

Programme Report: September 2025



Introduction

The YOSA programme is rooted in ten schools in the Soweto and Ivory Park communities. Our intentional, sustained presence in these school communities builds youth strengths through positive relationships, skills-building activities, and opportunities for contribution and leadership. YOSA staff are exposed to various school communities' cultures, so they design school-specific interventions. September saw our learners involved in various cultural activities, inspirational digital activities, interschools debate competitions, exam preparations for grade 12 learners, our evolving grannies support group and donations to needy families.

September cultural month

YOSA staff ran various cultural activities with learners in schools aimed at bringing moral regeneration, developing cultural competencies and promoting understanding of diversity. The creative activities were designed for learning while playing. YOSA is the default extra-curricular space for schools because teachers are inundated with matters of curriculum content delivery. Most social workers took the time to deepen their psychosocial support activities, supporting learners in small groups and developing systematic ripple impact with YOSA children converting others. Substance use, violence and teenage pregnancy were the main targets for September cultural interventions.



Psychosocial support through cultural interventions

The CuriosiTY Event hosted at Brescia House School

On the 6th of September 2025, YOSA staff along with 5 grade 11 girls from Sekano-Ntoane High School attended a digital appreciation event hosted by Brescia House School. YOSA was sponsored by Vivian Ladner of Scadco to bring 5 female learners to the event. The event aimed at encouraging female learners to pursue IT and related careers. Enabling the learners from Sekano-Ntoane High School to interact with other female learners from upmarket schools and exposing them to inspirational speakers was transformative. Our township young people cherished the multicultural nature of the event and the exposure to a range of possible IT opportunities.



YOSA social worker, Palesa Dhlamini with learners at Brescia House School

Debate clubs

YOSA staff members are running debate clubs in the various schools that they are supporting. In September the clubs started meeting for competitions. There are notable improvements in learners' confidence, public speaking skills and critical thinking. YOSA programme participants are exposed to various activities that deepen their involvement and school connectedness.

The YOSA library is also flourishing in creating a culture of reading for understanding. Learners are taking books home for reading and come back to give a summary of the book as well as showing a mastery of new words and their meanings. We are grateful to Donna, Karen and Trevor, and Rachel for protracted contributions towards the development of the library.





Some of the participants at the debate competitions

Class-based interventions

YOSA social workers provided intensive class-based interventions to grade 12 learners who are looking forward to writing their final examinations. The interventions helped to provide study skills and examination techniques and alleviate exam-related stress. Some of the learners were supported individually and in small groups. Most of the learners in the supported schools experience shortfalls in parenting hence YOSA staff become their support system during this crucial time of their lives.



YOSA social workers running class-based interventions

Grannies Support Group

In September the grannies embarked on making Worry Gobblers. These are stuffed toys used by social workers in therapy to help young people express and manage their concerns. During therapy sessions learners write down their worries and put them inside the Worry Gobbler which has a zipper or opening to insert notes. This is a symbolic act that can help alleviate anxiety and provide a sense of relief.





Grannies making Worry Gobblers

Babies' clothes donation

YOSA received a lot of baby clothes during the year. In September we donated a lot of the clothes to babies delivered at the Bheki Mlangeni Hospital whose parents could not afford them. A lot of the babies were reported to have been born to teenage mothers and other under resourced families hence the hospital was running a baby clothes drive asking for baby clothes and blankets from the community. YOSA came in handy and provided adequate clothes for 100 babies. We are grateful for the support extended to us by our friends from Australia, Karen, the Knitting Club, Donna and Rachel. We had enough woollen baby ware for 100 babies. The Knitting club in Australia has made life easier for the vulnerable babies.



YOSA staff handing over babies' clothes to the hospital staff

Social work students

The Wits undergraduate social work students placed in YOSA are in their termination phases. We will remain with a postgraduate student and those from SACAP and UP universities until the end of the year. Generally, the students have been a great resource for our programming this year. We are pleased with our partnership with universities. We have had a total of 16 students placed with us this year. YOSA is developing as a significant contributor to the development of the social work profession.

We have also had very significant visitors from Australia this year. In September we had 5 visitors from Australia visiting our project. They have contributed significantly to our programming and the staff welfare.





YOSA staff and social work students and, our regular friend Karen and Sarah meeting with Astonishment

Karen Glass is a very regular supporter of YOSA. From time-to-time Karen brings in friends to also join in supporting YOSA and the vulnerable young people in our care. YOSA depends on friends who understand our vision and mission and, who know that all the resources given to us go straight to support the needy children and families. Katherine, Tony and Tracey were the latest to join our group of supporters. They significantly provided for the children and staff of the organization. YOSA is at a stage where we plead for more partnerships to help us make life bearable for the many vulnerable youths we support.



Katherine Beilby with Melissa, Astonishment and Jane and, Tony, Tracey and Karen with Astonishment

New Developments

With support from Scadco our technical partner in our digital learning centres we now enjoy the support of **Vumatel and Cool Ideas**. These are partners that are installing free fibre networks to power our computer labs and the supported schools. We now have free and reliable internet network in our schools.

We have also been favoured with a partnership with **GoSolar**, a solar energy company that is working with Investec and other corporates to provide affordable solar energy to schools. Solar energy has the effect of reducing schools' electricity bills with as much as half their monthly bills. We are pleased that our three schools that are hosting our digital learning centres have been identified for solar energy installation. This will sustain our services in the computer labs and ensure that internet is always available.



YOSA Centre Repairs and Maintenance

YOSA has a flourishing garden that is providing vegetables for children attending the centre's programmes. Some of the children living in child headed households, or with grandparents, take vegetables for consumption at home. The garden **plumbing** requires enhancement to enable it to provide more vegetables. We are looking for partners that are able and willing to contribute to YOSA food self-sufficiency.

YOSA Centre **roof** needs repairs to avoid leaks during the coming rainy season and the Centre needs **repainting**. We are looking forward to partners that can contribute to our maintenance plan, making our Centre remain comfortable and appealing for the children. Painting and roof repairs will give longer life to our structures. We are updating costings for these projects that we will gladly share with partners who are willing to walk this journey with us.

Acknowledgements

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Conclusion

YOSA support for young people in schools and at the Centre has improved over the years. We have been more intentional in creating a specific brand of a YOSA Child. The sustained interventions and long-term relationships have proved effective in developing changemakers among our programme participants. The YOSA culture of hard work and our positive youth development approach improved our programming to increase learners' resilience and adaptability, positive relationships and social connections, academic performance and career prospects, and improved life skills. YOSA contributions to schools and the community at large has significantly improved, thanks to the support we receive from our partners.

