

People First Foundation

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST!

Reg. IT: 3902/2009

NPO NR: 078-535

Annual Report – 30 August 2013



“What is important in this world is not so much where we are but in what direction we are moving!”

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Introduction:

This is the second annual report of People First Foundation (PFF) covering the period 1 March 2012 to 28 February 2013.

This report will cover the following:

1. Brief overview of the NPO context
2. Our vision and mission
3. PFF programmes
 - a. Leadership forums
 - b. Workshops
 - c. Newsletter
4. Marketing and communications
5. Governance
6. Network partners
 - a. YoungPeople@Work
7. Fundraising and finances
8. Conclusion and thanks

1. Brief overview of the NPO context

As we correctly predicted in our previous annual report, the challenges facing NPOs will not abate any time soon. They actually got worse. The deregistration of thousands of NPOs early in this year sent shockwaves to many NPOs. Already burdened by a serious lack of funding, the sector was caught off guard with this unpredictable and senseless declaration by the NPO Directorate. According to the NPO Act of 1997, de-registration due to non-compliance precludes a non-profit from raising public funds. To understand the enormity of the crisis, one must remember that during the 2011 financial year, a total of 468 registered NPOs were deregistered due to non-compliance (NPO Directorate Annual Report – April 2011). In 2012 this number increased to 23 034 NPOs that were de-registered and 35 190 declared as non-compliant with only 29 286 that remained legally compliant. To bring relief to the sector, the department provided an amnesty period of 3 months for NPOs to become compliant. It is still to be seen whether this amnesty period had the desired effect. Many NPOs who submitted the relevant documents claimed that the NPO Directorate denies having received them despite evidence to the contrary.

The funding crisis confronting NPOs has also not abated. In fact, there are signs it is getting worse. The effect on the sector has been devastating! According to research survey on Non-Profit Job Losses and Service Cuts done by Greater Good SA and GivenGain, of 654 organizations, over 80% said they have experienced significant funding cuts over the past year. 64% have had to reduce services to beneficiaries as a result and report a total of 3,053 retrenchments of permanent staff. As this survey so starkly revealed, the bleeding within the NPO sector continues. The mainstream media has only covered the tip of the iceberg of the devastation going on. The effect that this has on the poor is indescribable! For every non-profit closing down there are hundreds of poor beneficiaries who will be cut off from essential services.

On top of these external challenges, NPOs also face internal challenges such as lack of effective board development, absence of clearly designed funding and marketing strategies, proper risk management, lack of continuous staff and volunteer development and a culture of continuous monitoring and evaluation and hence effective learning. Trapped mostly in survival mode, many NPOs have started to grow inwards. In the process many have started to blame only the external environment instead of also looking at their own responsibility to confront these external factors. And this is a leadership issue! For PFF the issue of effective NPO leadership to address its current challenges will require more focus in future. Issues such as strategic planning, repositioning, organizational renewal (instead of just sustainability), staff, board and volunteer motivation and constantly building strategic partnerships will need to be emphasized more.

2. Our vision and mission

Vision: An effective, strong, sustainable and vibrant community-based sector in South Africa.

Mission: To work in collaboration with community-based organisations in South Africa to strengthen their capacity to effectively mobilise resources, deliver valuable services to their communities and contribute meaningfully towards the eradication of poverty.

Our vision and mission statements are fairly clear. The question is: to what extent have we been able to successfully execute it in the current challenging circumstances?

Our programmes:

At the launch of PFF in 2010 we decided to opt for a very simple organizational structure with the least amount of overheads to ensure that we can make the maximum impact in relation to our mission. Instead of appointing fulltime staff we became a working board of trustees doing most of the work ourselves. Although it saved us a lot of financial resources, the downside was that we had to restrict our operational area to only the Cape Peninsula due to commitments of trustees in their own jobs. We focused on 3 primary programmatic interventions namely our Leadership Forums, Capacity Building Workshops and Quarterly Newsletter.

The following is a summary of the 3 programme areas:

Leadership Forums:

Date	Topic	Venue	No. of participants
April 2012	The questions NPO leaders want to ask (with a panel of NPO leaders)	Leliebloem House	76
6 July 2012	Donor Forum (with a panel of NPO stakeholders)	Artscape Theatre	122
30 November 2012	The role NPOs in deepening democracy in SA	Artscape Theatre	42

Capacity Building Workshops:

Date	Topic	Venue	Nr of participants
6-7 June 2012	NPO Legal Compliance	Leliebloem House	62
14 November 2012	Monitoring and evaluation	Department of Labour – Bellville	30

Quarterly newsletter

3 newsletters were issued during this period focusing on a variety of topics such as the funding crisis, leadership issues, networking, trustee appointments, relevant NPO resources, etc. Our newsletter was sent to about 780 NPOs captured on our database.

Media, marketing and communications

Various challenges were encountered on this front. However, we have recently adopted a new branding and media strategy and will be implementing it as soon as possible.

Up to now our primary marketing tools remain our newsletter with its database that requires urgent updating and our block emails promoting our capacity building workshops. Trustees have done their bit in promoting PFF in the various forums where they are active. We have recently joined Cape Town TV as a registered member but must still derive the benefits of this membership which include free adverts.

Governance:

During this reporting period we held 3 trustee meetings including two planning sessions at the start of 2011. An average of 4 trustees attended the meetings.

The following trustees were active during this period:

Trustee	Position	Terms of office
Frank Julie	Chairperson	2010-2013
Vuyiseka January	Vice-chairperson	2012 – 2013
Peter Hendricks	Treasurer	2011 – 2012 (resigned)
Ricardo Wyngaard	Secretary	2010 – 2013
James Senokwanyane	Member	2011 – 2013
Ronell Swartbooi	Member	2010 – 2013
Titania Fernandez	Member	2011 – 2012 (resigned)

We are currently in the process of recruiting new trustees since the terms of office of two trustees will come to an end very soon. Another trustee has given notice that he will resign but be available in a supportive capacity. Informal trustee evaluations were conducted to ensure that we live up to the expectations of our trusteeship. We also decided to start future trustee meetings with a general check-in to ensure that we do not overburden trustees with too many responsibilities without understanding what is happening in their personal and work

lives that may impact on their performance in PFF. Our audit and narrative report were submitted to the NPO Directorate as per the provisions of the NPO Act.

Our network partners

We have developed and strengthened strategic partnerships with the following NPOs and institutions:

Organisation	Value added	Value shared
Artscape Theatre, Cape Town	Free access to space for our Leadership Forums	Exposing NPO leaders to a public institution previously inaccessible
Department of Labour – Bellville	Free access to training space	Same as above including allowing space for DOL staff to inform NPO leaders about labour legal compliance
YoungPeople@Work	Volunteers providing free admin support at events	Volunteers allowed access to workshops and leadership forums expanding their networks in the process
Tina Thiar and Associates	Provided access to her database in promoting PFF events	PFF Trustees acted as speakers at their events and shared strategic information
Various NPOs	Participants attending our leadership forums and workshops at a small fee enhancing our income generation potential	Access to our leadership forums and workshops sharing valuable information to enhance NPO sustainability and renewal

YoungPeople@Work

During 2012 the organization’s chairperson, with the support of PFF, took the initiative to launch a youth development organization, YoungPeople@Work, focusing on assisting unemployed youth to access sustainable livelihoods. YP@W was formally launched on 28 November 2012 at Bishop Lavis library where most of its activities took place. It has recently acquired free training and office space at Adonia Life in Bishop Lavis.

Its programmes include a Computer and Life skills Academy, Rural Outreach, Community Information Sessions, Online Job Search Training based at community libraries, Youth Empowerment Workshops also based at various community libraries, an SMS Alert service informing unemployed youth of potential employment and training opportunities as well as a CV bank where CV’s of participants are stored for potential employers. The organisation has grown with leaps and bounds over the past year and developed a broad network of support organisations and professionals.

Small scale funding has been received from many individuals and a donor, SPZA, from Holland. The HCI Foundation also recently provided some funding for its Youth Empowerment Weeks. The organisation is largely sustained through the volunteer labour of its volunteer base which saved it more than R1 million in salaries since March 2012.

Funding and finances

Due to the nature of our operations, the need for large scale funding has been reduced with most of our income derived from fees paid at our capacity building workshops and leadership forums. In this context we have been doing very well due to the huge interest and the relevancy of our topics. With many overheads eliminated our expenses were limited mainly to catering and admin costs. Any expansion of our work outside of Cape Town will however compel us to raise funds. Our current audit report is in the process of being completed.

Conclusion

I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the trustees and our strategic partners who played a constructive part in the execution of our mandate to support the NPO sector especially those organisations on the margins. For many PFF has been a god-send as they were able to access valuable information and other resources to sustain their organizations. In the process they were also able to expand their networks.

The organisation is currently faced with two key challenges namely to stabilise its governance and to implement its branding and marketing strategy. When this has been overcome it will enter a new period of organisational growth.

Thanks

Frank Julie
Chairperson

20 August 2013