



INKULULEKO
Formative Report

Seeds of the Future: A Transatlantic
Cooperation on Building the Green
Economy Among Youth in The Eastern
Cape

CAPE TOWN US CONSULATE - BUSINESS SKILLS PROJECT
2022 & 2023

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Introduction

The present report shares and discusses the early monitoring and evaluation findings from the early experiences of stakeholders in Inkululeko's Business Skills Training Course. The program teaches selected students from Makhanda's Ntsika and Nathaniel Nyaluza High Schools about the green economy and entrepreneurship. In particular, the course equips students with the knowledge and abilities to integrate entrepreneurship and green economy principles. The course began on March 14 and is scheduled to end on September 5, 2022. The pilot course's conceptual phase, which occurred in 2020, and the 26th of April 2022 were covered by the formative assessment, which was done for both online and in-person course formats.

The essence of the formative evaluation was to collect data that will be used to identify the needs of learners, facilitators, and stakeholders before and during the deployment of learning. The evaluation process was collaborative and it remained cognisant of the stakeholders' interests, and by doing so, the evaluation helped to bridge the gap between what they wished to achieve and the path to get there. The importance of exploring this gap is that it gives stakeholders vantage points into the nexus between the course content, process, and context of learning. For the evaluation to arrive at this point, there was a need to explore various thematic areas of the course. Participants shed more light on what inspired them to be part of the course, the kind of learning environment they expected, and the outcomes they hoped to achieve.

South Africa-Based Facilitators

South Africa-based facilitators at Ntsika and Nathaniel Nyaluza High Schools came from different backgrounds; with some having been part of the pilot course and some being part of Inkululeko's after-school program. However, talking to them about their early experiences with the business skills course showed that all of them were having unique experiences and were determined to learn more and help their learners understand the content. For some of the facilitators, the Business Skills Course introduced new insights that make their involvement in the course more exciting. Some of the facilitators, despite having an academic background in Business, reported

that the Business skills Course has introduced them to new business ideas that they may consider implementing in the future

The excitement of learners was mentioned as one of the most encouraging experiences for the facilitators. Learners were said to be enjoying the course and keen to learn more. Facilitators mentioned that sometimes learners come to them and ask “*when is the next session?*”. This makes the facilitators proud of their work. As with the learners, facilitators see a huge value in the content that they are delivering to learners. Facilitators were happy with the provided facilitation devices that complement text content and other course material. The use of devices such as projectors allows facilitators to show videos to learners and allow them to reflect on their contexts and the shared videos and share what they think. The videos lighten up the learning space and help learners understand the content better this is evident in the increase in the number of questions learners ask after watching the videos. By asking questions learners will be helping each other think broadly and apply the new insights into their contexts.

US Facilitators

Having the opportunity to engage with the South African facilitators and other staff at Inkululeko offered the U.S. facilitators the opportunity to develop competencies useful in their professional development, such as their confidence. Developing the course material was managed in a manner that allowed them enough freedom, while being mentored and given direction, to personalize the course and develop it in a manner that they can share their input and ideas. Receiving direct input and being able to discuss challenges with more experienced stakeholders were seen as helpful in the development of the course and in improving the curriculum.

Zuko, Julian, and others, we have open conversations about what we can improve and give constructive criticism. Everybody at Inkululeko is there to learn. We are working towards a common purpose. With all that in mind, even though I have never met them personally, zoom meetings with conversations were all very valuable experiences (U.S. Facilitator).

While working on the curriculum of the course, U.S. facilitators had the opportunity to learn about the academic concepts, as well as how people in different countries and economies apply ideas such as upcycling. Participating in the development of the course curriculum also enabled facilitators to learn and apply new skills regarding time management and prioritization to meet deadlines, working in a team, being prepared to participate in meetings, and presenting ideas. Facilitators also had to learn how to negotiate different ideas arising within a team, to manage potential conflicts that can emerge. They learned how to share their ideas and simultaneously consider the ideas of others and then reach a mutual agreement on the way forward. It taught them that being open to different ideas can be useful to come up with better approaches than your initial ideas and that the final product can be a conglomeration of all the different best parts presented or suggested by different stakeholders.

Stakeholders

US Consulate

For the US Consulate, an immediate value, which is aligned with the goal of the funding; is to strengthen and expand Inkululeko's U.S. – S.A. network of partner organizations through novel collaborations. The U.S Consulate sees the project as an opportunity for U.S. and South African stakeholders to engage and build relationships. The project offers an opportunity to build relationships between South African and American citizens to get a first-hand experience of engaging across borders and develop a better understanding of the complexities in the respective countries. The project and its engagements offer the opportunity to build trust between the nations and contribute to international peace between nations.

That Inkululeko will work with their US and SA partners, just bring between them more opportunities for students, target audience of the program, to engage with Americans, public diplomacy grants are to build relationships between SA and USA, to broaden exposure to the world, to Americans, the essence of our work is that we believe the more opportunities to engage with Americans they can form their opinions and its complexities. Build trust among nations and keeps the peace. (U.S. Consulate)

A challenge to the successful outcomes of the project, as has been witnessed by the U.S. Consulate in other grants, is unforeseen challenges to implementation. Getting the envisioned number of course participants can be difficult and hindered by unforeseen challenges, e.g. the Covid-19 pandemic and associated barriers to engagements with participants. For the U.S. Consulate, it is acceptable to adapt, especially if adaptation is needed to ensure that the results of the project are still reached. In this case, there is still community buy-in in the project, even if the numbers are not quite what was envisioned initially.

There are always challenges in every single grant. There are always bumps and I expect them. I told the partners, we are their partners, and we want them to succeed. It is not a test. The objectives do not have to be achieved as is, they can be shifted to get to the overall goals. (U.S. Consulate)

The approach followed by the Business Skills course is seen as innovative in how it interrogates awareness of climate change and strategies to leverage the green economy to prepare for a while in which the climate is changing. Combining green business skills and entrepreneurship to build economic prosperity in this way is seen as innovative and they are interested to see the outcomes and the potential of how this approach can be applied elsewhere.

Conclusion

Developing the curriculum and working towards implementation of the course has required different South African and American stakeholders to collaborate, share ideas, and exchange knowledge. There is much opportunity and potential for mutual learning for all stakeholders. Working in partnerships can be challenging, but this collaboration is also helping stakeholders to learn valuable lessons and skills on how to work in teams and partnerships, negotiate mutual agreements and forge a way forward to reach envisioned goals.