

NEWSFLASH VPUU



Eighteen months ago we asked ourselves a very big question “How can VPUU NPC better serve the communities we work with, how can we offer the best service to our partners and deliver the greatest impact to all our stakeholders?”

This led us to re-look at the structure of the organisation. With the help of an organisational transformation expert we embarked on a series of intensive workshops revisiting where we have been, where we are and where we want to be. This led us to defining seven areas of expertise that we will refocus VPUU NPC around.

- 1 Neighbourhood development**
as area based approach
- 2 Active Boxes**
- small service centres in informal settlements
- 3 ECD for all!**
Population based approach in informal settlements
- 4 LED Broker**
to grow a sustainable and include economy
- 5 ICT4D**
- Innovation through technology
- 6 Research and partnerships**
- 7 Citizen College**
to grow strong communities

These seven areas were defined through a consultative process involving all staff. From an external point of view we looked at our strengths and weaknesses, and the needs of the communities we partner with. Internally we focused on our skills and, most importantly, our purpose.

As part of the transformation internally we realised we needed an organisational restructuring process to become a high performing and high impact organisation aligned to the Areas of Expertise. This re-structuring entailed a close look at our organisational structures, at how we operate, at our people and the roles they occupy.

As a result of this reflection we have restructured the organisation around dynamic project orientated teams, with each area of expertise been led by experts in their field.

We have streamlined our internal processes and re-orientated ourselves to be efficient, evidence based organisation, passionate about delivering value to all our stakeholders.

This has necessitated a restructuring of our leadership team as we move away from work-streams to project teams. We have also consolidated our executive team. These changes ensure greater flexibility, improved communication and more efficient delivery.

The Board has been wholly supportive of the process, and has elected Sisanda Mqwebedu as our new chairperson to oversee the process. Sisanda holds B. Com Financial Accounting from the University of Cape Town and MBA from University of Stellenbosch and is the Managing Director and Founder of Itayi Arts, which specialises in fine arts and bespoke decor items and is a part time facilitator specialising in leadership development; ethics and governance at the University of Stellenbosch Business School.

The board has also approved the new organigram under my renewed leadership (they have extended my contract by 5 years). I will manage the executive team comprising an Operations Manager (Gail Anders), Programme Manager (currently being recruited), and Talent Manager (Iris Taani), reporting to the board on regular basis against key transformational indicators.

The 7 areas of Expertise will be headed up by a lead person supported by Executive Support Services, which comprises Human Resources, Information Technology, Communications, Finance, Project and Knowledge Management. All appointed Leads are internal appointments, testimony to nurturing our own talent, and creating sustainable opportunities for talent within the VPUU family.

Our leads are:

- Fathima Rawat- ECD 4 All;
- Nicole Hopkins- Neighbourhood Development and Active Boxes;
- Fraser Siteti- Citizen College.
- Chris Berens- ICT4D.

The LED lead position has been advertised. Research and Partnerships will be formalised further before appointing a lead.

This is a rewarding process in particular for the work-stream leaders who have been mentoring the very people that are now the Leads. I'm proud of how the team has engaged with this process and how smooth the transition is progressing.

The transformational process we have embarked on has reconfirmed to us that the tools and processes we offer are in dire need.

The Board agreed to increase our staff compliment from now 76 to about 100 colleagues over the next 3-6 months to resource ourselves for the tasks ahead in the 7 AoE's. We aim to be leaders in the field of these areas of expertise and grow these into areas of excellence.

Transformation means letting go some of our people and welcoming new members to resource ourselves for the future. About 25% of our current colleagues will leave us by end of June 2018.

Three colleagues left at the end of April. Gail Timm, the longest serving VPUU member, left us for Pinelands High School as PA to the Headmaster; Alex Becker took up an offer by an architectural firm in Cape Town and Lelethu Tshofuti is heading up a transformation programme at the South African Council of Churches.

At the end of May Liesel Bakker leaves us to take up an exciting opportunity in London and Emma Hoskins will focus her energies on creating a sustainable market in the city and suburban areas for the ethically and organically grown produce of the townships. Wendy Arendse and Kathryn Ewing will be leaving us at the end of June. Kathryn will take up a lecturing post at UCT, but will remain on as a board member.

One of our strengths is to bridge the gap between grassroots organisations and policy. Hence we renewed our commitment to the communities we partner with by increasing our footprint directly in the communities. We will continue to maximise our impact through interventions such as ECD for all, the Community

Registration Offices in informal settlements and our innovative ICT for development drive towards smart urbanism to deepen participatory democracy.

The integrated area based approach will be continue to be a hallmark of VPUU in our work on a neighbourhood level as well as in informal settlements through the Active Boxes as seeds for development. The 7 AoE will in addition allow us to also provide specific sets of intervention that communities and partners require.

In order to nurture our internal creativity and capacity we are launching an internal innovation fund seeded with with R1 000 000 of our own funds. The theme is inclusive innovation targeted at finding solutions for pressing issues facing the society we live in and specifically the communities we work in.

We are honoured and humbled that we are able to continue our work with the communities and we intend to continue entering into multiyear partnerships with communities rather than short term consulting work.

We are also honoured that there is keen interest in the public and private sector to continue collaborating with us as agents of change and intermediaries on both a local government level and provincial level. A number of partnerships have been developed over the past months and we are continuing to look out for partnerships committed to creating safe and sustainable neighbourhoods to improve the quality of life for all residents.

We would like to extend our gratitude to partners and colleagues that have walked with us over the past 12 years and look forward to continuing the path towards a just and inclusive society.



Michael Krause,
CEO VPUU NPC