

Programme Report: April 2026

Introduction

The month of April contained dynamic programmes. We took YOSA to the University of Witwatersrand and mounted an exhibition of our services for students and staff. We also took a group of learners to Mintek in Randburg to attend a Technology Day hosted by Howden Pty Ltd. Our learner leaders in Morris Isaacson High School hosted learners from Eldomaine High School who came for an exchange visit. YOSA also hosted Wits University students who came in very large numbers to volunteer in our programme. Our staff and learners had a very busy month showcasing our interventions. We later had a whole day of staff retreat, a hiking event for team building and recharge. We concluded our month with a parental engagement activity.

WITS NGO Fair

On 9 April 2026, YOSA participated in the University of the Witwatersrand NGO Fair, an event that provided an invaluable platform to introduce the organisation to the university students and pave opportunities for voluntary work. YOSA staff engaged with university students, sharing the organisation's mission, programmes, and the meaningful impact it has on the lives of young people in Soweto. The responses from students were overwhelmingly positive, with a significant number expressing interest in and committing to volunteering as mentors within the YOSA programme. The 25 volunteer students recruited through this engagement have been very useful addition to our mentorship team. They brought fresh energy, skills, and academic experience to the benefit of learners in our five high schools. These volunteers were additional to our current 13 social work interns from SACAP, UNISA and WITS. YOSA is a work readiness hub!



YOSA exhibition at Wits University



Wits University students volunteering at YOSA

Howden Technology Day

We took ten learners on YOSA programme to Mintek to attend the annual Technology Day hosted by Howden Pty Ltd. The learners were exposed to high-level presentations delivered by expert engineers across various fields, an experience that served as both a powerful source of motivation and a practical eye-opener. By receiving information and inspiration directly from industry professionals, learners were encouraged to think critically about problem-solving in an increasingly technology-driven world. The event inspired innovative thinking among our learners. They were strengthened to take seriously their maths and science studies.



Learners sitting in the auditorium during presentations and interacting with AI

Evidence of ripple impact

A lot of our learners come to school without adequate uniforms. Our Learner Representative Councils in our supported schools have taken initiatives to ask for donations of uniforms to help the less fortunate learners. The Matric Classes of 2025 in our schools and the surrounding well-to-do schools were urged to donate their used uniforms. This drive provided uniforms including shoes to many needy learners. This was a drive by learners for learners. YOSA programme participants are actively contributing to their school communities.

News of YOSA's effective cultural transformation through learner leadership is spreading fast in Soweto schools. YOSA had the privilege of hosting learners from Eldomaine High School as part of a learner leadership exchange. The learner leaders visited Morris Isaacson High School where YOSA programme is entrenched. They came to learn more about the Culture Keepers group initiative and the activities run by learners to improve the teaching and learning environment. The session was highly interactive and productive, with detailed discussions on YOSA's work, challenges encountered in different school contexts, and opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of ideas. A total of 25 visiting learners accompanied by their teacher responsible for learner leadership, and a District official, were hosted for a day, making the session mutually beneficial.

The Learner Leadership Council President at Morris Isaacson High School, Sibusiso Mate, who is the former leader of the Culture Keepers group, was elected as the Treasurer for the District Learner Leadership Council. Sibusiso is in grade 11. He has been on YOSA programme since grade 8. He has delegated the leadership of the Culture Keepers group, but he still supports those in leadership to grow it. Mentored by YOSA staff, the Culture Keepers is a learner run initiative that promotes school connectedness by running activities such as Chess Club, Reading Club, Spelling Bee, Public Speaking, Debate and Scouts. These initiatives promote learner participation in developmental activities that occupy their time leaving no space for substance use and other learning barriers. The activities promote learner discipline and mutual respect.





Sibusiso Mate, RCL President and Vice, Ndimiso Makhubo with members of the Culture Keepers group

Book Donations

Our library was boosted with books from Debbie, Donna and the Sango family. We received 160 donated books, all suitable for Foundation and Senior phase learners. This donation addressed a critical gap in the YOSA library, which had previously been under-resourced for foundation phase. The arrival of these books has meaningfully expanded the learning materials available to support reading and literacy development among the young learners in YOSA's programme and is greatly appreciated by both staff and learners alike.

Learning support

Effective psychosocial support makes learning manageable. Classes are easy to control even if they are very big. Learners are focused on achievement. Our curriculum coaches are finding work very easy as they work with learners who are eager to learn and who exercise restraint. The school environment is focused. As few as 30 learners write Pure Maths and science subjects at matric level, out of about 200 learners in the schools we support. We are currently supporting grade 8 and 9 learners in these subjects to increase their competence and confidence. We aim to significantly increase the number of learners writing Maths and science subjects in the next three years as we are both shifting learners' mindsets and improving their skills. Our programme needs more curriculum mentors to run smoothly. We have so many university student volunteers who need only transport money to get to our sites. We pray for additional support in this programme area.



Extra Maths and Science classes in YOSA supported schools

Earth Day

On 22 April, we celebrated Earth Day through various educational and practical activities. YOSA had various activities in different schools. We are mentoring learners in all our schools to take responsibilities for programming. In Morris Isaacson High School where YOSA programme has fully developed, the Earth Day



activities were led by learners. The Culture Keepers' group introduced practical programmes that included recycling initiatives, anti-littering campaigns, and informative presentations to learners about the significance of Earth Day. Learners were taught the importance of maintaining a clean environment and taking responsibility for their environment. Our staff and educators were in support of the 105 Culture Keepers' group that was actively involved in both presenting and taking part in the day's activities.



Culture Keepers' Executive with YOSA's Nthabiseng on Earth Day

Parental engagement

YOSA team has a routine of meeting up with school governing bodies and address teaching and learning issues. The School Governing Body (SGB) at Sekwati Primary School met with our staff in April. The meeting provided an important platform for engagement between YOSA and the school's governance structures, with discussions focused on learner support activities and parental engagement in the school community. The engagement reinforced the collaborative relationship between YOSA and Sekwati Primary School and enhanced alignment on addressing the needs of learners. Such partnerships with school governance bodies are integral to ensuring that YOSA's programming is responsive to local needs, contextually appropriate, and deeply embedded within the school environment. A parents' meeting was also held at Morris Isaacson High School, where we presented our intervention programs, specifically focusing on the introduction of Science and Mathematics classes. We engaged with parents on the importance of these subjects and discussed the concern of declining learner participation. The principal was also involved in encouraging parental support to our learning support initiatives.



YOSA Parental engagement meeting at Morris Isaacson High School



Staff mental health Day

In April we had an online session with Victoria van Oerle. The session was mainly on awareness of and managing burnout. Staff were given practical tools to understand burnout and its various presentations and ways of preventing it. We all identified with the discussion because of our multifaceted work. We all realized the need to slow down sometimes and take care of our mental wellbeing. To that end, we decided to spare a day for staff mental wellness.

Our venue was the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve in the south of Johannesburg. All staff members and our university students arrived by 07:00. This was our first outing of the year, and the focus was team building. We set off for a moderate walk in cool, partly cloudy weather. Along the route, each staff member introduced a discussion topic, and we paused at intervals to rest and reflect together. By the time we returned to the car for our picnic lunch, we realized we had comfortably covered 10.5 km. The sense of camaraderie and mutual respect was clear. With chats and chuckles we left the venue at 1630hrs. We all agreed, “A Day well spent!”



Staff called this, “trekking and stopping for conversations”



More trekking and stopping for conversations

YOSA Wishlist

YOSA programme is running optimally in fewer schools than anticipated. The programme is most effective in schools where there are social workers for psychosocial support, learning support agents for curriculum coaching, and digital laboratories for computer skills and digital learning tools. All the other supported schools have psychosocial and learning support programmes and still require digital labs to function optimally. Experience has shown significant improvements in pass rates where the programme is running fully. Additional support will be helpful for us to root the three programming elements in all our supported schools.



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Conclusion

April 2026 was a month of exceptional activity, meaningful growth, and tangible impact across all YOSA's schools and programmes. From the recruitment of new university mentors, the empowerment of learner leadership structures and the celebration of Earth Day, the breadth of YOSAs' work during April reflects our deep commitment to the holistic development of young people in Soweto. Staff, students, and volunteers brought energy, professionalism, and compassion to every engagement. Through effective learner participation, leadership, and growing confidence, the programme continues to affirm the enduring value of YOSA's mission. As the organisation moves into the month of May, the strong foundations laid in April provide a springboard for even deeper impact in the months ahead.

