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Education for Transformation

Changing the world; one person at a time

Annual Report; 2018

Introduction

This report is a tale of God's grace for project staff and the many underprivileged young people supported so far. It's a tale of transitions from hopelessness to glorious inspiration; from emptiness to surplus and from anxiety to hope and trust. With emotional, material and financial support from friends and well-wishers we have effectively supported 15 schools during 2018. Multi-tasking, availability of committed local volunteers and working long hours helped us to maintain low project costs yet attaining the desired exponential growth.

Why We Exist

The vulnerability of youth and children and the deterioration of teaching and learning environment necessitated our intervention. We are also witnessing some closure of schools in old township communities due to demographic transitions. Financially capable families in townships are sending their children to former Group C schools which were predominantly for white people only before democracy. Younger families are moving to newer and sometimes up-market residential properties leaving the elderly and mostly under-resourced child-headed families in old township communities. The number of youths living in grandparents and child-headed households is increasing. As a result, there are shortfalls in parental supervision resulting in various learning barriers for the underprivileged children. Through its social workers and psychologists, Thuto Yokuthuthuka.org (TYK.ORG) runs after-school, weekend and holiday programmes addressing the many challenges found in underprivileged communities' schools that include:

- Dysfunctional relationships between parents/guardians and educators;
- Lack of parental involvement in the education of their children;
- Poor relationships between learners and educators;
- Substance use/abuse in schools;
- Violence among learners and sometimes educators on learners;
- Gender-based violence in the school community;
- Teenage pregnancies;
- Stressed learners due to inadequate exam preparedness;
- Low literacy and numeracy levels leading to low pass rates; and,
- Educators that are stressed and often offering disproportionate responses to learner attention-seeking behaviours.

Our Inspiration

When crops fail in the fields, people blame the soil and weather conditions. When children fail adults blame them reminiscing the so called 'olden days' when children's rights weren't so entrenched. Then, adults believed that 'whips drive demons out of children!'

Thuto Yokuthuthuka.org (TyK) was born as a response to societal disillusionment with many challenges confronting young people. Thuto Yokuthuthuka is Sepedi and iSizulu languages meaning 'Education for Transformation'. TYK strives to transform the youth development landscape in South Africa through sustained bold innovation. Adolescence problems of teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, school dropout, substance abuse, violence and others may seem to be insurmountable, but, armed with a strength-based perspective TYK is making significant difference through:

1. Treating youth as resources and growing their potential, and
2. Nurturing adult-youth partnerships to build developmental relationships.

TyK after-school programmes and activities inspire youth for:

1. Academic success
2. Arts and recreation
3. Community involvement
4. Cultural competency
5. Life skills
6. Positive life choices
7. Positive core values
8. Sense of self.

Change-makers' Training

The year 2018 started with the recruitment of 20 volunteers from the community to work as Youth Development Workers. The 20 volunteers were aged between 19 and 25 and had passed grade 12. They were living at home having failed to find work and also no opportunities to go to further education. In an effort to attain whole community youth transformation we trained the Youth Development Workers (Mentors) to understand the world of work, to acquire personal and social skills such as goal setting, leading a purpose-driven life and establishing networks for personal advancement. We are breaking the cycle of redundancy among youth in the underprivileged communities we support.



We provide perfect social work services in schools and communities. Our services comply with requirements for training of social workers hence the University of the Witwatersrand placed 20 social work students on internship with us for the whole year. The social work students and Mentors were thoroughly trained on Positive Youth Development Approach that the organization implements. We train all our staff and volunteers to live up to the values of the organization; to impart positive youth development to learners, parents/guardians and educators. We focus our attention on learners' strength as opposed to emphasizing debilitating problems, vulnerabilities, and deficits. By seeing young people through a positive youth development perspective, challenges of teenage pregnancy, violence, alcohol and drug use will not be the focus. These tend to describe our adolescents as troublesome or at risky population, thereby clouding our judgement on their capacity for contributing to self-rescue. The belief that change is likely, positive, and possible is important for the success of our intervention.





Youth Mentors and Social Work interns retreating to train for transformation

Our Approach

Despite the manifold problems often seen during adolescence that include, substance abuse, unsafe sex and pregnancy, school failure and dropping out, crime and delinquency, depression and self-destructive behaviours, we avoid labelling. We empower adolescents and families to help themselves playing partner rather than expert roles. We facilitate rather than fix; point to health rather than dysfunction; turn away from limiting labels and diagnosis to wholeness and well-being. This brings collaborative relationships. The primary focus of our interventions for young people facing uneven odds, therefore, is not preventing or ameliorating dysfunction but promoting positive functioning. Fixing happens best through the development of strengths; development happens best through participation in causes bigger than oneself. With support and guidance from caring adults, all youth can be healthy, happy, thriving, and make positive contributions to their families, schools, and communities. Our emphasis is on harnessing young people's resilience, positive energy, and initiative rather than emphasizing their problems and /perceived deficiencies. Building character strengths such as social intelligence, morality, self-control, and spirituality is one of the most frequent goals of our youth development programmes. A positive youth development approach takes us from conversations centered on fixing what is wrong to conversations that are more hopeful and focused on building on the good that is already present. Problems are resolved as young people build on their strengths.

Innovation

The problem-centered approaches have failed. They tend to label the youth thereby inhibiting their participation in self-development. Ours is a bottom-up innovation because we design programs and activities, test them and learn together with adolescents concerned. Autonomy, mastery, and purpose drive our change-business model noting that trust beats control. The program emphasizes

strengths and treats young people as 'resources' not 'problems' that need to be fixed. We use adolescents' resilience, positive energy, and initiative for cultural change.

Activities Completed

All the 15 schools supported provided office spaces for our social workers to attend to learners and school staff confidentially for counselling and administration services. We provided an opportunity for schools to enjoy the services of full-time social workers extending into after-school periods.

1. Class based workshops



A total of 14,845 learners attended our class-based workshops. The workshops covered topics such as Transition to high school, Emotional intelligence, Subject choice and career guidance, Study skills, Examination techniques, Purpose-driven life, Substance use, Sexual and reproductive health.

2. Individual counselling and support

A total of 163 learners were supported on an individual basis by our staff, social work interns and Mentors. The learners were presenting challenges involving suicidal tendencies, exam stresses, substance use, teenage pregnancies, abuse, neglect, lack of concentration, ill health and others.

3. Group work



A total of 413 learners were assisted in groups of 8-10. They required substance use interventions, teenage mothers' support, bereavement counselling and support, learning support, behavioural mentoring and coaching among other issues. Working in groups encourages deeper change and it creates circles of support among learners in the absence of project staff.



4. School Community projects

A total of 4198 parents were hosted in 15 schools' community projects. The purposes of the projects were to build favorable teaching and learning environments in schools, restoring functional relationships between schools and communities, engaging parents to play meaningful roles in the education of their children, encouraging community support in making schools safer for children, infrastructural development, resourcing schools with libraries and reading books, among others.



Libraries relaunch at Fons Luminis Secondary and Emadlelweni Primary Schools

5. Educational support

A total of 391 learners were given homework and learning support. Most of these learners were supported in maths and science subjects as part of the organization's Academic Support Programme that promotes learners' excellence in critical subjects. The learner support activities took place in school premises and in the Community Resource Centre.



In after-school time learners are provided with refreshments to restore their functioning and active participation.



Resource Centre based programmes call on our staff to run after-school, weekends and holiday activities.



6. Parents training

A total of 6313 parents attended our training meetings. In some instances we were invited to give talks on Positive Youth Development in parents meetings. We believe parents are primary teachers so their empowerment with positive parenting skills will help to bring up well balanced children.



Parents' training meetings at Emadlelweni Primary and Noordgesig Secondary schools

7. Educators training and support



A total of 131 educators attended our training meetings on Positive Youth Development, Positive Discipline and Building Developmental relationships. Educators were also supported in matters of learner leadership development and learner motivation to focus on education.

8. Infrastructure Maintenance

Support from TyK friend, Garry Callaghan one of Qantas Airline crew members, enabled us to fund the replacement of gutters at Isipho Primary School.



Before and after repairs of Isipho Primary School gutters, Mbali Zuma TyK staff member, Garry, Ms Nokuthula Dabula (Principal), Janet Wood (Qantas Airline staff) and Astonishment (TyK Director)

Partnerships

This project would not have been possible without the generous support from our strategic partners;

1. **Anglo-American Chairman's Fund:** Funded training in Social Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation. Astonishment's training inspired the innovative Positive Youth Development direction of this organization.
2. **Qantas Cabin Crew Team and individual crew members:** provided material and financial donations, funding for structural developments, contributing to digital/information technological innovation, staff moral support and volunteer incentives. Technological innovation is in keeping with the organization's mission of helping learners with IT skills in their transition to universities and vocational colleges.



Susy James on her visit to the proposed community resource center, Jill, Susy, Astonishment, laian and Mick on handing over of 60 ipads donated by Qantas Airlines to TyK and Astonishment, Karen, Janet and Carol on handing over of clothes, books and toys to Ikageng Resource Centre.



Brolin Castellino (Qantas Pilot) moved by empty shelves and provided resource center groceries for the whole month.



Rutendo, Vimbai, Brolin and Tanatswa buying groceries to feed homeless people, Susanne, Rutendo, Richard (Qantas Airline Captain), Vimbai, Peter and Brolin serving Christmas breakfast to 45 homeless friends.

Silica: proved to be a solid partner that provided the much-needed professional staff and volunteer allowance funding, innovation training, refreshments for after-school programmes, university application fees for learners from desperate families, stationery for learners and staff. This dynamic partnership has transformed our mindset and our project implementation model towards preparing children for the 21st revolution. With their support we will also be able to double our impact numerically and effectiveness in the next 12 months. We will also be able to acquire and operate another community resource center. We are currently in advanced stages of our discussion with both the Department of Infrastructure Development and the Department of Basic Education to acquire and operate another community resource center.

1. 8.



With support from Silica this abandoned school in Mofolo South in Soweto is set to be an innovation hub promoting academic success, arts and recreation, community involvement, cultural competency, life skills, positive life choices, positive core values and a sense of self.

2. **Methodist Church of Southern Africa:** has allowed us use of church facilities, encouraged volunteers and provided donations in cash and kind.
3. **University of the Witwatersrand:** placed intern social workers to support teaching and learning in our organization and paid for professional supervision of interns.

Impact

1. Total # Direct Beneficiaries Reached in 2018

Learners	15 812
Parents	10 511
Educators	131
Total	26 454

Note:

- Assuming conservatively that each of the direct beneficiaries lived in a household of 4 people thereby impacting the other 3 then the number of indirect beneficiaries is 79 362.
- Contributions from our partners enabled this impact. This is set to increase in 2019.
- 2. We have made significant progress in eliminating teenage pregnancy with only 4 schools out of 15 reporting 4, 3, 2, and 2 respectively from double digits each.
- 3. Cases of violence have also decreased but substance use seems to remain constant. We hope to see some changes in 2019.

Specific Needs

We are a non-profit organization rendering free services to school communities. We survive on donations from corporates, churches and individuals; local and international. The following are our main needs:

- Human resources; professional youth development practitioners (social workers & psychologists),
- Volunteers (especially, local community unemployed young people. We pay volunteer allowances),
- Financial resources for retreat camps and exchange visits,
- Stationery for mentoring and coaching,
- Meals for after-school, weekend and holiday programmes,
- Refreshments for educators and parents/guardians training meetings,
- Smart phones, tablets, laptops and desktops for IT based coaching, leveraging on lean staffing and preparing our young people for the 21st revolution. Thus, we will save on staff costs if we improve out intervention through technology. One staff member can connect with and support more students on digital platform.

Our implementation matrix is such that with greater IT based interventions, more beneficiaries are reached by a constant number of professional staff and volunteers. One-on-one coaching sessions with learners are enhanced.

Year 2019 in Focus

- We have firmly fixed our eyes on acquiring a New Community Resource Centre to improve our service delivery in underprivileged communities.
- We will engage in aggressive fundraising to upscale our project implementation and improve both width and depth of our impact.
- We will maintain strategic professional staffing levels to provide wider parents' and educators' training, support and guidance to volunteers and social work interns. Information technological innovation will increase our numerical coverage at constant costs.
- Programmes will be streamlined in line with Positive Youth Development; promoting academic success, arts and recreation, community involvement, cultural competency, life skills, positive life choices, positive core values and a sense of self.

- We are currently waiting for the authorities to approve a new name for our organization shortly. Our partners should expect a name change for our organization as we are currently rebranding.

Conclusion

Our project is strong in behavioural mentoring and coaching of learners, educational support and guidance emphasising maths, science and languages and building developmental relationships among learners, parents and educators. We occupy children with self-improvement activities in after-school times. Technological innovation will see us reaching more beneficiaries in relevant and personalized ways. We are grateful to our partners for valuable resources that have seen our organization meeting its costs beyond expectation. We pray for sustained partnership as we scale our implementation in 2019. Here is wishing all our partners a prosperous 2019!

Gallery



Nurturing moments in 2018: Susy and her African family, Brolin interacting with Tana and Susy handing over a donation of iPhone to Astonishment



Rutendo, Vimbai, Brolin and Tana buying food to feed homeless friends and interacting after sharing Christmas presents and visiting other needy families in Soweto



Brolin bidding farewell to homeless friends, interacting with Bob in Kliptown and Jo, Olivia and Jaxon were on a cultural exchange visit to Isipho Primary School.



Janet and Karen handing clothes to Ikageng Centre, Susy and Iain handing over 60 iPads to Astonishment and Olivia, and Jo and Jaxon also handing over clothing to Caroline at Ikageng Centre



Karen and Janet buying stationary for social work students Tintswalo, Sharon and Normsa, Janet with Nondumiso (left) and Mbali (right) TyK staff and Jo, Jaxon and Olivia walking through Soweto and interacting with children on the streets.



Jax, and Astonishment attending a prestigious international Singularity University Summit sponsored by Silica.



Young people after training go on to support teaching and learning



High school students running self-directed programmes after completing a mentorship course.



High School learners performing before their parents and educators. Presenting music and poetry on building developmental relationships in school community.



Project staff running parents training meetings on Saturdays



Students reading in the newly launched library. We have also introduced a system for borrowing and returning books that helps the schools to account for books as well as train learners to run the systems.



Ms. Nokuthula Dabula, Garry Gallagher, Fidelis (contractor) and Astonishment, Garry entertaining pupils and meeting project staff at Noordgesig Secondary School.



Susy James and Andy Murphy (Qantas Cabin Crew Team) spending some quality time with the children, Carol addressing learners on holiday preparations and Janet and Karen sharing tea with Astonishment and social work students Tintswalo, Sharon and Agnes



Susy James and Denis Krieg, a Qantas Airline Captain posing with a sangoma; and Jaxon, Jo and Olivia playing with kids on the street in Kliptown Township, Soweto. Denis provides comprehensive regular support for residents of Kliptown. He is more than a community friend.

AAPS

Astonishment Mapurisa
Founder & Director

