

Programme Report: April 2025



Introduction

A major development for YOSA is the scaling up of our three computer laboratories into extensive digital learning centers. The labs are going beyond offering computer training skills to learners to become community learning support hubs. The month of April was loaded with programmes despite the many public holidays. Our programming was enhanced by well-structured school holidays' initiatives that provided educational enrichment and recreational activities for learners during the school break. The holiday programme successfully engaged learners in meaningful learning support experiences while promoting personal growth, creativity, and teamwork.

Science and Digital Learning Centers

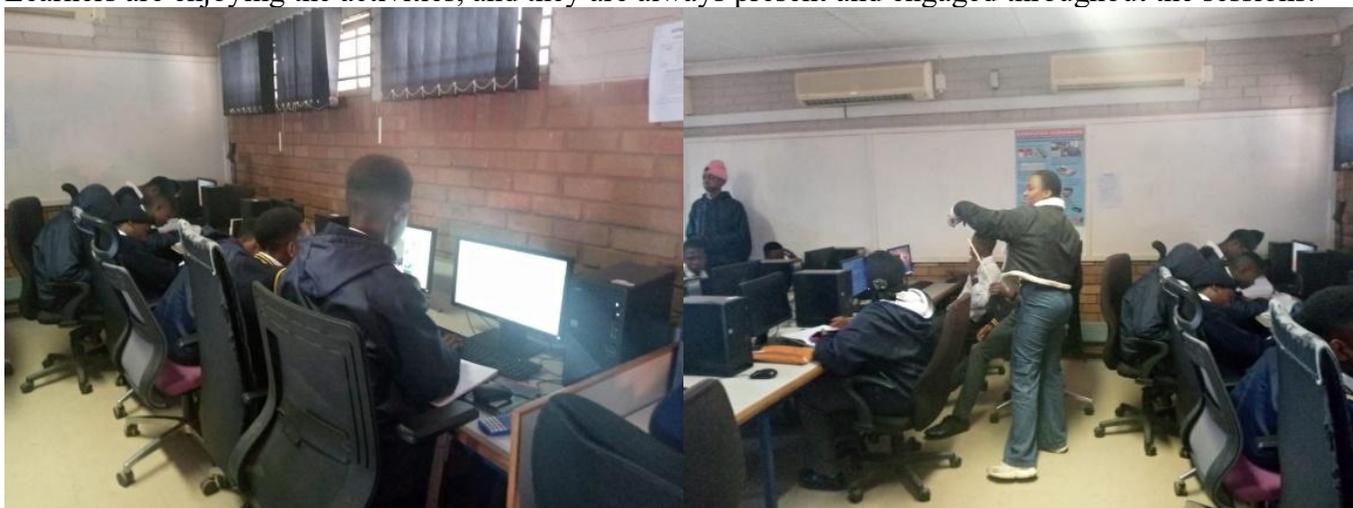
The mainstreaming of Mathematics and Science education in digital learning centers is bearing fruit with 28 learners in a YOSA supported primary school qualifying to enter the District Science Fair Competition. After extensive digital research the learners exhibited various Engineering and Computer Science projects at the District Expo that was predominantly attended by up market fee paying schools. Five of our learners performed exceptionally well and qualified to progress to the Gauteng South Regional Expo. Our school, Sekwati Primary School, had the third largest number of learners from one school progressing to the next level of the competition. With the support of our social workers and lab assistants, the learners researched through the website and were able to compete in this prestigious fair. The computer labs are taking these underserved schools to the next level. Our school communities are appreciative of our services.



Learners researching and working on their project displays

Digital innovation is the buzz phrase in the schools we support. Learners are using YOSA computer labs to access the internet, conduct research for their school assignments, watch educational videos, as well as apply for tertiary education and funding. Our social workers are also assisting learners with online bookings for identity registrations, and applications to universities.

Teachers are using computer laboratories to conduct classes to help learners improve their mathematics problem-solving skills through interactive computer-based exercises. Enhancing numeracy and comprehension skills using technological tools is driving independent learning across all grades of learners. One of our schools is subscribing to IXL application that is used to assist learners with Mathematics and English skills. Learners are enjoying the activities, and they are always present and engaged throughout the sessions.



High school learners conducting their studies with the help of YOSA Lab Assistant

Learner Leadership Development

YOSA leadership development programme presents a decisive break from the prevailing dysfunctional routines in schools. The training and mentorship of learner leadership brings coalescence of teachers and learners aimed at finding solutions to problems facing the school communities. Teachers and learner leaders commit and implement forthwith activities to achieve the desired changes.

Schools are assisted to build systems that help learners with self-awareness and emotional intelligence, communication and interpersonal skills, teamwork and collaboration, decision-making and problem-solving, ethical reasoning and responsibility, and initiative and goal setting. The supported schools are conducting learner leadership exchanges across schools. Leadership is becoming exciting and more purposeful for learners. The schools are cleaner, quieter, and more peaceful. Learners are participating in cleaning the school. Littering is very minimal. Substance use, violence and teenage pregnancies are the fast-disappearing



challenges in our supported school communities. Learners are becoming more focused.



Learner leadership for two of our supported schools

Parental Engagement

Due to repeated parental engagement meetings our parents are beginning to understand and be involved in their children's education, including career guidance and subject choices for learners. The outcome of our engagements with parents is to improve their relationships with their children, as well as to actively involve them in the education of their children. Social workers conduct home visits, when necessary, to engage the parents of the youth we serve.

The grandparents' support group meets on Thursdays at YOSA Centre for their income generating projects. They are supported to conduct their sewing, knitting and baking activities and selling the proceeds to supplement their incomes. The grannies survive on social grants while housing tens of school-going grandchildren.



Grannies support group meeting at YOSA Centre

Psychosocial Support

In addition to one-on-one counselling sessions held by YOSA social workers in their respective schools during the month of April, psychosocial support activities included spelling bee competitions, debate clubs and public speaking clubs. These were implemented weekly by YOSA social workers. The expected outcomes of these weekly activities are to create academically competent learners who are confident critical thinkers focused on their education.

A total of 17 learners in 4 schools were referred to our social workers for expressing suicide ideation in April 2025. The dominant reasons were neglect due to broken family bonds and poverty. The declining economic



conditions are rendering people jobless, leading to family break ups and rendering children vulnerable.

Holiday Programme

We successfully engaged learners and provided them with meaningful experiences during the April 2025 school holiday. It was a brief holiday, but our staff put together a very engaging programme, fostering academic support, and promoting personal growth, creativity, and teamwork. The weather conditions were prohibitive, but the holiday programme was attended by 75 learners from our surrounding schools.

Our programme emphasized learner character development through inspiring personal-leadership, academic competence, and confidence building, as well as reflecting on the first term of their new grades. This holiday program successfully covered the learning support, behavioral support and psychosocial support aspects of the YOSA strategy. The children flock to the YOSA programme to evade gangsterism and negative street culture in the local communities. The YOSA programme promotes a positive and inclusive school culture. Learners are helped to develop empathy, understanding, and build positive relationships.



Learners were involved in visual and creative arts



Learners enjoying the holiday programme

Learning Support

Activities such as one-on-one tutoring and book clubs as well as spelling-bee clubs are implemented weekly by YOSA social workers and peer-mentors. These activities provide more individualized interventions to learners who need extra support. The outcomes are impressive. The learners' academic performance and competence in Mathematics, English and Science Subjects is phenomenal. In the month of April, the learning support programme reached a total of 181 learners.

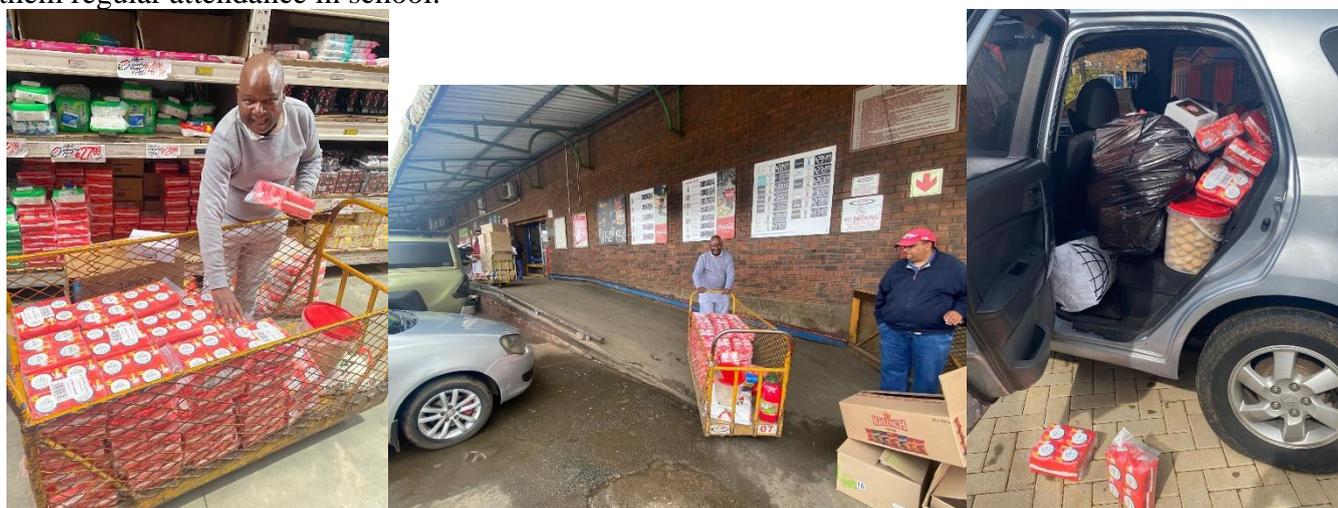




YOSA staff taking learners through learning support activities

Acknowledgements

YOSA is eternally grateful for the support from **FNZ**, a global financial services and fintech company supporting us from their Africa headquarters in Sandton. The support is very important for the implementation of YOSA programmes. We are also exceedingly grateful for the sustained monthly debit order contributions made by **Jennifer Van Oerle**. This is significant to support our learning support programme. We also received donations in kind from **Brolin, Karen and Trevor, Nicole, Rachel, Sarah** and a generous supply of programme uniforms from **Barker College** in Australia. We are truly grateful to Qantas Airline crew who bring lots of donations-in kind to support our work. The growing number of participants on our programmes is well supplied. The material and financial support from these friends were significant in driving our implementation in April. We are grateful to Karen and Trevor for buying dignity packs for our girls to enable them regular attendance in school.



Astonishment supported by Karen Glass to buy dignity packs for the girls

Conclusion

Our digital innovation project is a game changer. The school communities are seeing the light. Educators, learners and parents are all using the computer labs. Schools have turned into community resource centers with Maths and Science taking center stage in children’s education. Our after-school programmes are breeding a new culture of social cohesion around education. Learners that are participating in YOSA programmes are distinct by their conduct as they strive to model purpose-driven lives. YOSA is now a preferred placement agency for social work students from three universities. This makes us one of the largest internship sites in the country with 16 social work students placed with us this year from Wits, SACAP and UP universities. We are truly grateful to our supporters for availing resources for our programming.

