



UGANDA PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON YOUTH AFFAIRS

National Youth Volunteering Programme Options for Policy and Programme Development

2013

UGANDA PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON YOUTH AFFAIRS

in conjunction with

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

National Youth Volunteering Programme
Options for Policy and Programme
Development

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2013

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
ILO	International Labour Office
IYF	International Youth Foundation
NAVE	National Alliance of Volunteering Effort
NSS	National Service Scheme
NV	National Volunteer
NYC	National Youth Council
NYVP	National Youth Volunteering Programme
NYVIP	National Youth Volunteering and Internship Programme
ULGA	Uganda Local Government Association
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UPFYA	Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs
UYONET	Uganda Youth Network
VIO	Volunteer Involving Organisation
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth Leaders in Uganda, through the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs and the National Youth Council, decided to investigate the feasibility of establishing a **National Youth Volunteering Programme (NYVP)**, which would complement other measures to address youth unemployment and also provide young Ugandans with a way of contributing to their communities and their country.

Support has been received from DGF and VSO for this undertaking, guided by the following aim:

'To establish a youth volunteering programme within Uganda that has genuine national coverage; is accessible and attractive to all the young Ugandans who wish to apply; and that a) allows those young people to make a positive contribution to their community and their country and b) enables them to gain practical skills and experience to become more employable'

During initial information gathering, research and consultation on how best to establish a youth volunteering programme, a number of suggestions were made. These included consideration of a **National Service Scheme**; inclusion of **internship placements** into a national youth volunteering programme; and the development of a **National Volunteering Policy**, as part of the policy that would establish the NYVP.

The purpose of this report is to present options for the way forward. There are two main ones presented:

- Establish a National Youth Volunteering and Internship Programme;
- Establish a National Service Scheme.

However, within the first option, consideration is given to whether the policy that leads to the programme should be one that will apply to all volunteering or just the youth volunteering programme itself.

In order to present the options as clearly as possible and because of a tendency for terminology to be used interchangeably, section 3 of the report seeks to clarify the following key terms and particularly their usage in this report: 'volunteering', 'internships' and 'national service'.

Section 4 outlines the activity undertaken to date which has focused on information gathering, research and consultation, and presents outcomes and findings of which the following are key points:-

General issues:

- The feedback from Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) and volunteers themselves strongly articulates that volunteering is alive and well in Uganda and, more significantly, that there are examples where people have progressed in their careers through volunteering;
- There is a lot of interest in a national youth volunteering programme and many organisations indicating that they would wish to be involved. However, piloting will indicate the extent to which a stated interest is translated into an actual involvement;
- There is widespread belief that a national volunteering programme can make a positive contribution to addressing youth unemployment as well as giving young people opportunities to make a contribution; and
- There is widespread youth volunteering activity already taking place from which lessons can be learnt and on which future initiatives can be built. However, the level of current youth volunteering activity does not constitute a national programme in any true sense and there will be a need for significant scaling-up to achieve that aspiration.

Strengths:

- There are many different applications of volunteering programmes and types of volunteering. This potentially offers a rich mix of placement opportunities that would provide different kinds of experience; and
- The inclusion of internships within a national youth volunteering programme would add value to a programme and give it greater scope and opportunities particularly in respect of private sector placements.

Challenges:

- Whilst there are many examples of good volunteering practice, a strong message during the recent consultations was that there are also too many examples of bad practice some of which are effectively exploitation of the volunteers. Furthermore, examples of insufficiently robust systems e.g. in relation to health and safety, were cited;
- Although there is evidence from elsewhere and examples from within Uganda of youth volunteering that provides young people with opportunities to both make a contribution and improve their employability, it remains a challenge to effectively incorporate both into a single programme;
- The potential scale of a programme that aims at national coverage, given the numbers of young people in the country and the level of youth unemployment (quoted at between 70 and 83%), is a significant challenge; and
- A very strong theme in the feedback from consultations was that volunteering or internship placements that genuinely assist young people towards employment need to be very well-structured.

Section 5 presents the detail in relation to the options: what each would mean in terms of a programme, the policy requirements, the strengths and challenges, and other steps that would need to be taken concurrently.

The conclusions and full recommendations of the report are presented in section 6 - the key recommendations are set out below.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. It is recommended that Option 1 – National Volunteering and Internship Programme is selected.

Directly related to the selection of this option it is further recommended:

- a) That an NYVIP is implemented using the approach, including the proposed phasing, set out in section 5.1;
- b) That the main initial targeting is at qualified young people but a cohort of unqualified young people is included in the first phase. The reason for this is that it is believed unqualified young people will need more intensive employability support and the effective inclusion of this will need testing;
- c) That each phase is carefully evaluated so that each scale-up can be achieved effectively;
- d) That consideration is given in the evaluation and on-going planning to the ways in which the infra-structure needs to be increased as the programme scales up e.g. can it be managed centrally with some capacity locally or is a full operation needed in each region;
- e) That serious consideration be given at the outset as to what the limits are to the number of participants that a scheme can effectively process;
- f) That consideration is given to whether an NYVIP could at some stage incorporate a National Service Scheme; and

- g) The report presents evidence that such programmes can make a contribution to addressing youth unemployment but that they cannot do so alone and are most effective as one of a suite of measures. It is further recommended therefore that careful consideration is given to how an NYVIP fits with other measures to address youth unemployment. It is however also recognised that volunteering programmes offer significant benefits over and above their contribution to addressing youth unemployment.

2. The policy that is developed to establish an NYVIP is an over-arching National Volunteering Policy

In making this recommendation however it is recognised:

- a) That the development of a National Volunteering Policy must involve the organisations that will be affected by it and have the appropriate expertise: VIOs and Volunteer Supporting Organisations;
- b) That any policy development in this area must comply with Uganda's constitution and existing legislative framework;
- c) The formulated policy must be accompanied by an implementation plan;
- d) That serious consideration be given to any potential unintended consequences of policy over and above those identified in section 5.2.3;
- e) That the policy requirement to establish the NYVIP can be effectively incorporated into a National Volunteering Policy;
- f) That any policy in this area must dovetail appropriately with related policy areas such as labour laws; and
- g) Those with appropriate expertise in policy development in Uganda must be involved in the formulation stage.

3. It is recommended that capacity and resources are identified to progress with the next stages of development to complement those already available.

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1.1 Background

The high levels of youth unemployment was one of the key issues in the Youth Manifesto, formulated for the 2011- 2016 election. Since its election, the NRM government has adopted the need to address the high levels of youth unemployment as one of its priorities. To complement other government measures to address this issue, youth leaders, led by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) and the National Youth Council (NYC), decided to investigate the possibility of setting up a National Youth Volunteering Programme. As an agency with many years experience in running volunteering programmes and managing volunteers, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) was approached to assist. From early 2012, the following initial steps were taken:

- A study visit to Ghana, a country that already had a national volunteering programme, was undertaken and a report produced;
- The NYC Chairperson produced a paper outlining a concept and objectives; and
- VSO recruited a volunteer to support the initial phases of the development.

Based on these initial steps, and discussions within UPFYA and NYC and with officials in the Youth Department of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development the following aim to guide the early stages of development was adopted:

'To establish a youth volunteering programme within Uganda that has genuine national coverage; is accessible and attractive to all the young Ugandans who wish to apply; and that a) allows those young people to make a positive contribution to their community and their country and b) enables them to gain practical skills and experience to become more employable'

1.2 Key issues arising from initial activity

This report draws on initial work that has been undertaken and which included: assessment of the current situation in regard to youth volunteering in the country; consultation and dialogue with youth leaders and agencies with expertise on volunteering; the study of relevant research undertaken in both Uganda and elsewhere in Africa; and information gathering from similar programmes in other parts of the continent. This work has been undertaken through the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) funded UPFYA project entitled 'Enhancing Youth Participation in Governance Issues through Legislation' and with support from VSO.

The key outcomes and findings from this initial work are presented in section 4.2. However, the following three issues have been crucial in informing the direction of the work to date and the content of this report:

- A youth volunteering programme is one approach to providing young people with opportunities to make a contribution, whilst gaining skills and experience, but feedback from consultation has indicated that a national service scheme should also be considered as the first step. Essentially this is a choice between a voluntary and a mandatory programme;
- There are choices in terms of the nature and scope of the government policy that will be required to initiate and regulate a youth volunteering programme and rather than just focusing on a policy covering youth volunteering there is a need to consider a policy relating to all volunteering activity; and
- Including internship placements in a national youth volunteering programme could increase its impact.

1.3 Purpose and structure of the report

1.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the report is to present policy and programme options as to the way forward. In so doing the report goes into some depth on each option to provide sufficient information on what it might mean in practice.

The report proposes two options:

- Establish a National Youth Volunteering and Internship Programme;
- Establish a National Service Scheme.

However, within the first option consideration will be given to whether the policy that leads to the programme should be one that will apply to all volunteering activity or just the youth volunteering programme itself. As these are significantly different they are considered separately.

Whilst the main target audience for this report are the policy makers who will decide which option to select, it is envisaged that it will also be circulated widely as part of a consultation process that will inform the decision. It has been drafted with the intention that it can be understood both by those who have some familiarity with the subject matter and those who are coming to it new.

1.3.2 Structure

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the methodology of the work done to date;
- Section 3 provides working definitions and, where necessary, description and analysis, of the key terminology used in the report;
- Section 4 summarises activity undertaken and the key outcomes and findings to date;
- Section 5 presents the options including policy and programme issues; key strengths and challenges; potential to meet the aims of the NYVP; and other steps that will need to be taken should this option be selected;
- Section 6 presents conclusions and recommendations.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology agreed and followed for the initial phase of work included:

- Working with Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) to gather more information about existing volunteer involving activity;
- Talking to volunteers to gather positive and inspiring examples of the benefits of volunteering;
- Seeking opportunities to pilot a national youth volunteering programme, either from scratch or through existing VIOs, so that we can learn more about what works and what does not, and how we can scale up in a sustainable way;
- Working together through the National Alliance of Volunteering Effort (NAVE) towards a more consistent approach and, perhaps, a set of minimum standards; and to positively influence government policy through the NYC and the UPFYA;
- Working with employers and government to recognise volunteering as a route into employment and to create placements that have a genuine positive impact; and
- Using the positive and inspiring examples to raise public awareness of the benefits of volunteering.

Underpinning this methodology was a belief that there was already significant youth volunteering activity in Uganda and any steps towards a national youth volunteering programme needed to build on rather than replace what was already happening.

Furthermore, as the study trip to Ghana in 2012 had shown, there were examples in other African countries that could be learnt from. Information gathering has been undertaken as a pragmatic exercise rather than specifically as research and every effort has also been made to build alliances towards future programme development. To a certain extent this approach has been enabled by existing research that has been undertaken and did not need to be repeated.

3. CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

In order to clearly describe the options and to differentiate between them it is necessary to clarify the key terminology and ensure consistency in its use, particularly in relation to usage in this report. A further reason for clarification is that, in the discussions and consultations to date, there has been a tendency for terminology to be used interchangeably.

In addition to the terms '**volunteering**' and '**national service**' the term '**internship**' is considered because internship programmes are included in the report's proposals.

3.1 Volunteering

It is notoriously difficult to come up with a simple catch-all definition of volunteering which is partly due to the huge variety of legitimate forms of volunteering. The one that will be used here is from an International Labour Office (ILO) publication from 2011 entitled 'Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work'. This is:

'Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household.'

To give this more context, the UN uses three defining characteristics, which all need to be present for an activity to be called volunteering, and which are consistent with the ILO definition:

- Volunteering activity should not be undertaken primarily for financial reward although the reimbursement of expenses and some token payment may be allowed;
- Volunteering activity should be undertaken voluntarily, according to an individual's own free will; and
- Volunteering activity should be of benefit to someone other than the volunteer, or to society at large, although it is recognised that volunteering brings significant benefit to the volunteer themselves.

There are however many different forms of volunteering and a recent report, entitled 'Volunteering and Service in Three African Regions' published in 2012 by 'Global Economy and Development', offers a useful typology:

- Community-based informal volunteering; and
- Local formal volunteering and service'.

The first was characterised as mainly being about mutual aid and support, and people 'volunteering' in their own communities; the second was characterised as mainly being about individuals placed in non-governmental organisations to support service provision to communities. In addition, there are examples of formal volunteering supporting policy development and strengthening programme delivery in public services at a national level. In Uganda, as elsewhere, there are many different applications of both formal and informal volunteering that satisfy the definition cited above.

Within what is a fairly straightforward overarching definition, for the purposes of this report, there are a number of other factors in relation to volunteering and volunteering programmes that are relevant:

3.1.1 National volunteering

There are two aspects to the meaning of the term 'national' in 'national' youth volunteering:

- First: in African countries, 'international volunteering' is common and is the term used for people volunteering in countries not their own. The most common form of this is people from the west coming to Africa as volunteers but there are also many and increasing instances, for example through VSO, of African people volunteering in other African countries and indeed in other parts of the world. 'National volunteering' in this context therefore refers to people volunteering in their own country and, of course, for the purposes of this report of Ugandans volunteering in Uganda; and
- Second: the other aspect is about national coverage: it is an aspiration of the youth leaders who initiated this programme, as reflected in the programme aim, to establish a programme that can operate all over the country and could benefit people from all parts of the country.

3.1.2 Youth volunteering

Although young people are currently successfully engaged in many different forms of volunteering in Uganda which is one of the foundations on which an NYVP can build, there are some additional factors to consider in implementing such a programme for young people:

- One of the objectives of the proposed NYVP is to provide young people with an opportunity 'to gain practical skills and become more employable'. This adds different dimensions to the usual definitions of volunteering which focus primarily on what the volunteer can give rather than the benefits they themselves can derive from the experience;
- People tend to go into volunteering with a positive mindset – they are doing so out of their own free will and doing it because they want to. They are motivated and that motivation can be harnessed to increase the likelihood that the placement will be successful. This is an advantage that 'voluntary' programmes have over 'mandatory' ones but the realities of the current environment within Uganda need to be borne in mind: with the high levels of youth unemployment and relative lack of opportunities, volunteering placements are being sought by young people just because there is little else. This raises issues for the recruitment and selection process of an NYVP; and
- A further point about motivation is also important. It is entirely right to seek to establish an NYVP that can give young people genuine opportunities through well-structured placements, but a programme is unlikely to help someone who is unwilling to help themselves. Achieving positive outcomes from volunteering placements places responsibility on the young people who participate.

3.2 Internships

For the purposes of this report an 'internship' is a structured placement with an employer, for a fixed period, the objective of which is to give the intern work experience and on-the-job training. There are many common features between these kinds of internships and volunteering placements but key differences are:

- The focus of an internship placement is very much on the benefits to the intern although they would be expected to make a contribution to the organisation with which they are placed;

- The motivation of the organisations that host internship placements is more about their Corporate Social Responsibility and growing the future workforce than what the intern can contribute directly to their communities or their country; and
- You would not expect to see volunteering placements in private companies whereas internships, by the definition being used here, are typically in private companies. This must however be qualified as there were examples of private companies recruiting volunteers cited during the recent consultations but this is one of the questionable practices that has demonstrated the need for a regulatory national volunteering policy and is not a practice that should be encouraged.

Such internships can, and sometimes are, called apprenticeships and the two have many features in common. The term 'internship' however tends to be used for 'white collar' professions whereas 'apprenticeship' tends to be used in relation to 'blue collar' occupations. Apprenticeships have tended to be for longer periods during which manual skills are developed e.g. carpentry or motor mechanics. For the purposes of this report the term 'apprenticeship' will not be used.

For further clarification, it is vital to understand that the use of the term 'internship' for this report is not how it is most commonly used in Uganda currently. Here, the term 'internship' is mostly used to describe the placement of a student with an employer where the completion of the placement is a requirement in order for the student's qualification to be awarded. Such internships are not the focus of this report nor of the NYVP but it is recognised that some of the proposed policy developments might have either intended or unintended impacts on them and this must be considered in the formulation process.

3.3 National service

The term 'national service', sometimes referred to as 'youth service', was originally used to refer to schemes in which young people undertook military service. The use of the term has been broadened out to include a period of service undertaking socially useful work – there are examples of this across the world and in many African countries e.g. South Africa, Nigeria, Namibia and Ghana. The key features of such schemes are:

- They are compulsory and for a fixed period although in some cases it is possible to extend;
- They are aimed at a particular section of the population. Most commonly this is young people who have just completed a period of study which might be sixth form but is more commonly a course at tertiary level; and
- The 'service' tends to be undertaken on government programmes and, to a lesser extent, in NGOs but rarely in the private sector. In the government sector there are different examples but some common ones are: individual postings to services like teaching and health; and, group postings to work on projects.

4. ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN AND KEY OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS TO DATE

4.1 Activity undertaken

4.1.1 Information gathering, research and consultation

To date extensive information gathering and consultation has been undertaken:

- With more than 100 Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) and other NGOs – some of the individuals involved have been current and former volunteers;

- With key Volunteer Supporting Organisations such as United Nations Volunteers and Peace Corps;
- With many hundreds of youth leaders; and
- With officials from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

This has been done through small and large meetings; 1:1 interviews, meetings and discussions; in Kampala and around the country in Mbale, Tororo, Gulu, Lira, Mbarara and Kabale. A presentation was also given and feedback received from 85 youth leaders at one of the UPFYA National Reflection Platforms which are part of its DGF funded project.

In addition, secondary research, from studies of volunteering programmes in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa, on the benefits of volunteering, how volunteering programmes are being run, and the opportunities such programmes present for young people in addressing unemployment, has informed this initial stage. This included a number of studies commissioned by VSO in Uganda.

The purpose of this initial stage was to assess the current situation in relation to volunteering in general and youth volunteering in particular:

- To assess the opportunities and challenges;
- To establish a baseline and ascertain the foundations on which to build; and
- To build alliances that can be harnessed as progress is made.

It is intended that information gathering, research and consultation will be on-going and will inform future developments. Youth unemployment is an issue in many parts of the world and volunteering is a high profile activity both as an end in itself and as a means to an end. There are therefore always likely to be new research studies that can inform progress. Likewise, volunteering programmes in Uganda are vibrant and there will be new opportunities to learn and build alliances as the work progresses.

4.1.2 Piloting NYVP

Two pilots are underway: one that is being run through VSO's support to this initiative and one that is being delivered through a partnership between Restless Development and the International Youth Foundation (IYF). The latter was not initiated through the work that is being described here although the fact that it is happening demonstrates the level of interest in investigating the viability of such schemes and their potential to address youth unemployment.

- The pilot supported by VSO is taking place in Gulu and is being run in partnership with the District Youth Council and the Community Service Programme. It will involve 20 placements over a one year period. It is hoped that it will continue for a further year but this is not yet certain. It is aimed at graduates and both young men and young women. Initially all the placements will be with NGOs;
- The pilot being run by Restless Development and the IYF, entitled 'Youthmap Internship Pilot Programme' is an internship programme rather than a volunteering programme, but in its design and operation it is very relevant to the work here. It will run over 2 years and offer 100 structured internship opportunities with employers from a variety of sectors e.g. private, public and NGO.

Although these pilots are relatively small they have been designed and will be run in such a way that the learning from each will inform both policy and programme development.

4.2 Outcomes and findings

Key outcomes and findings are presented below with more specific issues incorporated into section 5 in relation to the options presented.

General points/overview:

- The feedback from VIOs and volunteers themselves strongly articulates that volunteering is alive and well in Uganda and, more significantly, there are examples where people have progressed in their careers through volunteering;
- There is a lot of interest in a national youth volunteering programme and many organisations expressed a wish to be involved. For example, discussions have commenced with the Uganda Youth Network (UYONET) which is interested in running an NYVP pilot to complement its secure livelihoods work with young people in Karamoja. However, piloting will indicate the extent to which a stated interest is translated into an actual involvement;
- Those involved in the consultation meetings around the country also pointed out the contribution that local networks of VIOs could play;
- There is widespread belief that a national volunteering programme can make a positive contribution to addressing youth unemployment as well as giving young people positive opportunities to make a contribution to their communities and their country;
- In addition to examples of positive outcomes in Uganda there is evidence from research in other parts of Africa that volunteering programmes can make such a contribution;
- There is widespread youth volunteering activity already taking place in Uganda from which lessons can be learnt and on which future initiatives can be built. However, the level of current youth volunteering activity does not constitute a national programme in any true sense and there will be a need for significant scaling-up to achieve that aspiration; and
- There are strong arguments for a National Volunteering Policy which are elaborated and explored in section 5.

The outcomes and findings that constitute **strengths** are as follows:

- As a result of initial groundwork, this policy area has been included in UPFYA's DGF funded project which is supporting the information gathering, consultation and the publication of this report;
- There are many different applications of volunteering programmes and types of volunteering e.g. in health and education programmes and in supporting different sections of the population. This potentially offers a rich mix of placement opportunities that would provide different kinds of experience;
- Pilots provide valuable data to inform policy and programme development and opportunities to test out implementation approaches. As such, it is of benefit that pilots are underway and another is being discussed. As an example the Youthmap Internship pilot has already shown the level of work needed to identify good quality placements. There are no current plans for further pilots but this has certainly not been ruled out in order to test different aspects of a volunteering programme;
- The inclusion of internships within a national youth volunteering programme would add value to a programme and give it greater scope and opportunities particularly in respect of private sector placements; and

- There are many resources available to promote good practice including: volunteering policies and practice of existing VIOs; the systems and procedures of Volunteer Support Organisations and, in particular relevant training packages from VSO; and research reports. These are being gathered and will contribute to a resource bank that is being formed to support future activity.

The outcomes and findings that constitute **challenges** are as follows:

- There is inconsistent use of terminology and a lack of common understanding. Furthermore, the term 'volunteering' means different things to different people;
- There has been a recurring theme in the consultations that the volunteering spirit is lacking in Uganda. Whilst this seems strange in a country where there is so much volunteering this was as much about the attitude of organisations that use volunteers as about individuals. As such attitudes tended to lead to bad practice, this adds weight to the argument for a National Volunteering Policy;
- Whilst there are many examples of good volunteering practice, a strong message during the recent consultations was that there are also too many examples of bad practice some of which are effectively exploitation of the volunteers. Furthermore, examples of insufficiently robust systems e.g. in relation to health and safety, were cited;
- Although there is evidence from elsewhere and examples from within Uganda of youth volunteering that provides young people with opportunities to both make a contribution and improve their employability, it remains a challenge to effectively incorporate both into a single programme;
- The potential scale of a programme that aims at national coverage, given the numbers of young people in the country and the level of youth unemployment (quoted at between 70 and 83%), is a significant challenge;
- A very strong theme in the feedback from consultations was that volunteering or internship placements that genuinely assist young people towards employment need to be very well-structured. This places high expectations on the organisations that host placements and on the levels of support they will need to provide for the successful delivery of quality placements. There are organisations that currently do this very well, but it will be a significant challenge to identify additional ones in sufficient numbers to meet the aspirations of a national programme. Furthermore, whilst many organisations may be willing to host volunteer placements they may not have the capacity or staff resources to provide the necessary support to young volunteers;
- Each year, Uganda's universities and tertiary institutions produce in the region of 400,000 graduates who compete for 90,000 available new jobs. The numbers of young people entering the labour market, therefore, is far higher than the number of jobs available. This is a key challenge for a programme that aims to produce young people who are more employable. One option maybe to incorporate elements of enterprise development into a national programme, so that, for example, programme graduates become the job creators of the future.

As will be seen in section 5 many of these challenges are considered in relation to the options presented. In the case of some, particularly the potential scale of a national programme, they have been addressed in what is proposed.

5. OPTIONS FOR POLICY AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The two options presented are:

Option 1: Establish a National Youth Volunteering and Internship Programme

Option 2: Establish a National Service Scheme

In the sections below both options are considered in detail: what a programme would look like, the policy requirements, the strengths and challenges, and other steps that will need to be taken concurrently. In the case of Option 1, the additional policy dimension: a National Volunteering Policy is considered separately.

5.1 OPTION 1: ESTABLISH A NATIONAL YOUTH VOLUNTEERING AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME (NYVIP)

5.1.1 Introduction and rationale

It is an intrinsic strength of volunteering programmes that they provide opportunities for people to make a contribution and this is what motivates people to volunteer. What is less obvious is that volunteering programmes can also support people to become more employable. However, information gathered from the initial consultation process highlighted many examples of individuals progressing into employment from a volunteering placement. With some of these they were the result of a programme that was structured and designed to support the volunteer's development; whereas with others, the progression was more of a bi-product of a volunteering programme, which focused on what the volunteer could provide, and there were also examples where the volunteer themselves took the lead.

The following quotes are also pertinent:

- 'Volunteering is a cost-effective way of enhancing skills which in turn paves the way for employability in Uganda by providing a range of social and welfare services. But it is not cost free. To flourish it requires an effective infrastructure, both at national and local level, to help mobilise support and match volunteers to appropriate organisations and tasks. Governments have a role to play in funding this infrastructure and in ensuring the requisite legal and fiscal framework is in place.' ('Volunteering and Employment in Uganda', commissioned by VSO in 2011 and produced by Professional Development Consultants International);
- 'Youth service was instrumental in placing these young people on a career path that strongly influenced their prospects for mobility and sustainable livelihoods' ('Volunteering and Service in Three African Regions' – 2012, produced by Global Economy and Development at Brookings)

Youth volunteering programmes can then address the aim that has guided this programme to date. However, some of the following issues from the outcomes and findings listed in section 4.2 need to be taken into account in policy and programme development:

- Although there is widespread youth volunteering activity that can be built on it is not at a level that can genuinely be described as a national programme: to achieve this aspiration significant scaling up will be necessary;
- However, coupled with widespread existing activity, there are organisations interested in scaling up their own volunteering activities; and
- The scale of the challenge in terms of the huge numbers of young people that could potentially be involved.

Taking these issues into account, this option proposes the establishment of a government-led mass operation, which is designed to support and complement existing activity, not replace it or

take over its operation and management. In recognition of the significant challenges to scale up the level of youth volunteering activity, this option also proposes a phased implementation that would commence with an operation that involved 1,000 – 2,000 placements.

It is also proposed, as the title suggests, that internship placements be included in the programme, and internship placements in the sense set out in section 3.2. This is for the following reasons:

- Existing programmes and particularly the Youthmap pilot have shown that such placements are sufficiently similar to volunteering placements;
- Although there would be issues to address, the two could be managed together;
- Internships would increase the range of opportunities that a programme could offer; and
- Such internships would allow placements in the private sector and increase the pool of organisations that could act as placement hosts.

5.1.2 The structure and functions of an NYVIP

A) Overview of an NYVIP

An NYVIP would need two arms:

- **A Recruitment and Referral Secretariat:** this would take the operational lead in managing and overseeing the implementation of an NYVIP. It is proposed that this Secretariat would be set up in the same way as the one that has been included in the Youth Enterprise Fund Bill: an independent entity but accountable to government. This would allow the Secretariat to be established with the appropriate expertise and to operate in way that enabled it to react flexibly to address different situations and changing circumstances.

The main functions of this Secretariat will include the following. However, if this is the option selected, these will need to be given careful consideration prior to any implementation:

- Manage and administer the NYVIP;
- Recruit and brief organisations to become placement hosts. It is envisaged that many of these organisations will be existing VIOs but that new ones will need to be recruited. Some capacity building will be necessary;
- Work with and support placement organisations to design good quality, appropriate placements;
- Ensure placements are of sufficient quality and are well-structured so that they enable the volunteers to a) make a positive contribution and b) gain real experience and skills. In terms of the skills development, there should be opportunities for qualified volunteers to apply their learning but also an emphasis on the acquisition of generic soft skills;
- Ensure an enterprise training element is incorporated which might entail central planning and programming. This responds to the challenge of producing programme graduates who might become job creators;
- Recruit and refer volunteers ensuring effective matching of volunteer to placement;
- Monitor the volunteer placements to ensure they fulfill the objectives and meet quality standards;

- Support the volunteers to move on following graduation from the programme – this would include exploring systems of accreditation.
 - Promote good practice in managing volunteer programmes utilising existing examples; and
 - Promote the NYVIP to those who might be seeking volunteering placements, employers and the general public.
- **Capacity to regulate:** Regulation of this programme will be vital to ensure its effectiveness. It is proposed that the role of regulation is one on which government should take the lead, both at national and local levels, for example through District structures. It is further proposed that regulation is applied to all youth volunteering activity as a means of combating the bad practice that has been reported during consultation.

B) Scale and Targeting – A Phased Implementation Approach

The aim is to create a mass national programme for youth volunteering. However as noted in previous sections there are significant challenges in scaling up from the current levels of youth volunteering to that of a mass national programme, particularly when the challenges of the provision of quality support to young people are considered.

It is therefore proposed to phase the development of this national programme, with an initial capacity of 1-2,000 places. This would allow the programme to operate across significant parts of the country, or even the whole country, whilst enabling it to be effectively managed as it develops. This approach would allow certain aspects of the operation to be investigated prior to scaling-up, including the capability of operating effectively across a large geographical area and in different Districts. As it is strongly suggested that an NYVIP is one element of a number of policy interventions to tackle youth unemployment, consideration needs to be given to:

- The placement numbers this programme would ultimately aspire to achieve balanced against the optimum numbers for effective delivery; and
- The resources allocated to an NYVIP relative to those allocated to other interventions.

In terms of participant targeting it is envisaged that the programme, right from the outset, would be as accessible to young women as to young men and to those from rural as well as urban areas. Beyond that, it will be up to government to set the priorities, for example is such a programme needed more by qualified or unqualified people? It is proposed here that the first phase of implementation mainly targets graduates but that a cohort of unqualified participants is also included.

5.1.3 Policy requirements to establish an NYVIP

Two separate options will be considered: a) a policy just to establish and regulate the NYVIP; b) a National Volunteering Policy that would benchmark and regulate all volunteering activity. The first will be considered in this section, the second in section 5.2.

The policy to establish the NYVIP is similar to that included in the Private Members Bill to establish the National Youth Enterprise Fund. In addition, it is proposed that the policy will also apply to existing and other youth volunteering activity so there will need to be regulatory powers included.

The key elements of policy formulation in relation to this option are:

- To establish the Recruitment and Referral Secretariat as an independent entity but accountable to government;
- To allocate resources to run both the Secretariat and the NYVIP;
- To include provisions for the proposed phased implementation;
- To create the capacity within a Directorate under a Ministry to oversee the regulation. This might also include undertaking the role or it might be to oversee this being done by District Administrations;
- To set out the parameters within which the programme will operate;
- To establish quality standards and good practice baselines;
- To establish the responsibilities of placement organisations and how volunteers/interns, as opposed to employees, should be treated;
- To set out the regulations as to how public sector and local government manage and support volunteer placements. ULGA has undertaken research on this recently and the report of this, although it is has yet to be finalised and published, provides a guide (Research Study for the Development of Operational Guidelines for the Harmonised Use of Volunteers and Interns in Local Government);
- Include provisions for incentives for employers to take on volunteers and/or interns. At a recent Reflection Platform a suggestion was made that tax breaks for employers should be explored; and
- To clarify terminology which would assist in the process of public education and promotion. Also, the process of developing a policy and steering it through parliament can itself be used to raise the profile of volunteering and VIOs.

5.1.4 Strengths and challenges of this option

A) Strengths

- **Meets the programme aim:** as cited above, there is evidence to indicate that an NYVIP can provide young people with opportunities to contribute to their communities and their country and, whilst doing so, gain skills and experience to become more employable;
- **Promotes the benefits of volunteering:** in addition to the good practice examples that will be provided through the quality of the placements, an NYVIP would offer a high profile means of promotion and public education on the benefits of volunteering and act as a catalyst for increased activity over and above what was on offer within the programme itself;
- **Builds on and strengthens existing foundations:** it is envisaged that an NYVIP would build on existing foundations in three ways: i) it would operate through existing structures e.g. using some of the same placement hosts and support those existing structures e.g. acting as a recruitment and referral agency; ii) it would work alongside and complement rather than replace existing effective activity; and iii) it would raise the profile of volunteering activity generally and act as a catalyst for increased levels of activity;
- **Allows for a phased and manageable implementation process:** the challenge of scale is discussed below and it is a massive challenge. An advantage that an NYVIP has,

particularly over a national service scheme, is that it can be implemented in phases with capacity being increased as it evolves and grows; and

- **Volunteering programmes provide many other benefits:** it should not be forgotten that volunteering programmes provide many other benefits in addition to those that are the focus here. These are benefits for the volunteers over and above enhancing employability with examples being: learning about participation; building team working and citizenship; and benefits for communities and the country, such as community and peace building, and strengthening public services.

B) *Challenges*

- **Scale:** the huge challenge of scale has been referred to above and it is not intended to repeat points already made. However it is also worth noting that in Ghana the National Service Scheme which also manages the country's national volunteering programme processes in the region of 70,000 placements each year. To do this it has a central Secretariat with approximately 230 staff and an office in each District (a similar number to Uganda) albeit with many of the staff at that level being service personnel. The specific issues with a national service scheme are considered in section 4.2 but the infrastructure to run a volunteering programme alone would be similar;
- **Implementation of a programme with a dual aim:** participation in volunteering programmes can provide tremendous benefits to young people and give them a means to make a contribution to their communities and their country. Participation can also assist them in becoming more employable. Whether a single programme can consistently and effectively do both remains a challenge;
- **Volunteering programmes will not solve the problems of youth unemployment alone:** volunteering and internship programmes can support their participants to become more employable and, with the inclusion of enterprise training, some of their graduates will be in a better position to consider establishing an enterprise. They do not however directly create jobs in any major way. They are most effective therefore as part of a suite of measures that would include economic development to create more employment opportunities. Furthermore, some participants in such programmes would need more intensive employability support than could easily be incorporated into the programme itself. The challenges then would be:
 - Ensuring there are the additional measures that will be needed to allow an NYVIP to be effective;
 - Making effective links with other existing measures to address youth unemployment one of which is the National Youth Enterprise Fund; and
 - Incorporating an enterprise training element effectively into an NYVIP;

These challenges will be more acute the larger a programme becomes which indicates that the proposed phased approach makes sense;

- **Identifying sufficient placement hosts:** one of the key factors in the success of an NYVIP is the quality of the volunteering and internship placements. Identifying sufficient organisations that will provide these will be a major challenge;
- **The employer's perspective:** in addition to the challenge of finding host organisations, there are two aspects to the employer's perspective that also need to be considered:
 - Some organisations willing to take on volunteers will be seeking someone who already has skills and experience and can immediately make a positive contribution rather than someone they will have to support and nurture. It was stated on more

than one occasion during the recent consultation meetings that organisations often prefer international volunteers because they tend to come with more experience; and

- If an NYVIP is intending to produce young people who are more employable, employers need to believe that graduates of the programme are, indeed, more employable. A recent report produced by Youthmap Uganda entitled 'Navigating Challenges. Charting Hope' included a section on employment and job readiness, which reported feedback from employers in relation to employing young people. Whilst employers cited many positive characteristics of young people they also listed less positive characteristics. These included: the lack of technical skills and work experience; and the lack of soft skills (incl. financial management). Employers will need to be convinced that participation in a volunteering or internship programme produces young people that meet their requirements and perceptions of employability;
- **A single model or a flexible approach:** the information gathering to date has shown that there a variety of approaches being taken by VIOs in managing volunteers. As has been indicated above there are examples of bad practice but there are also a variety of examples of good practice. It would be much simpler to run an NYVIP with a single approach but there would also be merit in a flexible approach to meet different needs and adapt to different situations;
- **Potential drawbacks of policy:** policy formulation is a key element of any way forward but policy that is too heavy handed could have a negative impact. A policy that places too many regulations on organisations with the intention of combating bad practice might also discourage those organisations from taking volunteers or interns on placement; and
- **Potential drawbacks of a government led programme:** in the wider context of economic development and reducing youth unemployment the private sector will be expected to play a major role. This could and should include employer led internship programmes. There is a danger that including such placements in a government led programme could inhibit employers establishing their own.

5.1.5 What else needs to be done concurrently

Information gathering, research and consultation will be on-going activities to inform both policy formulation and the design of an NYVIP. In addition, engagement with employers and employers' organisations will be necessary to address the employer related challenges identified above, in particular, to ensure that the programme does deliver on improving employability skills. IYF and Restless Development have created strong foundations with employers and employer's organisations and these links can be built on.

It is not intended that an NYVIP takes over the management of all youth volunteering activity or that all such activity be channeled through an NYVIP. To this end it is proposed that steps are taken to support existing youth volunteering activity and to stimulate more.

One of the outputs of the information gathering, research and consultation will be a resource bank of good practice materials. This could be used to build the capacity of existing VIOs but it will also be available to other organisations wishing to use volunteers. A strong message during the consultations was the wish of VIOs and other organisations to strengthen their practice and they welcomed the prospect of support with this. Another common theme from the consultations was that local networks of VIOs have a role to play in assisting with this and would like to be involved in extending the reach and improving the quality of youth volunteering programmes in their areas.

5.2 A NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING POLICY

A National Volunteering Policy (NVP) would be designed to benchmark and regulate all volunteering activity and for the specific purposes here it would also need to establish the NYVIP. The policy requirements for the latter have already been set out so this section will focus on the additional elements. As an NVP would have an impact beyond the NYVIP both by design and by default, it is considered here in greater depth.

5.2.1 Introduction and rationale

In 2007, VSO Uganda commissioned research to generate analytical information that would inform the promotion of national volunteering in Uganda. The research report also drew attention to bad practice and highlighted the challenges faced by volunteers, volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) and volunteer supporting organisations. Key amongst these were:

- No common understanding and/ or distorted interpretation of the concept of volunteering;
- Exploitation of employees by employers under the cover of volunteering;
- Low knowledge among Ugandans of the existence and activities of organisations (e.g. VSO, UN Volunteers, US Peace Corps, Students Partnership Worldwide etc) that mediate the process of volunteering in Uganda;
- There is not sufficient evidence to show that volunteering is being undertaken and or managed as a strategic process in Uganda's development;
- There is no policy or legal framework to adequately guide and regulate volunteering and actors in the volunteering sector in the country; and
- Local volunteer involving and supporting agencies do not have systems and structures that can help them manage professionally the volunteering processes they are involved in.

(‘National Volunteering – Prospects and Opportunities’ – 2007)

One of the key recommendations of the report was:

‘Government should take a lead in creating an enabling policy and legal framework that allows volunteering to flourish.’

Feedback during the information gathering, research and consultation that has led to this report has demonstrated that many of the problems highlighted in the VSO report still exist. Furthermore, VIOs and Volunteer Supporting Organisations re-iterated their advocacy for an NVP in a ‘Memorandum to Government’ entitled ‘Volunteer Action Counts’ submitted as part of the celebrations for International Volunteering Day 2012. Two of the recommendations in the memorandum were:

- Adopt a national volunteerism policy that will guide the engagement of volunteers and organise the Volunteer Involving Organisations’ sector; and
- Strengthen a Directorate under a Ministry to create a National Volunteers Corps that will promote and mobilise volunteers in Uganda.

Both these recommendations echo with those in this report.

In addition to combating bad practice an NVP would be designed to promote the benefits of volunteering and benchmark good practice. The benefits go far beyond those associated with an NYVIP as the types of volunteering and its many applications are much broader than those that would occur within an NYVIP. The following quotes illustrate the breadth:

- ‘Volunteering has unique contributions to human development as it sustains livelihoods, brings about social inclusion and cohesion, disaster relief and risk reduction as well as contributing to governance and democracy’. This is from the report of an International Association of Volunteer Effort (IAVE) conference on volunteering that took place in Kenya in 2011 entitled ‘Getting the Word Out – Volunteering in Africa’, attended by representatives from 12 African countries;
- In resolution 57/106 of the UN General Assembly following the International Year of Volunteers, governments recognised that “...volunteering particularly at the community level, will help achieve the development goals and objectives set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration...”. It called for “the relevant organisations and bodies of the UN system to integrate volunteerism in its various forms into their policies, programmes and reports”; and
- ‘There is mounting evidence that volunteer engagement promotes the civic values and social cohesion which mitigate violent conflict at all stages and that it even fosters reconciliation in post-conflict situations’ (‘Volunteering and Service in Three African Regions’ – 2012, produced by Global Economy and Development at Brookings).

Furthermore, the economic value of volunteering and what it contributes to the economies of countries, over and above the numerous social and community benefits, are increasingly being recognised. In Europe and the US, to measure the impact of volunteering, it is common nowadays for a monetary value to be ascribed to volunteer time equivalent to the hourly pay rate of an employee. Indeed, the International Labour Office (ILO), on behalf of the UN, has recently produced a manual entitled ‘Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work’, from which the definition of volunteering quoted in section 3 comes, to provide countries with a tool to measure the economic impact.

5.2.2 The key elements of a National Volunteering Policy

Taking the lead from the challenges identified in the 2007 report ‘National Volunteering – Prospects and Opportunities’ listed above, a National Volunteering Policy would therefore need to address the following:

- Establishing a common understanding of the concept of volunteering among organisations and individuals;
- Establishing a legal framework for volunteering and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all actors in the volunteering process. As an example of what this might mean in practice, in Burkina Faso health and safety standards for volunteering working conditions have been set;
- Ensuring the framework is applied comprehensively and effectively to the public and NGO sectors;
- Ensuring the specific case of internships is covered e.g. that the policy also applies to the private sector;
- Dovetailing such a policy with other associated areas of law particularly labour law but also with the bill being promoted by civil society towards an NGO Policy/Act;
- Combating the bad practice that exists such as exploitation of employees by employers under the cover of volunteering; and
- Promoting the strategic inclusion of volunteering in development programmes.

In order that the NVP also establishes the NYVIP it will need to:

- Establish the capacity to oversee the implementation of the Policy and regulate volunteering practice according to it. A critical issue relates to sanctions: what they would be and how they would be applied;
- Seek to enhance the capacity of existing VIOs and volunteer supporting organisations to disseminate good practice and support and train new VIOs; and
- Ensure effective coordination and delineation of roles between government and NGOs.

5.2.3 Strengths and challenges related to an NVP

A) Strengths

- **A positive impact on all volunteering practice:** A National Volunteering Policy would apply to all types of volunteering and would lead to a consistency of approach and practice. This would make regulation simpler to apply and more effective; and
- **Would lead to increased levels of volunteering activity:** to a certain extent this is a perceived rather than an actual strength and it would not be known until after a policy was adopted whether it would indeed stimulate increased levels of activity. An NVP alone would be unlikely to do this but there is some evidence that levels would increase indirectly:
 - First, some NGOs that would be well placed to involve volunteers do not currently do so because they believe it is too difficult to do it effectively and there are too many potential negative impacts. A robust policy would reassure them; and
 - Second, the report of the study commissioned by VSO in 2011 entitled 'Volunteering and Employment in Uganda' noted that organisations reported that they found it difficult to recruit volunteers with the right skills and experience. One of the areas of national volunteering that is currently weak in Uganda, although good examples exist, is expert volunteering such as that done by retired professionals: a stronger policy framework for volunteering across the board would be likely to lead to increased activity in this area.

B) Challenges

- **Potential negative impact on volunteering practice:** As outlined in section 3, there are many legitimate and effective forms of volunteering that necessarily operate in different ways. An NVP will apply to all and drafting it to rigorously achieve its purpose whilst avoiding negative consequences will be a significant challenge; and
- **Discourage organisations from becoming placement hosts:** this has been identified as a challenge for the NYVIP generally but is emphasised here. In order to scale up volunteering activity and to maximise the examples of well-structured placements there is a need both to recruit new placement hosts and to regulate the practice of existing ones. However, without placement hosts - organisations prepared to be VIOs, there will be no volunteering placements. Achieving a balance between combating bad practice and avoiding placing too many hurdles in the way of organisations will be extremely challenging.

5.3 OPTION 2: ESTABLISH A UGANDA NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME

5.3.1 Introduction and rationale

For the youth leaders who are driving this initiative, a National Service Scheme has been an ultimate goal right from the outset. Initially, this was envisaged as an extension to a volunteering programme but, as a result of consultation, it is being considered here also as a possible first step. As opposed to an NYVIP, however, an NSS would not have current foundations on which to build although there has been structured community service in Uganda in the past so there could be lessons to learn from that.

Many African countries have successful National Service Schemes and they do make an impact (see below in section 5.3.4). Some of them are extremely large e.g. 250,000 young people pass through Nigeria's each year; and some have been operating successfully for a significant period e.g. Ghana's has been running for more than 30 years. There are therefore examples from which to learn and evidence that such schemes can be established and can be successful.

5.3.2 The structure and functions of an NSS

Essentially, the structure and functions of an NSS would be very similar to those outlined above for an NYVIP. However, there would be some key differences:

- The majority of placements would be within government departments both centrally and locally. Also, it is envisaged that there will be group placements – service personnel working together on projects. There would be a requirement for government departments to design and manage placements for service personnel. This could also happen within an NYVIP but with a mandatory scheme it would be by far the most common element; and
- There would be a greater need for capacity of an NSS Secretariat at a District level to support local government to design appropriate placements and work with local government to explore ways in which such a potentially huge resource could be deployed for national benefit.

5.3.3 Policy requirements

The policy that would lead to the establishment of a National Service Scheme in Uganda would need to address the following:

- Pass a law that makes it mandatory that a certain section(s) of the youth population undertakes a period of national service. The decision would have to be taken as to which section(s) of the population this would apply e.g. all graduates from tertiary education, all sixth form leavers etc;
- Set the parameters of the postings within the scheme e.g. what would be the duration of a national service posting, what types of postings would be included, what would be expected of service personnel, would there be any legitimate grounds for an individual to opt out and, if so, how would these be applied;
- Establish a National Service Secretariat within a Ministry to manage the scheme;
- Allocate resources to run both the Secretariat and the NSS;
- Establish the Secretariat nationally but also establish the capacity within each District to manage the Scheme;
- Place duties on government departments and local government in terms of developing placements and hosting service personnel;
- Set out the various roles and responsibilities and how service personnel, as opposed to employees, should be treated;

- Set the framework for non-governmental organisations to host service personnel; and
- Set out the time-scale for initial implementation from the establishment of the Secretariat through building the infrastructure to run the scheme to the first actual postings.

5.3.4 Strengths and challenges of this option

A) Strengths

- **Strengths of National Service Schemes from other African examples:** the report also quoted above entitled 'Volunteering and Service in Three African Regions' from 2012 cites the four key general areas of success demonstrated by the Ghana National Service Scheme: encouraging the spirit of national service among Ghanaians; providing opportunities for participants to take part in urgently needed development initiatives, particularly in areas of rural health and mass literacy; furnishing participants themselves with skills that might advance their personal and professional development; and finally, "strengthening the bonds of common citizenship among Ghanaians";
- **Enhanced benefits to the country:** there is little doubt, and examples from elsewhere confirm this, that the impact on the country of a well-managed NSS could be immense. Postings could be made to NGOs in similar ways in which volunteering placements are made currently but it is in the public sector where the major impact is likely to be felt. One of the areas of success of the Ghana scheme has been in supporting urgently needed development initiatives but service personnel have also been posted to public services such as education and have provided support to, for example, rural schools;
- **Potential benefits to local government:** The ULGA report, also cited above, on volunteering and internship in local government also refers to another potential benefit of placements in local government: to encourage young people, following a period of service, to seek permanent employment in local government; and
- **Support to national development:** with a national service scheme that is government run there would be a huge resource available to government to provide support in key areas of national development both geographically and thematically. There would also be flexibility year on year as to where personnel were deployed.

B) Challenges

- **The sheer scale of the operation right from the outset:** in most schemes in Africa it is graduates who are mandated to undertake national service. In Uganda, as quoted above, universities and other tertiary institutions produce some 400,000 graduates a year. For comparison the Ghana scheme involves 50,000 NSS personnel per year and the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps Directorate, as mentioned above, handles 250,000. This scale indicates the following major challenges:
 - The level of infrastructure that would need to be put in place to manage the scheme;
 - Creating sufficient placements and maintaining a level of quality; and
 - The cost of running a scheme of that scale;
- **Phased implementation would not be possible:** once government passed a law mandating those in a certain section of the population to do national service, all those to whom that applied would have to join the NSS. It would not be possible to phase implementation in the way proposed for an NYVIP;
- **The provision of effective employability development and enterprise training:** participants on a national service scheme would be gaining work experience but incorporating any significant structured skills development and/or enterprise training into such a large scheme would be extremely challenging;

- **Lack of available jobs:** the challenges for a National Service Scheme would be similar to those for an NYVIP but on a larger scale: insufficient jobs available for graduates of the scheme;
- **Current challenges being experienced by National Service Schemes in other African countries:** the key successes of the Ghana NSS are cited above as an advantage of such schemes. The report from which these were drawn however also cites some current challenges facing the Ghana and Nigeria schemes. Of particular significance are: increasing rates of post service unemployment, a loss of prestige of the schemes due in part to external influences on postings, and, in the Ghanaian case, examples of user agencies abuse of service personnel; and
- **Possible negative impact on volunteering opportunities:** many of the individuals who might otherwise be interested in volunteering would be posted to the NSS and would not therefore be available to organisations seeking volunteers.

5.3.5 What else needs to be done concurrently

The information gathering, research and consultation that has been undertaken to date has focused on volunteering programmes - national service schemes have been considered but not as a central theme. Should this option be selected then, there is considerable work still to do to:

- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of existing national service schemes in other countries;
- Determine young people's attitudes to a national service scheme. This is important for a youth led initiative designed to meet the needs of young people; and
- Consider the potential impact on volunteering programmes.

In addition, should this be the option selected, it is envisaged that the steps to support existing youth volunteering activity and to stimulate more proposed in section 5.1.5 would still be pursued.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Which Option to Select

Examples have been provided, from Uganda and elsewhere in Africa, that show participation in volunteering placements can provide young people with real opportunities to contribute to their communities and their country whilst gaining experience and skills that make them more employable. There are also strong indications that the outcomes for the young people involved are strengthened when the placements are well-structured. There are many such examples of this currently in Uganda but not at a level that could genuinely be called a national programme. To achieve this aspiration, as set out in the programme aim, will require significant scaling-up.

It would be feasible for scaling-up to be undertaken through either a voluntary or a mandatory programme. There are many potential benefits of each - some are common to both and some are different. The challenges will be great whichever route is taken with some of the major ones being:

- Finding organisations in sufficient numbers that are prepared to host placements. Organisations that were consulted expressed interest but piloting will need to test whether an expressed interest progresses to actual commitment;
- Ensuring the placements are well-structured and include effective support towards employability; and
- Programme participants are able to move on after completing their placements, hopefully to find employment.

The scale of the challenge increases significantly the larger a programme becomes and potentially such a programme in Uganda, viewed from the perspective of the number of young people that might gain from participation, could become very large.

One of the key objectives is to establish a programme that can contribute to addressing the problem of youth unemployment. It has been argued in the report that programmes that offer work-type placements to young people can and do make a contribution to this but it has also been argued that they cannot do this alone. They are most effective, and it could be argued only effective, as part of a suite of measures. Such programmes are not designed to create jobs but the availability of jobs is a key component for their success. Alongside such programmes, therefore, measures to stimulate the economy and create jobs will be needed. Given that resources for such measures will always be finite, careful consideration will need to be given to the balance of allocation. Bearing this in mind it is recommended that:

- a) Rather than attempting to implement a mass programme immediately, a programme of a manageable size is first introduced;
- b) Scaling-up is planned from the outset to allow the programme to grow recognising the numbers who could benefit; and
- c) Consideration be given early on to the optimum size a programme can reach given the competing demands of the numbers of young people that could benefit and the other measures that will be needed.

Given that a National Service Scheme would require mass implementation from the outset, **this report is recommending that Option 1 – a National Youth Volunteering and Internship Programme is selected as the way forward.**

Linked to this overarching recommendation, it is further recommended:

- a) That an NYVIP is implemented using the approach, including the proposed phasing, set out in section 5.1;
- b) That the main initial targeting is at qualified young people but a cohort of unqualified young people is included in the first phase. The reason for this is that it is believed unqualified young people will need more intensive employability support and the effective inclusion of this will need testing;
- c) That each phase is carefully evaluated so that each scale-up can be achieved effectively;
- d) That consideration is given in the evaluation and on-going planning to the ways in which the infra-structure needs to be increased as the programme scales up e.g. can it be managed centrally with some capacity locally or is a full operation needed in each region;
- e) That serious consideration be given at the outset as to what the limits are to the number of participants that a scheme can effectively process; and
- f) That consideration is given to whether an NYVIP could at some stage incorporate a National Service Scheme.

It is also recommended that careful consideration is given to how an NYVIP fits with other measures to address youth unemployment, how they can complement each other.

In making this recommendation it is noted that an NYVIP will have impacts over and above any contribution to addressing youth unemployment.

6.2 Which Policy

Section 5.2 makes the case for a National Volunteering Policy whilst recognising that the development of such a far-reaching policy would be a major undertaking and would require wide-ranging consultation. Formulating a policy that would establish an NYVIP, similar to that being developed for the National Youth Enterprise Fund, would certainly be less involved.

However, because of the potential positive impact of an over-arching National Volunteering Policy, in enhancing the benefits to the country that volunteering programmes provide, it is recommended that this is the option selected. In making this recommendation however it is recognised:

- a) That the development of a National Volunteering Policy must involve the organisations that will be affected by it and have the appropriate expertise: VIOs and Volunteer Supporting Organisations;
- b) That any policy development in this area must comply with Uganda's constitution and existing legislative framework;
- c) The formulated policy must be accompanied by an implementation plan;
- d) That serious consideration be given to any potential unintended consequences of policy over and above those identified in section 5.2.3;
- e) That the policy requirement to establish the NYVIP can be effectively incorporated into a National Volunteering Policy;
- f) That any policy in this area must dovetail appropriately with related policy areas such as labour laws; and
- g) Those with appropriate expertise in policy development in Uganda must be involved in the formulation stage.

6.3 Further consultation

It is recommended that further consultation is a key element of the next stage and there are a number of aspects to this:

- Consultation to develop the NVP;
- Consultation with young people will need to be on-going to ensure that any eventual programme meets their needs and is something they would seek to join; and
- The need to engage with employers has been stressed in the report both to recruit them as placement hosts and to assess their attitudes to an NYVIP. It is, however, further recommended that employers need to be involved in the development of the programme to ensure it meets their needs.

6.4 Other measures

As has been stressed above, pursuing a government led NYVIP should be done in conjunction with supporting and strengthening existing youth volunteering initiatives and stimulating more. The following activities to do this have been identified in the report but it is envisaged that this will be dynamic work and there will be other opportunities that will arise:

- On-going information gathering and research;
- Continue to implement existing pilot programmes and explore others;
- Working with existing networks to support youth volunteering activities and seeking opportunities to share good practice; and
- Continue to develop a resource bank of good practice materials and seek opportunities to utilise it.

6.5 Resourcing the next steps

There is existing capacity with UPFYA and the NYC to lead on the next steps but insufficient to undertake and coordinate all the work that will be necessary to both take forward the selected option and undertake the concurrent activities. Consideration will need to be given to how this can be resourced and any decision will affect both the scope and pace of the next stages.

REFERENCES

1. Ghana LINKS Tour Report – VSO, 2012
2. Concept Note on a National Youth Volunteering Programme – NYC, 2012
3. 'Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work' - International Labour Office (ILO), 2011
4. 'Volunteering and Service in Three African Regions' - Global Economy and Development, 2012
5. Numerous websites of national service and volunteering programmes from around Africa
6. 'Volunteering and Employment in Uganda' - Professional Development Consultants International (PDCI), 2011 - commissioned by VSO
7. 'Research Study for the Development of Operational Guidelines for the Harmonised Use of Volunteers and Interns in Local Government' – ULGA (a draft of this report was studied, it has yet to be adopted in its final form)
8. 'Navigating Challenges. Charting Hope' – Youthmap Uganda, 2012
9. 'Getting the Word Out – Volunteering in Africa' - International Association of Volunteer Effort (IAVE), 2011
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11. 'National Volunteering – Prospects and Opportunities' – PDCI, 2007 – commissioned by VSO
12. 'Volunteer Action Counts' – Memorandum to Government adopted during the International Volunteering Day celebrations in 2012

*Your views and comments on this policy paper are welcomed.
Please respond to;*

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