

Programme Report: March 2025



Introduction

Our school communities have been hives of activities driven by our social workers and social work interns. Our implementation themes have been learning support, behavioral support, psychosocial support, digital skills training, leadership development, and parental engagement. Learner leadership development has been the major highlight of the month bringing the most desired organic transformation in school communities.

1. Learner leadership development

In March we gathered 57 learners from 5 different schools to participate in an intensive leader development course. This is a training and mentorship course that prepares learners for a ripple effect of positive changes in schools. The learners concerned play vital roles in promoting discipline, peer support, and developing a positive school culture. The young leaders are being groomed to become a pool of emotional intelligence, resilience, advocacy and dispute resolutions. Thus, industry, discipline and purpose-driven life dominates school interactions and critical thinking is becoming fashionable in the school communities we serve.



Learner leadership development conducted by YOSA social workers

2. Digital Learning Centres

Digital innovation has been embraced by learners and teachers. That has also transformed the learning and teaching environment. Teachers and learners frequently refer to web-based learning platforms and AI tools. Teaching and learning seems much easier and very interesting to learners. We are contemplating running digital skills development classes for parents in one of our high schools. The parents are also showing significant interests. The computer labs are transforming life in school communities. The primary school is making use of IXL, an application that offers interactive computer-based exercises aimed at improving learners' problem-solving, numeracy and comprehension skills. Learners are excited enough to spend long hours in the lab. The lab has become a learning centre.



The computer laboratories have turned into effective learning centres

3. Psychosocial Support

Class-based interventions provide the basis for our psychosocial support. We intensified these interventions throughout the month of March in all our 10 schools. YOSA social workers and student social workers were deployed in all grades to introduce our support programmes and activities. Through class-based interventions we identify learners requiring specific support such as those with social challenges, substance use, behavioral/bullying inclinations and those requiring moral support. We have also been able to determine appropriate activities for school holidays through interaction with learners in class-based activities.

Weekly support and therapeutic group sessions were held by YOSA social workers across all schools during the month of March. These counselling groups are centered around a range of topics such as health and wellness, high school preparation for grade 7 and 8 learners and behavior modification for learners who have exhibited behavioral concerns. A total of 156 high school learners, ranging from grades 8 to 11, were regular attendees of these group therapy sessions.





Creativity groups are formed to help learners cooperate and form helping relationships

4. Learning Support

In March we celebrated that 11 learners who previously could not read and write were restored to their respective grade levels through our learning support programme. The learners are showing effective competency and confidence since enrolled into our learning support programme in January. Our one-on-one sessions are proving to be effective remediation methods with lasting outputs.

In one of the high schools that we support our social worker collaborated with the Trevor Noah Foundation to offer learning support activities to 20 at-risk learners ranging from grades 8 to 12. The programme was intensified during the school holidays in March and the results are beginning to show.



YOSA learning support programme during afterschool time

Book Club

Most of the schools we support do not have functional libraries. Learners depend on YOSA library. Our purpose-structured library has fostered a sense of community among the learners. It has also developed a culture of reading for interest. The library is also nurturing further activities such as spelling bee and essay writing because of a growing culture of studying.

Spelling Bee Clubs

All the schools we support have Spelling Bee clubs. We are planning to hold contests among these schools in June. The schools are currently running internal competitions to choose their best contestants. These contests are developing confidence and reading interests in learners. Schools are reporting improvements in reading and writing skills. We are also nurturing a meritocratic school culture where learners who perform well academically are acknowledged, rewarded and celebrated. Currently 300 learners across our 10 schools are participating in Spelling Bee clubs.



5. Parental Engagement

Parental engagement meetings were conducted especially for grade 8 and 12 parents. A total of 245 parents were reached through these meetings. These engagement meetings helped to educate the parents on the importance of parental involvement in their children's education, as well as involving the parents in addressing issues such as bullying, substance use and class bunking within the schools.



YOSA programming build parental involvement in education

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Conclusion

Our partnership with the Department of Education and schools is significant in providing essential psychosocial support and the development of digital skills to learners and educators. Parents are also engaged in the education of their children through this partnership. Vulnerable earners feel supported. We are truly grateful to our supporters for generously providing valuable resources. Without their financial and material support our work would be impossible.

