



STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ETHICS PROGRAMME SUMMARY

There is an African proverb that says the future belongs to the people who plan for it today. Strategic planning is all about bringing the future into the present, but what is it exactly? Strategic planning is a formal process that focuses on fundamental choices about an organisation's vision, mission, values, services, resources, beneficiaries and place in community. A forward-thinking strategic plan can be compared to a roadmap that takes an organisation from where they are to where they would like to be. It outlines well-planned organisational goals and action points to guide the leadership towards future success.

The external environment in which the civil society sector operates continues to be complex in nature with challenges, threats and opportunities that keep emerging for nonprofit organisations. In order for non-profit organisations to respond timely and ethically to this changing context and to continue to thrive, they need to be able to implement effective strategic plans in line with their vision, mission and value statements. This can be done through innovative strategic planning and positive collaboration with stakeholders, which will enable them to tackle challenges effectively, while accessing new opportunities for growth.

In collaboration with Valcare, Ezrah Community Training and Development launched the strategic planning programme for nonprofit organisations in 2018. Each year about 7 identified nonprofit organisations attend at least seven interactive, experiential workshops focusing on the following four key areas of strategic planning through 9 lessons:

1. Service delivery and collaboration
2. Leadership (Team management and governance)
3. Resource management
4. Administration

The workshops are supported by individual mentoring sessions to assist organisations to contextualize the training content for their own nonprofit organisations. In each lesson participants get the opportunity to set strategic goals and action points, which are eventually captured into individualised strategic plans to guide participating organisations towards greater sustainability.

In 2020 during the COVID-19 crisis, Ezrah responded to the challenge by translating the content of the in-person workshops to an online programme. This programme will now run parallel with our in-person training to ensure that the delegates of our programme get the best support possible.

Another unique feature of this programme is the strong ethical foundation that is embedded into every lesson in line with Ezrah's vision statement of promoting ethical service delivery and quality education where children matter. We are also very excited about our new ethics coordinated effort in collaboration with Valcare that was

launched in 2021 to further strengthen the ethical foundations of this very successful programme.

The progress and success of the programme is monitored on a continuous basis to inform further improvements as we want to make sure that we fulfill our mission statement of empowering the next generation as leaders of change as effectively as possible. We are therefore very grateful that this programme was shortlisted as 1 of 5 in the MTN Awards for Social Change (in the small non-profit category) that rewards good monitoring and evaluation practices.

Ultimately, it is the change in our beneficiaries that matters most. Here is just some of the feedback received from delegates who attended the programme over the last few year:

- "From here on we will raise the standard for establishing policies and making it transparent."
- " We have started well. We have a clear future plan, we have enthusiasm and hope, we are getting to a place where we can be a responsible, well-managed organisation."
- "The burden became light as we are much more focussed."
- "The tools (templates and assignments) really helped us to collate a lot of information in a way that creates focus and support thoughtful action."
- "I have the understanding now to collate all the aspects of a strategic plan in order to make it a reality."
- "Very grateful for the professional level of assistance and framework provided. Feeling empowered."
- "Everyone must implement ethics and it must become the yardstick in every decision."
- "I never thought that I would be able to lead a strategic planning process for an organisation! Now I do it confidently!"

We believe that this programme exemplifies our motto "*Grow Today. Lead Tomorrow*" and will lead to many more community stories of change.