

LEARNING SNAPSHOT

This is an overview of the innovative partnership model used by the YearBeyond programme. It is supplemented by a more comprehensive learning brief on the same topic.



Building cross-sectoral partnerships for scale and impact: lessons from the YearBeyond programme



When we are pressured to tighten our belts, we have to review how we work and maximise synergies — both within government and across all sectors of society — to solve our most pressing, wicked problems.”

– Guy Redman, Head of Department, Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport

This Learning Snapshot:

- **Explores** the necessity for re-evaluating how budgets are allocated and spent in a constrained fiscal environment.
- **Emphasises** the need for a “whole-of-society” approach to tackling South Africa’s wicked problems.
- **Demonstrates** through the YearBeyond programme how a government-led model of collaboration crowds in financial and non-financial resources and achieves greater and more cost-effective impact.

To achieve policy goals in a constrained fiscal environment, **government needs to invest in partnership models that catalyse additional investment**, and that **unlock and align resources** from across society.

The YearBeyond programme offers a **blueprint for an effective, government-led partnership model** with a dual beneficiary approach: it is effectively reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) while improving learning outcomes, social cohesion and well-being for children and communities.



“Many youth programmes focus on the youth and what they actually do is secondary. YearBeyond is committed to ensuring that young people contribute meaningfully to social change through their work.”

– Stefan Howells, Director, SCORE (YearBeyond implementing partner)

The YearBeyond partnership model

YearBeyond (YeBo) is a youth service programme that connects young people ages 18-25 to opportunities. Youth on the Programme (called YeBoneers):

- **Gain work experience** by volunteering to deliver social programmes (like academic catch-up or mental health support);
- **Develop core competencies and work readiness** through weekly sessions, coaching and mentoring, job fairs and practice interviews; and
- **Build their networks** and are supported to access their next work, study or training opportunity.

YearBeyond is structured as a partnership between provincial and national government, donors, NGOs (implementing partners) and employers and institutions of further learning (opportunity partners). It is an innovation of the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS) that has recently expanded to other provinces.

The programme is rolled out through a **social franchise model**. Government provides tested models, training, systems and platforms for scale, opportunity placements, and a modest contribution to implementing partners' operational costs. Implementing partners run YearBeyond programmes, hire mentors and supervise YeBoneers.

What is social franchising?

Social franchising scales up proven, high-quality models to deliver social services by packaging these models so they can be replicated by others, and by working through partners who can leverage local expertise and bring existing resources to the table.



“The decentralised model, where a smaller, central YearBeyond office works with a broader network of partners that are already embedded in communities, is core to the programme's success.

The smaller central team is able to innovate, test new solutions and tools, ensure quality and leverage insights from the teams on the ground to ensure the curriculum addresses the needs of the youth they are serving.

And the centralisation of many of these functions, that are typically duplicated across multiple sites in other programmes, makes for more effective and cost-efficient programming.”

– Ona Meyer, Programme Manager: Youth Employment, Michael and Susan Dell Foundation

Rethinking traditional funding models: investing to catalyse

Typically, government budgets to implement its own programmes. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) do the same. This is not always the most effective spend. Given the scale of the challenges South Africa must solve, and highly constrained public budgets, everyone needs to think differently about how resources are used by investing in partnerships that can catalyse additional investment.

YearBeyond has mobilised co-funding from national government, other Western Cape government departments, private donors and NGOs. Each partner funds a different component of the programme, in line with their mandate and risk appetite.

This funding model means that **each R1 contributed by the Western Cape DCAS unlocks an additional R1.40 - more than doubling** its investment. It also ensures that national, provincial and donor efforts to reduce youth unemployment are aligned for greater impact.

In 2023, YearBeyond launched an **impact financing mechanism** in partnership with Harambee, a not-for-profit social enterprise tackling youth unemployment. NGO partners will be paid if 75% of youth remain economically active after 15 months, and again after 24 months. This incentivises partners to focus on the long-term outcome: ensuring that alumni remain economically active and do not return to the pool of NEET young people.

Beyond funding: unlocking resources across the whole of society

In addition to attracting more government and private sector investment, YearBeyond's social franchising model has unlocked additional resources and capacity from NGOs and business.

NGOs that implement YeBo programmes as franchise partners bring additional capacity, resources and infrastructure, as well as local knowledge and relationships, to the table. This amplifies the funding pot with significant in-kind resources, aligned towards a common goal.

And YeBo's opportunity partners, including businesses and tertiary institutions, volunteer at practice interviews and offer pathways for YeBo alumni.



The crowding in of financial and non-financial resources to strengthen each component of the model is critical. Each stakeholder plays a role to shape the unique offering.”

– Melissa Parker, Director: Provincial Skills and Partnership, Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism

IMPACT

YearBeyond achieves impressive outcomes:

- Each year, at least **75% of its cohort access their next opportunity** within 3 months of exiting the programme. (In 2022, the figure was 79%.)
- **70%** of YeBoneer alumni continue **volunteering in their community**.
- Children **improve literacy** and **maths skills** and attend school more frequently, and libraries have expanded their membership and book circulation.
- **YeBoneer alumni are more hopeful**, more satisfied with their lives and more confident.

In the long term, reducing the number of people who are NEET reduces dependency on the state, grows the economy and moves families out of intergenerational poverty.



“You’re not solving for one person placed in one job. You’re solving for reduced crime, violence and depression; increased employability; reduced cost to re-hire – and reduced costs to the state in the long term.”

– Ariane de Lannoy, Associate Professor, Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) and Project Lead, Basic Package of Support

Why it works: key enablers

These outcomes make a strong case for investing in network-based partnership models. Adopting a social franchise approach that centralises programme design, systems and support while decentralising implementation enables rapid, cost-effective scale; mobilises additional resources; taps into local expertise and builds partners’ buy-in and ownership.

Key enablers in this model that can be replicated include:



Government commitment: Visible, long-term support from government gives private donors and NGOs confidence to invest and partner.



Shared goals and outcomes: Clear targets and impact measures ensure efforts to solve complex problems are aligned to policy goals and coordinated.



Investment in systems for scale: Thoughtful investment in efficient digital systems, standardised materials and clear guidelines has enabled YeBo to sustain quality through a rapid expansion, and lays the groundwork for further growth.



A humble, innovation-focused mindset: Commitment to deep listening and continuous quality improvement drive an agile, innovation-focused culture where rapid iteration is possible and all partners feel seen and heard.



“YearBeyond has conceptualised and developed a programme that looks like a start-up, yet is run by a government department, with the space and freedom to be entrepreneurial and open to opportunities.”

– Joanna Marzec-Visagie, Manager: Sustainable Development and Stakeholder Relations, Theewaterskloof Municipality (YearBeyond implementing partner)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Between 2019 and 2023, YearBeyond grew from 500 to 3 500 YeBoneers. Its success to date makes a strong case for using state funding to:

- Make clear, long-term commitments that give strategic direction on policy priorities.
- Invest in partnership models that can unlock private sector and civil society contributions.
- Use co-funding approaches to increase alignment and reduce duplication across government departments, between provincial and national government, and between government and civil society.