Quality in Exchange

If QUALITY is a HABIT and not an act, what does this mean to the exchange sector?

Obviously there is no quick answer that encapsulates the many facets of QUALITY in exchange as it is a complex and diverse landscape that is inclusive of an extremely broad role-player and actor base.

At the same time, exchange is a relatively simple concept in terms of the shared sector intent to provide an enabling, meaningful and relevant experience for participants engaging in the exchange experience.

To achieve quality, it becomes important to think about, and make habit, the following aspects related to your role in the sector:

- Creating the best exchange opportunity for maximum benefit – enabling, meaningful, relevant
- Communication and partnerships – are these optimized for maximum reach, equal, of relevance to a development agenda (youth, local, global etc)
- Planning & preparation in all aspects is a habitual collaborative exercise
- Liaison with key stakeholders is habit
- Implementation is carefully considered and structured for maximum benefit to all affected by the exchange
- Maintain an open and reflexive position, learn and share your lessons and expose best practice as habit
- Appreciate your role/expertise in the exchange landscape and be in the habit of providing appropriate oversight, support and attention to all aspects of the exchange experience whether it be in the capacity of hosting, sending, training, networking, innovating or developing new cooperations for the sector

As part of the AGYI SERVICE OFFER, a representative working group is developing a Guidelines for Good Practice and Responsible Exchange. V2 Draft will be circulated to stakeholders for comment in June 2018.

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BITES

- Thoughts on Quality
- Alumni Voice
- Network pin board
- Calendar of Special Days
- SAwN
- Alumni Workshop Report

MARCH

Partner organisations (practitioners); placement organisations; local & international government; civil society; private sector; formalised associations and networks

Participants – this includes any person who engages and is affected by the exchange activity

For all roleplayers and actors, not just the participants

The working group includes - SA expertise and experience, multiple exchange formats and includes civil society and government inputs.

Quality guidelines are not new - German partners adhering to mandatory standards, many local organisations have their own criteria and the South African voluntourism private sector commissioned Fair Trade in Tourism to develop standards criteria. The AGYI guidelines aim to provide a support tool for working towards increasingly good practice and responsible practices. Willing practitioners will voluntarily subscribe to these guidelines in an effort to improve the quality of exchanges that they engage in.

AGYI Monthly News-bite ..........

To improve communication across the sector, inform, share and highlight developments, challenges and successes in exchange.

All stakeholders are invited to submit content to us before 22nd of each month should they wish to have it included in the news-bite. Keep it brief and provide on-line links for further details. We will, at times, call on stakeholders to submit specific content for sharing, but ultimately this is a platform that can be enjoyed and utilized by all who engage in exchange.
“Life is about experience and experience is a great teacher”

Mpho Matamela

Exchange programme
SayXchange Alumni 2013

Placement: Mozambique

“I am a South African youth coming from Hammanskraal – Gauteng. I am very passionate about youth and skills development. My passion is aligned with sharing information especially in rural areas.

I became interested in exchange programmes because of the need to want to know more about the world around me. I believe that every young person should at least have the opportunity to experience life outside the norm and embark on an international adventure.

There is so much to learn outside our comfort zone and an exchange programme offers a variety of activities, experiential learnings that brings awareness to the opportunities across the world that are available to an African child.

With exchange programmes we are able to import and export skills in participating countries. In Mozambique, I learned about street trade (exchange of goods) and the importance of integration, to become one with the people. My self-development and awareness led to a more colourful confidence where I was able to independently solve problems that came my way and also have the courage to pursue my music interests with other organisations in Mozambique.

I am an advocate for Exchange programmes because they allow one to dream and to also experience the dream. I lived my dream. I found myself through the programme. Life is about experience and experience is a great teacher.”

Sawa Sawa seeks to challenge our youth into growing and honing their skills to become changemakers in their respective communities. The programme was initiated by the five member partners of AFS in Africa (AiA), namely Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Tunisia.

The Ghana programme is based on experiential learning, with the participant-learner being guided to rediscover himself/herself, and to build on his/her strengths as a learner. Each learner is guided through what is seen, heard and experienced, as the facilitators prompt the learning process. Projects will be visited, and group work encouraged and assigned. Learning can’t be more fun than this...!

More info – unathi.sophazi@afs.org
The colour dots with the numbers in the calendar of special days refer to the relevant SDGs, helping you to align any planned activities to these important goals.

Incorporating the SDGs into your exchange mind-set is one further way to improve the quality of the exchange experience.
SAwN is an effective network for the collective decision-making voice of all Southern African host/partner volunteer organisations and thus optimising the volunteer environment in Southern Africa focusing on weltwärts and potentially on other programmes.

SAwN is a network of organisations receiving and sending weltwärts volunteers in the Southern African region. It evolved out of the need for a representative Southern African voice which could be supported by the German Ministry to ensure the quality and quantity of exchange/volunteering in the weltwärts format is maintained, viewed and considered from a Southern African perspective. While SAwN’s priority is to support weltwärts PO’s, some of its members are agents who place volunteers in host organisations but do not necessarily host them.

The elected steering committee is deliberately representative of the regional weltwärts countries of operation who attended the 2015 Partner Conference and includes has included South Africa, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia. South Africa currently has the most members and is most strongly represented on the committee. SAwN plans to officially launch later in the year and all PO’s will have an opportunity to elect representatives.

The alignment of SAwN’s priorities to the AGYI is very strong and includes its focus on the quality of exchange programmes, facilitating new partnerships, regional dialogue, encouraging networking among and African and German partners and engaging governments. Going forward, SAwN recognises that it may expand to represent the sector beyond the weltwärts format.

SAwN and WESSA intend to collaborate on numerous activities though the pilot phase of the AGYI. Some initial areas under discussion include communications, enhanced mapping activities, alumni and change projects and ensuring, where appropriate, that workshops hold maximum benefit to SAwN members.

In the spirit of pan-Africanism, the three pilot countries aim to identify an exchange initiative that is inclusive of South Africa, Tanzania and Benin. Some initial ideas have been tabled for further exploration.

Sustainable, meaningful and relevant exchanges require multiple role-players and actors to collaborate for increasingly resilient youth development through exchange. As the implementing organisation we will aim for maximum cooperation with all relevant entities to achieve this.