



VPUU'S TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) calls for action to create safe and sustainable neighbourhoods. We are clear that our vision requires a TRANSFORMATION that is rooted in our own personal way of living, the way we work as a collective within VPUU, the way we partner with the communities we work and live in, the partners we are able to enrol, and in society at large.

When we work on transformation within VPUU, we see the journey as a shift in situation from the current state, to the future. A transformational journey involves self-discovery, reflection and an open mind towards profound change. We need to let go of old ideas and traditions, and make way for new ideas in an ever-changing world. To achieve this, our vision is to co-create safe and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Over the past 18 years, we have seen how small changes can trigger big changes to transform a community from living in fear, to living in peace full of hope. The pandemic proved that the world can change from one day to the next. Through our collective action, we have been able to be the hope and the change we want to see in the world. Let's continue this journey with curiosity and authenticity.

In solidarity,

Michael



Our transformational journey

VPUU started in September 2005 as a programme between the City of Cape Town, German Development Bank and the Khayelitsha community. Some of our team members worked for a consulting company, that designed and implemented the VPUU methodology, before it was institutionalised.

In 2013, VPUU became a South African non-profit company (NPC) with a Board of Directors, a CEO and employees.

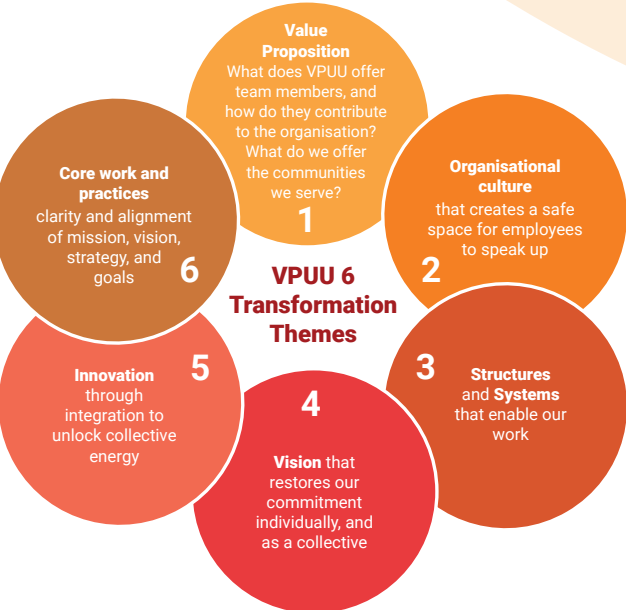
2019

In 2019, we focused on strengthening relationships and building trust within the new Leadership Team, before moving onto the rest of the organisation. Through our initial transformational workshops, we learnt that the nature and quality of relationships, influences the field of possibilities and opportunities.



Accomplishment/Relationship Triangle

In order to strengthen relationships internally, the Leadership Team participated in a week long workshop, where they identified six themes to work through:



2017 - 2018

In 2017, we reflected on our work and the next steps in our journey. We referred to this process, as 'Creating our future.' This was the beginning of our transformational journey.

Facilitated by an external transformation expert, we held a series of workshops with leaders, coordinators, and board members in 2017 and 2018. Through this process, we re-confirmed and defined our areas of expertise, developed a new organogram, and expanded our Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team had a series of workshops throughout the year on topics such as marginalisation and diversity, power and decision-making, innovation through integration and emotional intelligence. Social lunches were also launched as a way to provide team members with a platform to connect around a warm meal. In September, a staff meeting was held at Monwabisi Park Resource Centre. Everyone was invited to share stories, with the intention of building trust and relationships internally. Staff safety was identified as a key issue by the Leadership Team and local staff teams were engaged to discuss the topic in October and November 2019 through social dialogues facilitated by Community Participation colleagues. Staff recommendations led to several policy and practical procedure improvements



Leadership workshop



Staff lunches

2020

In February 2020, the Leadership Team connected to review and confirm the six transformational themes. They also planned for an organisation-wide workshop on diversity and race, which later had to be cancelled, due to the pandemic. Considering lockdown restrictions, interactions had to be limited, which made it difficult to conduct transformational activities. Despite this, we continued working on our transformational themes, through our response to Covid-19 in our day-to-day work.

When the pandemic started in March 2020, we focused on looking after each other and acknowledging everyone's contributions during this period.

These are some of the ways in which we recognised all team members:

- Created a WhatsApp group (VPUU Social Solidarity) to keep all team members connected
- Hosted regular team meetings and check-ins
- Made sure that nobody got laid off
- Provided salary increases to all team members
- Delivered comfort parcels to those affected by Covid-19
- Prepared year-end packs, in place of a function
- Provided food donations, and children's books initially on a smaller scale
- Became a citywide partner through the programme Towards Building a Community Circular Economy (TBCCE) project and the voucher programme which supported more than 20.000 of families.

2021

In 2021, we reviewed our vision and Theory of Change (ToC), in line with the VPUU 4C's

- Changing lives
- Changing communities
- Changing spaces
- Changing systems

The Strategic Transformation Team expanded from four, to seven members through a democratic elective process.

A new board was selected and onboarded in October 2021.



Covid emergency response



TBCCE voucher programme

VPUU 4CS



2022

In February 2022, we held our first all staff gathering in over two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with more than 170 people in attendance. We took turns introducing ourselves, and then broke into small groups to discuss key topics that aligned with our transformational themes.

Main themes identified:

VPUU Value Proposition

- Trauma
- Emotional impact of Covid-19

1

Safe and courageous spaces

- Fear of speaking up
- Gatekeeping
- Abuse of power
- Sense of victimisation
- Fear of consequences

2

Structures and systems that enable our work

- Level of people management
- Access to Leadership Team
- Leadership versus management
- Managers being trained to lead
- Emotional intelligence
- Rank
- Who is Leadership Team and why
- Understanding leadership structure and processes
- Level of feedback when raising issues
- Channels for raising issues
- Uncertainty of HR
- Short-term vs long-term employment
- Disconnect between office and field staff

3

Vision that renews our commitment

- Level of shared values and respect

4

In June, we held a follow-up meeting which focused on prioritising issues identified. As part of this, the broader team was introduced to VPUU ToC and the VPUU 4Cs, through fun and inspiring activities.



Staff meetings

From July, we started welcoming Change Makers to our team. To create a sense of belonging for all team members, we rolled out welcoming events, in line with our six transformational themes. Through these events, we introduced our vision, as well as our 4C's. We also initiated the supervisor mentorship programme, with the intention to capacitate supervisors in leading and managing their teams and to provide a supportive space to discuss challenges and share experiences.

2022 PRIORITY ISSUES

Abuse of power/Level of Respect

Fear of speaking up

Level of feedback when raising issues

Different types of contracts in the organization

VPUU 4CS

CHANGING LIVES
PREVENTION

CHANGING COMMUNITIES
COHESION

CHANGING SPACES
PROTECTION

CHANGING SYSTEMS
EVIDENCE



Welcoming event

During all staff meetings, team members wanted to gain a better understanding of the Leadership team - its purpose, and processes.

In August, the Leadership team took part in a two-day workshop to define a criteria list that determines membership. Based on this, each AoE and key organisational functions, areas and projects were allocated a membership. Once this was finalised, the Leadership team was renamed to Advisory team in January 2023.

In October the Transformation Coordinating Team (TCT) was formed to help define and roll out programmes and initiatives to the wider organisation. TCT is made up of team members from Harare, Monwabisi Park, Lotus Park, Sigalo, Nyanga, Villiersdorp, Observatory, and a sponsor from the Strategic Transformation Team (STT).



Kleinmond workshops



Welcoming event

In December, the TCT and STT attended a 2.5-day workshop in Kleinmond to discuss the roll out of transformation to the broader organisation. During this workshop, everyone agreed on the transformational vision, as well as next steps for 2023.

Our transformation vision was collectively defined:

AT VPUU, TRANSFORMATION IS THE PROCESS OF BECOMING, OR BEING THE ORGANISATION THAT WE WANT OR NEED TO BE. WE ARE CO-CREATING, GROUNDED IN THE FUTURE AND PROPELLED BY OUR PAST.

CREATING AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE THAT IS JUST AND FAIR, WHERE WE EMBRACE:

- Diversity
- Safe and courageous spaces to speak up, and have honest conversations
- Innovation through integration
- Area context
- Flexibility
- Impartiality
- Transparency
- Growth opportunities
- Inclusion
- Equality
- Trusting relationships
- Empowering oneself and others

Leadership Teams

All teams are guided by the same principles.

WHO WE ARE

We are fully present, empathetic and brave leaders, who seek to understand, embody our values and vision, and honour the diversity of the organisation.

COLLECTIVE PURPOSE

1. To be stewards of our VPUU Vision, mission, and Theory of Change.

2. To exemplify VPUU values and principles.

3. To create a dialogue where we connect, reflect and shape our future.

4. To represent concerns for all stakeholders, to respect and raise diverse perspectives and views of team members, and to ensure compassion in the organisation

5. To live co-design as a value promoting co-creation and co-production

6. To be a platform that ensures accountability, holding each other and oneself accountable

Each team's structure

LEADS TEAM

WHO?

AoE leads

WHAT?

Programmatic, organisational, transformation

WHEN?

Meet bi-weekly on a Tuesday

PURPOSE

- To champion and model integration in all spheres of the organisation.
- To ensure alignment across AoEs through dialogue and continued participation.
- To be a communication mechanism that shares information throughout the organisation, connects the dots, and enhances integration
- To influence key policies and operational decisions.
- To make decisions that have:
 - Financial implications
 - HR implications
 - Process implications and other organisational programmes and priorities - Impact on the organisation
 - Policy implications – internal and external
 - Communication issues – internally and externally – and who is authorised to say what

ADVISORY TEAM

WHO?

Appointed AoE, area and project representatives

WHAT?

Programmatic, leadership development

WHEN?

Meet bi-weekly on a Tuesday

PURPOSE

- To champion and model integration in all spheres of the organisation.
- To ensure alignment across AoEs through dialogue and continued participation.
- To be a communication conduit that shares information throughout the organisation, connects the dots, and enhances integration
- To be an advisory body that gives input and generates alignment around operational matters, "legislated" issues, strategic thinking and reviews.
- To empower leaders to become brand ambassadors and lead by example.

STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION TEAM (STT)

WHO?

Senior management and experts

WHAT?

Transformational and organisational

WHEN?

Meet bi-weekly on a Wednesday

PURPOSE

- Craft the overall transformation plan
- Identify the adaptive agenda
- Remove barriers at senior levels
- Review programme
- Has more access to overarching, strategic type of information such as HR, contracts, finances, resourcing, projects etc.
- Access to the Board & Leads meeting
- Through the Leads (where required) and based on recommendations from TCT, make transformation-related decisions that have:
 - Financial implications
 - HR implications
 - Process implications and other organisational programmes and priorities - Impact on the organisation
 - Policy implications – internal and external
 - Communication issues – internally and externally – and who is authorised to say what
 - Clarity on meeting structures and how and what we communicate where

TRANSFORMATION COORDINATING TEAM (TCT)

WHO?

Elected area representatives

WHAT?

Transformational and organisational

WHEN?

Meet bi-weekly on a Wednesday

PURPOSE

- Carry transformation into the organisation
- Carry the adaptive agenda and surface new issues
- Remove barriers at ground/ local/ constituency levels
- Implement programme
- Has more access to what's brewing in the organisation, what's happening day-to-day, across areas, projects, levels – day-to-day ground knowledge

2023

In February 2023, the TCT held staff meetings, to report back on outcomes from the workshop in December 2022. Most members of TCT attended a three-day Train-the-Facilitator course, that aimed to equip them to host Transformation Orientation workshops.

Between May and September, the TCT facilitated orientation workshops with all core staff across geographic areas, to have conversations about what transformation means within VPUU. Key elements of the programme will also be shared during welcoming events for Change Makers.

At the end of June, we said goodbye to our first group of Change Makers, that were part of the Social Employment Fund (SEF) programme. They were celebrated and thanked for making an impact in the communities we work in.



Facilitators workshop

Employee Wellness and Trauma Support programme

All South Africans, from varying backgrounds, have experienced some form of trauma in their lives, which could be as a result of apartheid, serious illness, domestic violence, or loss of a loved one. Trauma was recognised as a key focus area in our journey. Our transformational process helps create safe and courageous spaces, as well as a healthy organisational culture - this is one of the most powerful trauma support interventions.

In August 2023, we introduced an **Employee Wellness and Trauma Support programme** to help VPUU team members deal more proactively with stress and anxiety-related issues in their lives, including trauma. We're hopeful that this will make a positive difference in the lives of our staff and communities.



Staff feedback meeting