



2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT **03**

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR'S REPORT **05**

TESTIMONIALS **07**

ABOUT ACTION VOLUNTEERS AFRICA **10**





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JANINE HANSEN

THE ANCHOR HOLDS

Covid-19 was the main cause of a perfect storm and it lasted much longer than initially anticipated. There were many casualties in all spheres of life. Many people suffer from long-COVID, a condition where the symptoms are present beyond the normal period. Long-COVID or post-COVID syndrome, seems a fitting term for many NPOs to describe the range of ongoing problems due to Covid-19. Recovery is going to take time.

When the storm subsides, one always takes stock of the ship, the crew and cargo. For AVA, the crew (staff) is well and in high spirits. The ship (policies, procedures and overall operations as an organisation) is intact, but the sails that propel the ship (finances) took a battering. Fundraising has proven really challenging during a time when income (funding) was less for various reasons. Most importantly, the anchor (our values, vision and core mission for existence) held. That's why our cargo (youth participants) was safe and cared for as we continued investing in their development and equipping them for the world of work. At a time when many organisations cut services, AVA expanded. Unemployment, in particularly youth unemployment went off the charts in 2021 and rose to unprecedented numbers. The crew (staff) made a deliberate decision to help more unemployed youth through work-readiness services; and provided much needed hope when many felt helpless against a system and economy that isn't doing enough to equip youth for work; nor creating opportunities for them to access. No wonder increasing numbers of youth battled with mental health issues during the pandemic.

Programme Developments

AVA is proud of a consistent average progression rate of 75% of youth who complete the programme; and progress to employment or studies. The Life Matters group achieved a staggering 81% progression rate and it is the result of much training, guidance, mentoring and individual coaching that helps the youth take the next step towards meaningful employment and a sustainable future.

The pandemic had a devastating impact on youth unemployment. With the bone-chilling stats of young people not in employment, education or training, AVA made a deliberate decision to expand their work-readiness services to reach especially rural youth with an Educate-for-Employment (E4E) strategy. Logic tells one to cut back, but at AVA where 70% of the staff are AVA Alumni, there was a strong need to help more youth who's dreams of decent employment were equally battered by the pandemic. That's why AVA launched the Mobile Career Café (MCC) on 16 June 2021. Little did the team know what an impact that project would have. Just look at the increased learning for youth AFTER attending a MCC event:

- **71% MORE** could identify potential employers and learning opportunities in their communities;
- **52% MORE** youth felt confident that they now know how to prepare for a job interview;
- **34% MORE** was very confident that they could identify and list their skills on their CV.

Human Resource Developments

Astute management characterised the organisation's leadership who have demonstrated insight to recognise opportunities and challenges; together with the ability to realign resources to deal with the change due to especially Covid. The combination of insight, sound judgement and flexibility enabled AVA to not only maintain programmes, but also build a successful model, through these difficult two years. The AVA staff played the key role in contributing to AVA achieving especially programmatic goals. Their optimism and commitment never wavered; and they're always ready for the next new venture.

This year, AVA also employed two admin interns for a 12-month period to alleviate pressure in the office. A new Programme Coordinator was appointed to help coordinate the activities in the various programme streams. In January 2022, the role changed to a Programmes Assistant and Tiffany Schouw was appointed in the new middle management position. Sadly, Charnré Taylor, Programme Director at AVA since August 2015, resigned to take up a wonderful opportunity in the same sector. AVA is grateful for her contribution to the development of the organisation and training content.

Financial Management

Our biggest challenge is securing financial sustainability. During the pandemic, it appears funders stayed loyal to their beneficiaries. Others had less funds to distribute and some have their own ideas about changing the structural causes of youth unemployment. This year AVA had a significant deficit of R897 733. The management developed an even leaner organisation by considering all avenues to save. Increased efficiency was achieved by moving to a smaller office in Observatory and sharing with two other NPOs. This meant a 35% saving on office rental expenses, compared to the previous financial year.

In a time when fundraising proves very challenging, the strategic focus is on creating alternative income streams. AVA offers its bespoke personal and professional training at a fee and this source of income has increased

the past two years. A menu of services, e.g. recruitment of youth, specific training, mentoring and progression, is available for organisations to choose from with a fee for every service chosen. Expansion of AVAs services to corporates could yield bigger income. This will be explored in future; as well as the value for accreditation of training programmes.

AVA also launched a crowd-funding campaign for the Mobile Career Café in September 2021, on an extremely credible and professional platform – GlobalGiving. More than R70 000 was raised in the first year and the campaign will continue in the next financial year. Another strategic activity is to invest more resources into marketing and communications. There are amazing success stories and significant impact through AVAs work and there is significant scope to develop the capacity of the organisation to capture and share the great stories.

AVA has always maintained good relationships with all their stakeholders and is open to collaborate and explore strategic alliances with like-minded organisations. It seems that NPOs in South Africa still have a long way to go before they are truly open to new organisational models that will allow them a greater chance to do more, and to survive future storms.

Thank you to the AVA Board of Directors for their role in supporting and guiding the work of the organisation. They have a wealth of experience and will play an even bigger role in future as the financial sustainability of AVA is at the top of the agenda.

Conclusion

Just when we got through the Covid storm, Russia invaded Ukraine and started another senseless war that will impact economies (and people) around the world. The dynamic and ever changing environment we operate in, is constantly challenging our ways of thinking and doing. With financial sustainability being our key priority, we need more innovative solutions for the future; yet remain anchored in our belief in what we do and why we exist. In spite of all the challenges, I trust the crew I work with and I am optimistic that the sails will be mended; and the anchor will hold. ✨



PROGRAMME DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CHARNRÉ TAYLOR

For many organisations 2021 was a year of big change, some even closing down and struggling to keep doors open. For AVA 2021 was a year of exciting programmes, growth and development and amazing opportunity. We were ready to take the challenge head on using a dual model of face-to-face and online training.

Our highlights this year was the launch of the Mobile Career Café, and the development of an online course that was also piloted with a group of youth in rural communities. We tried a new model in Work4Progress and also maintained our existing programmes such as Year Beyond and Life Matters.

YEAR BEYOND

This year – 2021 - was the sixth year that AVA was involved in the implementation of the Year Beyond Programme. The programme has a dual development focus: educational enrichment for learners, which is run during and after school hours, and leadership and employability readiness for young volunteers, 18-25 years. In this way, the model is characterised by a pay-it-forward approach. We give to volunteers, and in return they give to learners and their communities.

AVA is the first and oldest implementing partner in this programme and in 2021 we managed the implementation of YearBeyond in 16 primary schools, 12 in Khayelitsha and 4 in Mitchell's Plain; reaching 1600 Grade 3 and 4 learners.

Progression of youth post the programme:

Progression Status: the percentage of YeBoneers who have successfully landed in opportunities (work/study)	AVA's % of Progression	Academic Streams Progression against YearBeyond's Average Progression
Progressed	68%	68% Average Progression in Academic Stream
Not Progressed	20%	
No response (to follow-up calls and emails)	12%	
Grand Total	100%	

WORK4PROGRESS

Work4progress has taken on a different format this year. Our partner HBUFC (Hout Bay United Football Community) opted to grow our established partnership by increasing the number of youth placed in SMMEs and NPOs in Hout Bay from 2 to 16. This group that started in October 2021 for a 12-month period, also receives their basic salaries from the Youth Employment Service. AVA provides the job readiness training modules and mentoring support and travels to engage with the group 2 x per month. This group is progressing well and only one youth dropped out in the first 6 months of the programme. Their progression statistics will be reflected in the next annual report as the programme terminates at the end of September 2022.

LIFE MATTERS

AVA started this exciting partnership with the Life Matters Foundation in 2017, and with the exception of 2018, has worked with the Life Matters Foundation (LMF) ever since. The Life Matters Foundation is an educational enrichment programme that serves 6 schools in the Capricorn, Steenberg, Westlake and Retreat communities. This programme was geared at offering a volunteer opportunity to unemployed youth from these communities while simultaneously improving numeracy and literacy levels in Grade 2 and 3 learners in the schools. AVA recruited, orientated, mentored,



and provided ongoing self-development and professional training to 17 youth who were placed with LMF.

Progression of youth beyond the programme:

Only 1 youth dropped out within the first 3 months after securing a higher paid position. The rest all completed their 12-month programme and 3 months after exiting the programme, the results are remarkable:

- 62 % - Employed
- 19% - Studying
- 19% - Unemployed

MOBILE CAREER CAFÉ

The Mobile Career Café (MCC) was born from the need to extend AVAs job readiness services to young people in small towns and communities, out of reach of AVA services. The MCC was launched in 16 June (youth day) and it was a great success. From the onset, AVA collaborated with the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve (CWBR) and we travel to small towns where job readiness workshops are offered. The MCC aims to help young people identify and access opportunities for work and study where they are; learn to compile a professional looking CV & prepare for a job interview; and also learn about nature and opportunities in the environmental education sector. This year MCC has been to the following communities, where the following number of youth attended the MCC workshops:

- Worcester: 31 youth
- Wolwekloof: 14 youth
- Caledon: 30 youth
- Swellendam: 34 youth
- Hout Bay: 14 youth

The feedback from youth and adults working with the youth, have been immensely positive.

AVA ONLINE TRAINING

AVA was approached by CEFA (Continuing Education for Africa) to design and facilitate an online training in career guidance and support. Through this process, AVA had the opportunity to run a 7-week process with a group of 9 young people from the Darling community. This training was run online, using zoom and various online media. All the youth that attended the online course reported a shift in their mind-set and newfound confidence in the work search journey.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

An AVA Alumni event was held on the 9 September 2021, and more than 40 Alumni attended a morning with various guest speakers and activities. The theme for the event was “How to flourish in times of Covid” and the youth valued the opportunity to interact face to face again. The reality is that many young people were negatively affected by Covid and lost their jobs when companies and organisations collapsed during the pandemic. ✨



TESTIMONIAL



NONTSIKELELO MOSE

“Before I joined Action Volunteers Africa, I was in a very dark place. Since starting the programme, my life has changed for the better. My communication skills improved. I now know how to conduct myself professionally in the work place. The experience has been amazing. I have made new friends and I get to engage with different people every day. I also get an opportunity to be myself without the fear of being judged. AVA has also helped me discover who I am and what I want to do in future, and the career I want to pursue”.



TESTIMONIAL



ASHWIN NAIDOO

“The year at AVA, I learned valuable skills that helped me prepare myself for the workplace. I learned to be professional, how to communicate so that I can explain myself to others and listen to solve problems more effectively. I recommend other youth do this programme because you learn so much about yourself. AVA helps youth realise their potential so that they can make a meaningful impact on their community and the economy”.



TESTIMONIAL



KAYLYN JORDAAN

“There is no monetary value that can be placed on personal growth and development. I have become more open and confident. I also made new friends and learned to trust myself more. My communication with other people has improved and my fear of speaking, in terms of being worried about what other people might think of me, has slowly disappeared. I am more open to the variety of jobs that are on the market. I now have a better understanding of what is required in the workplace as a whole. It has given me the perspective that I can be successful in whatever career path I take with the qualities or values needed to be successful. I thank AVA for giving me the opportunity to find myself again”.



ABOUT ACTION VOLUNTEERS AFRICA

Action Volunteers Africa (AVA) is a non-profit organisation which has been working in the field of youth development, since 2013. AVA's innovative programmes contribute to resolving the crisis of youth unemployment in South Africa as we envision a country in which every unemployed young person is empowered to build a sustainable future and contributing to society. We do this by harnessing volunteering and work-based learning as a tool to enable unemployed young people, to gain the life skills, work experience and confidence needed to change their future trajectories. Through these sustained work-based opportunities, enriched by a unique personal development programme and intensive mentoring, the youth gain experience and are empowered to become economically independent and socially responsible citizens. Career expo's aimed at inspiring and informing youth with and without matric are organised and practical, relevant career opportunities are shared with youth from different organisations.

AVA places youth in three contexts to gain work experience:

- Non-profit Organisations (NPOs): Youth fulfil many roles in non-profit organisations where they are able to provide extra hands with programme facilitation, admin and office tasks, etc.
- Small, Medium and Micro-Sized Enterprises (SMMEs): Youth are placed in SMMEs where they fulfil diverse tasks, based on the nature of the role they are appointed in. The aim is to enable SMMEs - through training, support, and supervision - to provide work experience to out-of-school youth who are struggling to access employment.
- Schools: The youth are placed in schools where they work as teacher assistants and after-school practitioners, mainly helping to teach literacy and numeracy at schools in the Western Cape.

AVA has impacted over 2500 young people who have participated in our programmes since inception. The progression of the youth into meaningful employment or studies towards a career post the programme, is an important component of the process. An average of 75% of the youth who completed AVAs programmes have managed to secure further opportunities for work or full time study and are firmly on the path towards sustainable careers. Due to the successes achieved, there is a growing demand from organisations and companies that request AVA to train and place youth with them. AVA is based in Cape Town and the strategic intention is to expand.

The AVA Model:





As part of AVAs strategy to Educate-4-Employment, the Mobile Career Café (MCC) was launched to reach unemployed youth in under-served areas. A lack of services outside South Africa's cities mean that rural youth are particularly vulnerable to long-term unemployment. We drive to towns, providing basic career guidance and job readiness skills (CV-building, job-hunting, career development and interview skills). We partner with local NGOs to widen impact.

Please visit www.avafrica.org.za to find out additional information about the organisation and its programmes; or e-mail info@avafrica.org.za.



SECTION 21: 2012/183456/08
PBO 930041189
NPO 117-712

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS



CONTACT US

NPO 117-712

info@avafrica.org.za

www.avafrica.org.za

AVA Board of Directors: Moira Jones (Chairperson), Mandla Sifumba, Pule Keswa, Thembisa Maxwane, Gabeba Gaidien.

AVA Staff: Janine Hansen, Charnré Taylor, Skhumbuso Masango, Tiffany Schouw, Babalwa Bobo, Siphamandla Papani, Shakiera Taliep.



YOUNG & UNEMPLOYED?

JOIN AVA!

*Gain real work experience, make a difference
and expand your opportunities.*

WHAT AVA'S VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES OFFER:

- A FULL-TIME 10 - 12 MONTH PROGRAMME
- WORK EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOLS AND SMALL BUSINESSES
- TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
- PERSONAL GROWTH
- AN ALLOWANCE

INTERESTED?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FILL IN AN APPLICATION FORM: www.avafrica.org.za
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT info@avafrica.org.za OR 021 761 3578

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING.