and goals of the service and encourage them to apply as volunteers.
- To inform the general public about the programmes goals and enhance its public legitimacy.
- To enhance the buy-in of all stakeholders by creating a positive public image of the service.

Essential elements of a publicity campaign should include:

- Clear and consistent messaging regarding aims and objectives of the NYS and its contribution to national development.
- Advertising strategy (poster campaign, radio and TV broadcasts) with particular emphasis on campus-based marketing.
- Information events for prospective volunteers on campus (seminars, presentations) including after year one testimony by alumni of the scheme.
- Consistent, audience-specific branding appealing to a youth audience.
- Effective media engagement to ensure consistent messaging.

The best advocates of the scheme are volunteers who have been through the experience and gained from it. They can articulate most clearly and authentically the value of volunteering to other prospective volunteers, for example, through on-campus talks and presentations. Harnessing alumni to promote and publicise the scheme will therefore be a key aspect of any marketing strategy.

Ideally, a dedicated PR Officer should be in place to roll out the publicity campaign, coordinate all public relations activities and provide strong media liaison.

3.6 A monitoring and evaluation system

Monitoring and evaluation at all the stages of NYS will be crucial to all stakeholders. This will help in providing a meaningful role to all involved at all the stages of the process and will be achieved through an M&E framework which is able to:

- Measure progress towards programme outputs, outcomes and impact
- Report internally
- Ensure there is accountability to volunteers, host partners and beneficiaries
- Share learning and support quality control of NYS

In particular the tools that will be developed should be able to measure opportunities availed to:

- Young people to participate and demonstrate leadership
- Participating host communities in assessing progress and achievements of the programme
- Encouraging learning for all participants to support on-going change and action

The data and information collected by the M&E process is to be collated and analysed to allow review and improvement of the NYS. Various methods and tools will be used to collect data and information on the NYS. These include:

- Managing For Impact tools capturing regular feedback
- Daily, weekly and monthly reporting forms/progress reports.
- Structured surveys with former volunteers e.g. self administered questionnaires
- Focus Group Discussions with support groups
- Evaluations and post-evaluations of programmes, trainings e.g. KAP/Life skills surveys
- Long term case studies
- Wide dissemination/sharing of lessons learned

3.7 Approximate costings and financing options

An estimate of the budget

The consultants have prepared an approximate budget for the first year of the NYS scheme, assuming one third (i.e. around 330) of the 1,000 graduates will be recruited and deployed. The figures do not include staffing or governance costs as these would be set at agreed civil service salary scales which the consultants did not have access to. All other estimated costs minus staffing and governance break down as follows:

Fig 16: Approximate budget for year one of the NYS

| Item | Approximate estimated cost USD |
|--|--------------------------------|
| NYS set up including launch events, staff recruitment and equipment/vehicle purchase | 400,000 |
| Recruitment , training and deployment of volunteers including stipend of 500,000 leones per month for 330 volunteers | 1,850,000 |
| Support to volunteers in placement (field visits, medical cover) | 120,000 |
| Programme quality (including M+E, stakeholders meetings) | 165,000 |
| Staffing and governance costs | TBC |
| Grand total | 2,535,000 |

This estimate shows that, apart from staffing and governance costs, the recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers is the largest part of the budget. Fortunately these are also areas in which alternative financing options may be available. Some of these are discussed below.

Financing options for long term sustainability

Youth Services around the world have struggled to gain financial sustainability in the long term and so it is important that issues of sustainability are factored in during the initial planning of the scheme. Some good ideas can be drawn from other NYS models:

Community contributions – Wherever possible the communities that are benefiting from the contribution of the NYSVs should be encouraged to themselves contribute to support arrangements for the volunteer. This will help to generate a sense of mutuality in the programme and enhance the community's ownership of the scheme. As suggested above, a basic contribution could be the provision of free housing for the volunteer. Other contributions could include meals during the working week. These contributions could allow the stipend for volunteers to be lowered.

Placement organisation contributions – In a number of other schemes examined, placement organisations have actually contributed substantially to the costs of the volunteer by paying either for a proportion of or the entire volunteer stipend. This has worked particularly well in Ghana where private sector placement organisations not only pay the volunteer stipend but also a 20% supplement towards the NYS administration costs.

Income generation activities – Another model from the Ghanaian programme is to engage in Income Generation Activities. The Ghanaian NYS has a number of income generation projects including a maize farm, borehole drilling and fish and poultry farm. Some volunteers are posted to these projects as part of their placement. The projects help to generate a significant part of the funding for the NYS.

Fig 17: Income generation initiatives in the Ghana NSS

The Ghana National Service Scheme has grown over the years from an initial figure of 2,000 National Service Personnel from inception to 60,000 in 2010. With this phenomenal growth, the Scheme by necessary implication has a lot of challenges ranging from personnel placement to budgetary constraints. In addressing the issue of insufficient budgetary allocations, the Scheme is embarking on a number of income generating projects to raise funds to supplement its budgetary allocation.

One such project is a maize farm. The Scheme has acquired about 2000 acres of land at Ejura in the Ashanti region, plus five tractors from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The Scheme has deployed 20 National Service Personnel with agricultural background. The Ejura farm is also intended to provide a nucleus to serve block farmers within the same radius. The farm is intended to provide practical training for national service personnel who would like to go into agriculture as a career.

From Ghana NSS website <http://196.201.43.251/>

Part 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

A National Youth Service for Sierra Leone should be rooted in the following principles:

1. Clear aims, objectives and limitations

Learning from the experience of other NYS, it is important that the purpose and goals of the Sierra Leone NYS are clearly conceived and articulated in order to manage the expectations of all stakeholders. Important to this is an acknowledgement of the limitations of the service, including how far it can contribute to employability, which target groups it will focus on and so on.

2. Stakeholder ownership

Stakeholders must believe that they “own” the NYS, and that it doesn’t exist simply because the government or Youth Commission wants it. The initiative must therefore be inclusive and seek to build community ownership and buy in from all stakeholders, tertiary education institutions, young people, communities where service men and women will be deployed among others. Learning from other countries’ examples, political will is a very important factor in the continued success of a youth service and cross-ministerial representation on the management board is one way to enhance this.

3. Strong and transparent management

It is crucial that the body appointed to oversee the design and implementation of the NYS exercises integrity, transparency, and commitment to the collective good of the graduates and communities. The NYS should be devoid of political interference.

4. Towards self-sufficiency

Many Youth Services in other countries have struggled to sustain themselves in the long term because of limited financial resources. The medium to long-term goal, therefore, should be to move towards self-sufficiency by “growing” wealth through diverse sources of income. These could include income generation, community contributions and placement organization contributions.

5. Management for impact

It will be important during the pilot that comprehensive information is gathered in order to measure the impact of the NYS and improve and plan for the future phases of development. There is therefore a need to develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to serve as a guide and practical tool to manage the impact of the NYS in its initial stages.

Recommendations for a way forward

The consultants propose the following steps to take the NYS framework to the next stage of development:

1. **Agreeing core principles** – Agreement to be reached, ideally via an informed, multi-stakeholder committee such as a steering group, with regard to the core principles of the NYS such as whether it is compulsory or voluntary and which sectors it will target.
2. **Fine-tuning the model** - A steering group or other formation to examine the model as proposed in this report and make any necessary adjustments or adaptations according to need and resources. These discussions should involve a range of stakeholders including students and youth representatives to ensure engagement and buy-in.
3. **Finalising costings** – This study includes a provisional budget based on some of the general costings of the scheme but this requires further elaboration, particularly in relation to the management costs. Once a finalised model has been produced and agreed, NAYCOM should work with central agencies to finalise costings for the pilot project.
4. **Final validation of the framework** - The finalised proposal of the framework should be presented back to stakeholders for final validation before its conception is incorporated into annual budgets and plans.

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Part 5: Appendices

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- VSO (2012) *International Citizen Service: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework*
- Work Bank (2009) *Youth Employment in Sierra Leone: Sustainable Livelihoods Opportunities in a Post-Conflict Setting*

Web-based resources

- Innovations in Civic Participation <http://www.icicp.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/1453>
- UN Human Development Index <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>
- Jamaica National Youth Service <http://www.nysjamaica.org/>
- Ghana National Youth Service <http://196.201.43.251/>

Appendix 2: Stakeholders Consulted

Higher education institutions, training institutes and student representatives

Njala University
Eastern Polytechnic
University of Makeni
Northern Polytechnic
Fourah Bay College
Milton Margai College of Education and Technology
St Joseph's Vocational Institute, Lunsar
Government Technical Institute, Kissy
Opportunity Industrialisation Centre, Bo
Institute of Public Administration and Management
National Union of Sierra Leone Students
Tertiary Education Commission

Youth representative organizations

Bo District Youth Council
Kenema District Youth Council
Bombali District Youth Council
Youth organizations in Bo
Nongoula Chiefdon Youth Council

National and local government

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
Ministry of Local Government and Community Development
Ministry of Trade and Industry
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
Ministry of Youth, Employment and Sport
Strategic Planning Unit, State House
National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)
Makeni District Council
Kenema District Council
City Council of Freetown

Civil service and armed forces

Sierra Leone Police Force
Sierra Leone Army
Sierra Leone Prisons
Sierra Leone Fire Force

Private sector representatives

Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
Sierra Leone Indigenous Business Association

Donor agencies

World Bank
European Union
UK Department for International Development

Volunteer-involving organizations and other civil society

Voluntary Service Overseas
Peace Corps
YMCA
Sierra Leone Youth Coalition on HIV and AIDS (SLYCHA)

Appendix 3: Terms of Reference for consultancy

National Youth Commission

National Youth Service

Concept Note

Background

The Government of Sierra Leone plans to establish a National Youth Service to give young people the opportunity to gain practical work experience by serving in programmes of development value to the country. The following concept note sets out the aims, target groups and provisional structure/design of the proposed Youth Service which will guide the framework to be developed by the consultant. These elements are not prescriptive and it will be the role of the consultant to propose the most cost effective and impactful approaches to meet the goals of the programme.

Youth Service for whom?

- In Phase 1 (year 1 to 3) the service will be open to only university graduates
- In Phase 2 (Year 4 and 5) university graduates and TechVoc Institutions will be eligible
- In Phase 3 (from year 6 onwards) university graduates and TechVoc Institutions and graduates from senior secondary Schools will be eligible
- In addition, the consultant will include in the report a feasibility assessment of including out-of-school youth aged 15-35 in phase 1 and 2

Youth Service for what?

- The National Youth Service would be a long-term programme
- The Service will:-
 - Strengthen the employability of young people and second it should
 - Support the provision of important basic services
- The Service will youth the opportunity to
 - Get their first professional work experience;
 - Live and work in another part of the country thereby gaining an enhanced perspective of their own country;
 - Gain a practical understanding of the development challenges confronting their country;
 - Develop links and contacts with employers that become important during job search;

What will the Youth Receive?

- In addition to the opportunity to gain work experience the youth who are volunteers in the youth service will receive :-
 - free accommodation and food and their station of duty
 - allowances for transport and “pocket money”
 - coverage of medical costs
 - training package, e.g. basic IT and presentation skills
 - a certificate after successful completion of the service

How will the youth be recruited?

- Youth will apply once per year
- The selection will be from all districts, proportional to the population of that district,
- Selection within the youths that applied from any one district will be random
- There will be set number of places per year

What work will the Youth Do?

- In the first phase (year 1 to 3) the youth service volunteers will be literacy trainers of youth. The youth groups will be organized by the District and Chiefdom Youth Councils with oversight of the NAYCOM

Where will be youths be posted?

- Youths will be posted outside of the district in which they currently live

How will the Service be Managed?

- The National Youth Service Secretariat will be set up within the NAYCOM
- In phase 1 National Youth Service Secretariat will
 - Manage the application and selection process
 - Work with the youth councils to create the youth literacy groups
 - Manage the payment of eh allowances
 - Establish (through the NAYCOM Provincial Offices) the supervision of the youth at the locality to cover such issues as attendance, quality of work, professional behavior
 - Establish (through the NAYCOM Provincial Offices) a system in the locality to ensure the youth's safety

How many youth volunteers will be recruited each year?

- In Phase 1 which will be the start-up period it is expected that there will be 60 youth from every district and 200 from Freetown City and 80 from Western Rural i.e. 1,000 in total

How much will the Youth Service cost?

- National Youth Service Secretariat based at NAYCOM
Staff (Minimum: 1 Secretary, 1 Office Manager, 3-4 Officers for handling applications, service provision, assistance to volunteers and organisation of trainings, M&E 1 Driver)
Office Equipment & Materials
Running Costs
- (12) Local Offices at District Youth Committees
Staff (1 per district)
Office Equipment & Materials
Running Costs
- Training the Youth volunteers
- Transport allowance

Monthly allowance
Medical allowance

- Advertising Costs (to make the programme known to the public and announce new application periods)
- Monitoring and Evaluation

What will be the indicators of success?

- In Phase 1 the indicators will be :-
- Number of youths participating
- Number of youths who have received literacy training
- Standard of literacy in the students of the groups in comparison to similar groups where there is no literacy training
- There will be an external evaluation after the end of the first year

Deliverables

The consultant will be expected to deliver the following:

1. An inception report (within one week of arriving in SL) that describes the process to prepare the framework report
2. A draft of the framework report 'Framework of the National Youth Service of Sierra Leone' incorporating a costed proposal to include the following elements:
 - The management structure at national and local level
 - A strategy for recruitment, selection and training of volunteers in the specified categories
 - Support package for volunteers in the field (transport, stipend, medical etc)
 - Publicity, promotion and advertising of the service
 - A monitoring and evaluation system
3. A final framework report incorporating the input of stakeholders gained through a multistakeholder validation.

As part of the consultancy, the consultant will also be expected to:

- Attend consultative meetings with key stakeholders during the design phase in both Freetown and in the provinces
- Present the draft framework report at a multistakeholder validation workshop and coordinate the input of stakeholders to the draft

Administration and communication

The consultant will report to the Commissioner of the National Youth Commission.

Appendix 4: Student Survey

BENEFICIARY QUESTIONNAIRE

Date of Interview: _____

Name of interviewee:-

Gender: Female Male Age: _____

Institution: _____

Region:

1.0 What education category best describes you. Please tick all that apply to you.

- i) Advanced Lever Secondary school
- ii) Collage Certificate
- iii) Diploma
- iv) Advanced Diploma
- v) Bachelor Degree

2.0 Which is your specific area of study

.....

3.0 Which part of Sierra Leone do you identify yourself with?

4.0 NAYCOM is planning to establish the National Youth Service which will give graduates an opportunity to explore their creative minds. Would you be willing to participate?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

5.0 Have you ever participated in any of the following programmes (it could be informal or formal)? Please tick in the boxes indicated below.

- Internship
- Community Service
- Volunteerism

6.0 What was your role in the placement?

- i)
- ii)
- iii)
- iv)
- v)

7.0 What other roles would have been happier to perform in the organization if you were given the opportunity to? Please list them.

| S/N | Organisation | Role |
|-----|--------------|------|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |

8.0 What skills do you possess? Please mention

- i)
- ii)
- iii)
- iv)
- v)

9.0 Please indicate methods you often use in the efforts to search for part time jobs or internship opportunities among the following.(Please tick all that applies to you).

- i) Recruitment Agency
- ii) Advertisements in newspapers
- iii) Visit to potential companies/institutions
- iv) Online Platforms
- v) Other (please specify.....)

10.0 If yes, which part of Sierra Leone would you prefer to serve? Please indicate in order of preference.

- i)
- ii)
- iii)
- iv)
- v)

11.0 What support would you require to participate in such a programme? Please indicate below.

- i)
- ii)
- iii)
- iv)

13.0 Do you think this programme should be compulsory?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

14.0 Please give your reasons for either answer as above.

.....

.....
.....

12.0 Please provide other comments with regard to the proposed National Youth Service.

- i)
- ii)
- iii)
- iv)
- v)

Appendix 5: A Comparison of the main features of National Youth Services in four countries

| Country | Mission statement | Main Features/Success | Challenges |
|---------|--|---|--|
| Nigeria | Established "with a view to the proper encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity". | Incepted in 1973 Target degree holders 2011 had 110,000 Legislated Supported by robust economy Window to employment in Govt, private sector & CSO's Funded by the government | No. of graduates vs placements Killing & sexual harassment of corps Inefficient social and educational system Corruption, nepotism Reputation for cheap labor. Irregular calendar of universities M& E Budgetary constraints |
| Ghana | Mobilize and Deploy Ghanaian citizens of 18 years and above for National Development "Service to the Nation" | Incepted in 1980 Target diploma/ degree holders In 2011 had 50,069 volunteers Constitutional Strong private sector /public partnership. Government gets 20% service charge from placement organization, who also pay stipends Regarded highly Government quantifies service of SM/W NSS raises funds through giving credit of household items | Accommodation Lack of coordination Health concerns Viewed as cheap labor Unscrupulous practices flout labor laws Budget constraints Corruption - Allowances delayed - Poor M& E due to Inadequate staff - Inadequate training leading to negative impact - Conflict of Culture |
| Kenya | Training of the youth citizens to serve the nation, and employment of its members in Tasks of national importance and otherwise in the service of nation. Serving with the armed forces during war times in the defence of the nation whether within or | In place since 1964 2011 (9,000 SM/W) Target group 18 -22 Sustainable Choice for middle level employee Provides technical skills, entrepreneurship & start up loans and tools Provides service in various sectors | Pressure for expansion Flawed selection and recruitments Corruption, tribalism and nepotism |

| | | | |
|---------|--|---|--|
| | outside | Hub for labor export National Youth volunteer Scheme in place | |
| Jamaica | To create a cadre of patriotic young people – disciplined, responsible, caring, confident, self reliant and culturally aware, who through involvement in voluntary activities contribute to personal, community, national and international development. | -Incepted in 1973 -Target group secondary graduates - 2011 (430 corps) -Imbedded volunteering, mentorship & summer internship -Working closely with FBO's -Well structured training modules(core & specialized training) | Politicization of NYC -Skills gap - Partnership development lacking - Questions on its functions in relation to high crime rates - M&E |