

LIBERIA YOUTH CENTERS

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC &
OPERATIONAL PLAN



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SCOPE OF WORK

The activity began with an assessment covering the organizational, technical and institutional capacity of youth centers across the country, followed by the development of a resulting capacity development plan for the youth centers.

In keeping with the agreed work scope, we began by drafting the capacity assessment methodology and tools¹ for UNDP and MYS approval prior to beginning the assessment. The Ministry of Youth and Sports had no comments on the proposed methodology during inception; however, the UNDP focal person at the time saw the need to be more specific on certain aspects of the proposed methodology. After minor revisions, the inception report was accepted and field mission approved.

A desk review was conducted of the key documents that established the Youth Centers, including the mandate, mission and strategic plans that necessitated the construction of the Youth Center across the country, after which the field mission began.

In the field, a situational analysis was conducted of each youth center recording findings of the comprehensive field organizational, institutional and technical capacities assessment of all centers, highlighting their strengths, weaknesses, limitations and opportunities. Consultations and performance assessment of existing staff were carried out to determine capacity gap and training needs.

Subsequently, findings and recommendations were summarized, highlighting the capacity gaps and capacity building needs of each center at the organization management, institutional and technical levels.

An integrated draft capacity Assessment report and Capacity development plan was submitted to the MYS and UNDP for comments; here again there were no additional comments from the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The senior level technician from the MoYS was present on the field and joined the consultant for daily debriefs; and therefore, had no further input. UNDP requested the separation of the assessment report and capacity development plan into two distinct documents. There were a few additional comments from UNDP. These comments and concerns were addressed, as was the request to separate capacity assessment report from capacity development plan.

The end result of this entire exercise are two distinct documents: **The Comprehensive Capacity Assessment Report**, and the **Capacity Development Plan**, this document.

¹ Approved assessment tool is found in annex 2 of this inception report

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Overview & Structure of the Plan

The Capacity Development Plan, a direct result of the capacity assessment study, presents realistic and time-bound strategies to address the capacity deficits of youth centers based on the results of the assessment.

This document outlines a proposed plan for building the capacity of the youth center to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

The Areas of capacity assessment presents competency needs under the three capacity building areas.

Institutional Capacity	Support the Ministry of Youth and Sports in clearly defining the functions of the youth center management team including its composition. Support MYS in separating the role of youth center manager from County Youth Coordinator Conduct training for YCMTs and their respective governing bodies – Youth Center Governing Board in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Leadership and Governance
Organizational Management Capacity	Support Youth Center Management Teams through training and mentoring in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budgeting and Financial Reporting• Asset Management• Team building• Effective communications• Resource Mobilization
Technical Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Management• Basic Technology Management• Instructional Design• Positive Youth Development

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY NEEDS

As indicated in the accompanying Capacity Assessment Report, all the youth centers have the organizational capacity needs. The needs have been categorized according to the three key capacity development areas established prior to the assessment:

Institutional Capacity

Strategic Leadership & Governance

The lack of active Terms of Reference and organizational structures at the various youth centers necessitates support to the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Highlights of said support must include:

- Clearly defining the functions of Youth centers
- Developing the Terms of Reference of Youth Center Management Teams
- Drawing a distinction between the Youth Center Manager and the County youth Coordinator
- Establishing a governing board for each youth center.

As part of further institutional capacity development, additional training for is required for Center Management:

Strategic and Coordinated Planning, Monitoring, Reporting

- Establishing baseline development data, indicators, benchmarks
- Translating development data, indicators and benchmarks into realistic development plans which take account of capital and recurrent investment
- Establishing management systems for performance, monitoring and review, reporting and assessment outcomes and outputs
- Ensuring the planning is both top-down (clarity of direction) and bottom-up (taking account of feedback from the clients on priorities)

Organizational Management Capacity

Managing Budgets More Effectively

- Linking the budgeting process to planning process
- Integrating and complementing various revenue streams
- Integrating the annual and multi-year planning and budgeting processes
- Budget discipline and monitoring
- Effective management of cash transfers, expenditures, acquittals

Team Work and Managing People

- Providing clarity of position roles and responsibilities
- Making the organization's structure 'results and client oriented'
- Writing results-oriented position descriptions
- Understanding key variables which influence staff/people's performance
- Motivating staff for greater productivity
- Approaches to instilling discipline
- Instituting a results-oriented performance management system

Asset Management

- Use of asset management systems and process such as the asset registry, regular maintenance, procurement and disposal of assets, and security.
- Allocating and overseeing asset management responsibilities by management staff

Effective Communications

- Selecting and using the right communications channel for the situations
- Active listening as a means to avoid conflicts
- Clarity, Concision and feedback
- Respect & Open mindedness

Technical Capacity

Programme and Project Management

- Clearly assigned responsibilities for ongoing service Programme management
- Linking budgets with priority service Programme priorities
- Managing activity plans for key ongoing services and reporting progress
- Developing effective project proposals with clarity of outcomes and outputs, and realistic inputs
- Assessments and activity plans
- Ability to carry out tendering and procurement, and effective contractor supervision
- Monitoring, and providing progress reports

Basic Technology Management

- Fundamentals of computing
- MS Office Suite
- Internet Usage
- Social Media
- Connecting printers
- Troubleshooting hardware and software malfunctions

Instructional Design and Training Delivery

- Describing the concept of training
- The ADDIE model of Instructional Systems Design
- Conducting a training needs analysis
- Course development
- Planning for a training

Positive Youth Development

- Theoretical underpinnings and key principles of positive youth development; brief review of adolescent development
- Positive outcomes and strategies to build these outcomes
- Youth Voice and Engagement: opportunities for meaningful engagement; overcoming adultism
- Youth Development Programming: features of effective youth development settings and youth-centered learning approaches
- Youth Worker Competencies: competency frameworks, boundaries, and ethical dilemmas

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONAL PLANNING

Suggested Training & Technical Assistance Format

Given the consultant's experience, and having assessed the capacity at all youth centers, the recommendation is that all trainings should be complemented by coaching and mentoring, especially at institutional and technical levels. At the operational level, it is important to recruit staff who have background knowledge and expertise, no matter how little, in the area in which they're expected to serve.

Peer to peer training could be helpful when there is someone that is knowledgeable in the area (Wulu from Zwedru) developing for new coordinators and/or youth center managers.

Training formats will depend heavily on the understanding of the context and participants' background. It is however advised that no matter how trainings are designed, they be highly participatory and engaging.

It will be important to adopt a format that gives an opportunity for participants to understand what the vision of the Youth centers are.

It will be vital for the presenter to honor and respect and validate the relevant previous knowledge of the group and use it in new ways so that they see the value of the broader perspective.

While many participants would prefer in person trainings, web-based trainings formats should be explored for their efficiency, flexibility and accessibility. Web-based trainings have proven to be very helpful because of the cut in travel time and associated costs. With everyday advances in technology, participants can access material right from their cell phones.

Suggested Timing

Given how dispersed participants for the suggested capacity development interventions will be, there are two options worth considering: In person training and Web based.

For an in-person training of approximately 70 persons to be effective given how much material needs to be covered, nothing less than a one-month boot camp would be ideal.

Participants will get the opportunity to immerse themselves into the ideas and concepts that would be taught over the course of the one month.

The Web based training will require no physical gathering; however, it will require a considerable amount of self-discipline on the part of the participants. In person training will be more practical.

Suggested Location

The ideal location for host the suggested boot camp for newly form YCMT members will be a facility most likely owned by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and has dormitory, electricity and water facilities. The most obvious such facility is the campus of the Monrovia Vocational Training Center, MVTC.

Suggested Service Providers

A number of local training providers were identified as having the capacity to plan deliver the requisite trainings:

Nerissa Solutions, Inc

11th Street & Gibson Ave

Sinkor, Monrovia

Contact Person: Gordon Harris

info@nerisasolutions.com / gordonharris320@gmail.com

Optimal Impact Trainings & Advisory Services

Congo Town, Near Zone 3

Monrovia, Liberia

Contact Person: Gabriel Sela-son

Email: optimalimpacttrainings@gmail.com / gselason@gmail.com

Devin Corporation

Tubman Blvd; Old Congo Town

Sinkor, Monrovia

Contact Person: Natty B. Davis

natty.davis56@gmail.com

CONCLUSION

This document, in its entirety, constitutes the capacity development strategic and operational plan youth centers across the country at the organization management, institutional and technical capacities. It identified areas where human and institutional capacity needs to be built. Real impact of any support to Youth Center will truly be felt when the centers' capacities are built.