



VOLMOED YOUTH

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME

"I appeal to the youth and all those on the ground;
start talking to each other across divisions of race and
political organisations. " — Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

MISSION

Volmoed Youth Leadership Training Program (VYLTP) gathers young adult South African and international leaders to form a safe space of learning, through courageous conversations, that fosters strategic, wise leadership and empowers them to facilitate transformative justice in our countries and our planet.

"Leadership is caught, not taught. "
— Desmond Tutu



COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course offers engagement with the themes below through formative conversations and creative reflection, as well as practical learning exercises:

Building the Beloved Community

Wholeness & Healing

Race, Gender & Reconciliation

Care of Creation & Climate Justice

Justice & Peace Making

VYLTP officially launched on June 16, 2016 on the 40th commemoration of the 16 June Soweto uprising.





ORIGINS

In 2015, at the 30th anniversary of the 1985 Kairos document, it was resolved that new young leaders had to be nurtured to take forward the tradition of prophetic theology. Prof. John de Gruchy and Rev. Edwin Arrison, who live in Hermanus, resolved to launch a youth leaders program at Volmoed Retreat Centre, Hermanus, in 2016, as a way to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 1976 youth uprising in Soweto. The late Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, the patron of Volmoed, gave this new program his full support and blessing.

NEW YOUNG LEADERS DEVELOPED

Forty years after the events of June 1976, a new generation of young leaders had arisen: in this new time it required new leadership. The first cohort of 14 young people started a ten-week residential program in late May 2016. Attendees shared housing space and learned principles of conflict resolution, building community in very practical ways over the ten-week program. This program took place annually, late May through July, at Volmoed Retreat Centre.

The course focused on the five themes above. Local, national and international facilitators offered interactive learning experiences and created safe spaces for courageous conversations. Creative expression and learning took place through art sessions with the resident artist at Volmoed. Field trips explored the beauty and history of Cape Town and the local region of Hermanus, to understand the social and political contexts, and the context of climate change and the environment.



Volunteer tasks helped to sustain the retreat center and build organizational and leadership skills in the attendees. Times for personal reflection and mindfulness were built into the schedule twice daily, with extra time at weekends for reflection, walking etc. Weekly communal reflection took place as a group, with an experienced facilitator, resulting in learning conflict resolution skills and tools for deepened self-understanding as leaders.



TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

This was an intense program. Transformative learning and growth took place over the many weeks of living and learning together. This led to the development and transformation of young leaders who have now gone and made a difference in their communities and beyond.

NEW PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS DURING and POST COVID-19

In April 2020, due to the COVID19 pandemic, we suspended in person training of young leaders and moved online. While trying to keep this important work going, we conducted **online reflections** with many alumnae from May to June 2020. This drew a wider group of dynamic young leaders to participate in the **design of the online courses**.

The **TAIZE YOUTH DAY PROGRAM** began in November 2020. This one day event brought thirty to fifty young people from the Western Cape together, for a multicultural, multilingual day of reflection, song and silence, walks in nature in the beautiful space of Volmoed Retreat Center, and workshops focused on Climate and Environment, Gender Based Violence (GBV), Africa, trainings in social media and public speaking, and more. This now takes place three times a year.



In 2021 the **BELOVED COMMUNITY WORKSHOP** was offered online, which meant it reached more people. In 2022 it became in person once again, and now continues annually. It is joyful and inspiring to see young people transformed through confidence building, information sessions and creative exercises, all in the space of a week.

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH DRUMMING

Drumming can empower young people and create community. Drumming can help to bring about healing and reconciliation. Drumming can provide an income to help with the issue of youth unemployment. This led VYLTP to roll out a new drumming project at Volmoed. This project involves learning to:

- play an African drum
- entertain others through drumming
- make and decorate drums
- lead drumming circles at schools, hospitals, corporate events, team building functions, etc.
- make and sell drums in order to create an income



Bevil Spence from Drumba (drum360.net), a drummer, drum maker and drum circle facilitator for more than 20 years, partners with us to make this project an exciting reality.

The first phase began in September to December 2022, involved drum training for selected young people from Zwelihle and Mount Pleasant. The group performed in one of the prime tourist areas of Hermanus during December and January.

The training for making drums began in May 2023. The drummers with interest, skills and commitment, are being taught to make the drums and how to use drumming as a therapeutic tool and for entertainment.



This facilitation-training is primarily for unemployed young people who have been part of VYLTP programs, so that they can earn a small income while they are training in the VYLTP leadership programs. VYLTP remains a youth leadership program with a specific vision and mission. The drumming program is an excellent tool to achieve this vision and mission.



LOCAL FOCUS WITH GLOBAL CONNECTIONS



During the first few years, VYLTP was national and international. The focus has now shifted to local programs that train local young leaders. Our programs have included activities for local young people together with students from the USA and Europe, sometimes hosted by



the local young leaders. Young people from different continents and cultures, languages and races, interact and engage in discussions. This makes VYLTP a local program with global connections.

NEW THURSDAY PROGRAM FOR LEADERSHIP LEARNING

VYLTP added this new weekly program in March 2023. The young leaders come to Volmoed on Thursdays, engage in learning programs with local and visiting speakers, enjoy the nature and beauty of Volmoed and get to know each other across racial and cultural, language differences.



This now takes the place of the former ten week residential program. It includes a skills training program (public speaking, video and social media), together with a justice and peace program focused on human rights, elections, and South African history, local challenges. The aim remains to focus on the five themes above and teach leadership skills and tools needed for young leaders in society, faith groups and churches. This is a very exciting development.