

Programme Report: March 2026

Introduction

YOSA programmes create a supportive, inclusive, and academically focused environment where every learner feels capable and motivated to succeed. We grow the young people's commitment to learning, positive values, positive identity and social competencies. We provide opportunities for youth participation in leadership and drive parental involvement in the education of their children. Our march report outlines some of our success stories, activities with learners and our attention to staff mental health.

YOSA success stories

So many young people are mentored by YOSA to study and transform their lives. Below are our programme alumni. The first two from the left-hand side, Vukosi and Anele, were mentored from high school through universities by YOSA. The third graduate, Rethabile (extreme right), was a university student on field placement at YOSA last year. She graduated and immediately commenced volunteering at YOSA while proceeding to do her masters' degree. Anele has taken a full-time appointment at YOSA, while Vukosi is employed as a software engineer and regularly comes through to mentor our young people in Maths and Science subjects. All these young people are effectively giving back to YOSA through supporting learners.



YOSA alumni who graduated recently from universities

Antibullying activities

Through our Positive Youth Development approach, we have taken a stance to eliminate bullying in all our supported schools. Bullying is driven by a complex interplay of psychological, and environmental factors. We note that in most of our local schools the dominant element is learners' exposure to violence in the home and community. Through our therapeutic interventions we note that the exacerbating factors include learners' social and academic incompetence. A combination of our learning and psychosocial support programmes has proved to contribute significantly to a positive school climate. We have realized that learners who become socially and academically competent are very unlikely to turn into bullies. Rather they grow confidence and contribute to a caring school environment. Learners who are therefore susceptible to perpetrate bullying are

identified for psychosocial and learning support beforehand. This activity is operational in all our supported schools.



Our staff running antibullying activities in school

Weekends and holiday programmes

Our weekends and holiday programmes are popular for contributing to learners' school connectedness. The learners enjoy coming to schools and partake in our programmes. Parents approach our staff to secure places for their children on YOSA programmes. Some programme participants who later transfer and attend schools in other communities outside Soweto still return to our weekend and holiday programmes. We have established that once a YOSA: one will always be one.



Learners, including returnees and YOSA programme leadership

Staff mental health

The nature of our work demands that we consider staff mental health monthly. We have a staff wellness activity every month. In March we had an online wellness session that was facilitated by Trevor, our friend who is based in Australia. Trevor is a religious minister by profession. He is aware of the many challenges we face in our daily work hence a wellness discussion with him left us in very empowered state. The session provided practical insights into supporting learners facing psychosocial challenges without neglecting our wellbeing.

Another online meeting was also held with Victoria Van Oerle. She is a psychology student at the University of Pretoria. Victoria helped us to explore how psychological services can be integrated into YOSA's model, thereby strengthening the organisation's capacity to respond to complex learner needs. This engagement represented a significant step towards broadening the professional support available to both staff and the learners we serve.



Learning support

Our learning support programme is popular for taking learners on individual discovery journeys. Where necessary, learners are given individualised support. Neo (pseudonym) is a grade 4 learner who used to sleep in class because she was bored and could not follow the lessons. She had missed most of the relevant concepts and found it difficult to catch up on her own. The teacher was too busy with a class of 45 learners and could not pay individual attention to Neo. The teacher had no patience and always berated her for unfinished work. Neo was enrolled on our learning support programme and was assisted to catch up by YOSA learning support staff and her motivation shot through the roof. Learner motivation is a function of comprehension. The responses we are getting from learners previously labelled as incompetent are enormous.



Learners attending the learning support programme

Integration of digital learning tools

The integration of digital learning tools in our learning support programme helps us to consider the needs of all the learners in our programme. Some learners concentrate better if the lessons are delivered through digital learning tools. Our learners are enjoying alternative models of teaching and learning as they explore all their subject materials on digital platforms. Our computer laboratories have effectively turned into learning centres mentoring learners in curriculum content and going beyond sheer mastery of computer skills. Internet connection has proved to be a game changer in our learning support programme. We wish to expand our digital labs to all the schools supported by YOSA.



Primary School Scouts Group

One of our supported schools, Sekwati Primary School, has started a vibrant scouts' group. This is our first primary school group showing the effectiveness of our intervention in schools. Parents are very much in support of our scouts' programme. The scouts' groups are contributing significantly to the positive school climate. Learners are trained in leadership, character development, teamwork and resilience bridging the gap between formal curriculum teaching and the essential life skills.



We note that scouts complement formal education through teaching practical skills, self-sufficiency, and physical wellbeing. We are however, constrained by financial resource to effectively carry out our outdoor activities. We are also looking for partnerships that can help us with funding for our uniforms and equipment.



Newly formed Sekwati Primary School Scouts' Group

Sekwati Primary School Greening

Through partnership with YOSA, Sekwati Primary School is gradually turning green. The school has always had rainwater harvesting project running. YOSA enhanced the school's water sources by drilling a borehole. The borehole has recently been connected to supply the whole school ensuring that the school functions even when municipal water is turned off. The borehole water is sustainable and reduces water bills for the school especially that YOSA and the school have expanded their vegetable gardens to feed school children and the local communities. YOSA has also collaborated with GoSolar to install solar energy in Sekwati Primary and other five YOSA supported schools. Thus, the school now uses solar energy for heating and lighting. The school's water and lights bills have significantly been reduced helping the school to focus on enriching the teaching and learning activities.



Sekwati Primary School in celebrating steps towards turning into a green school



YOSA Wishlist

Any support to repaint our structure will go a long way in meeting our programming needs. The updated costs for the repairs are R4,500. The garden structure that was damaged by hailstorms has since been restored. We still need to attend to plumbing to ease the watering and enable it to provide more vegetables. Any support to this project will contribute to YOSA food self-sufficiency. The updated cost for the plumbing is R3,600.



Building still needs restorative painting and garden shed now well restored

Any second-hand gadgets (phones and laptops) will also be greatly appreciated to help set up the young people into tertiary institutions. We can also use the gadgets to help learners with remote mentorship.

We support child headed families with food parcels. Fifteen of these families rely entirely on YOSA support. With additional support from our nutritional garden, we provide groceries of household basics worth R1500 each to last them two months. Any support or contribution towards provisions for our child headed families will be greatly appreciated.

Acknowledgements

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Conclusion

The month of March was very dynamic. We have witnessed the learners mentored by YOSA going through the universities. The mental health support from our partners was truly valuable for our staff who are working with challenging cases every time. Our learning support programme is yielding results. The value of our digital laboratories for learning is ever growing. We are grateful to our business and individual partners for their sacrificial support. We have made decisions to rescue these young people, but our success depends on financial and moral support. With support from our partners, we will forever strive to make a difference.

