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March 2023 Report

Introduction

YOSA programming is anchored on productive occupation of the young people's time enhancing their participation in education. Running after-school, weekend and holiday programmes YOSA activities include curriculum coaching and extracurricular content like gaming, digital training, sporting activities. The month of March had so many activities that helped to broaden the young people's horizons. The participation in the national computer games, the Global Hackathon and subsequent virtual experiences for the winning teams meant so much to our township-based learners. March school holiday was also a major highlight of the month. The holiday is oversubscribed as many learners throng the Centre for the holiday activities.

Nintendo School League Launch Party

We are grateful to Scadco for funding the registration of one of our primary schools to participate in the Nintendo School League computer games. Having been registered, learners from Sekwati Primary School were invited to attend the launch party for the games at the Bryanston Knowledge Base. Attending the inter-cultural event was mind-opening for the young Soweto kids. We received a donation of two computers for learners to train and participate in online games. This has proved to be life changing as learners are playing and winning a lot of their games online.



Learners attending the Nintendo launch party and carrying their donated computer equipment.

Virtual Reality Experience

The high school winning team and first runner up team were treated to a virtual reality experience as their prize for coming top in the national hackathon competition. The Virtual Reality experience was sponsored by Maurice Crespi at his offices in Melrose Arch. This whole experience has motivated learners to explore more and pursue further digital studies. This has also made the computer lab a focal point for a lot of learners. Our computer lab assistant is very busy giving computer lessons to learners as well as helping them to conduct researches.

FNZ Partnership is instrumental in this YOSA digital transformation. The visit dedicated to IT development, by Ms. Ntombi Mzalisi, Ms. Mikateko Zonke and Mr. Vusi Ngobeni from FNZ Holdings (Pty) Ltd on Saturday 18 March 2023 was testament to the company's commitment to impart the 4th industrial revolution skills to the vulnerable communities that we serve. The computer labs and IT-dedicated staff have helped to improve both social and technical skills for learners.



High school learners during the virtual reality experience.

Holiday Programme

The YOSA Centre has become so popular with learners in the community that we have had to register them in groups of between 40 and 50 and entertain one alternative group each day. We cannot accommodate all the children requiring our services on any one day. Janine blessed us with the netball poles and balls. The Centre is a very popular place of entertainment and learning for the young people in the community.



A day in YOSA holiday programme combines playing and learning, Bridgety on maths coaching for learners.

YOSA academic tutoring programme has seen the following improvements in matric pass rates in flagship schools (2021 vs 2022)

-School A: 81% to 96%

-School B: 73% to 87%

-School C: 75% to 86%

-School D: 82% to 89%

-21 direct beneficiaries of YOSA entered universities this year.

-2 Primary schools had no maths teachers for two terms and were dependent on our mentorship programme.

-There has been significant decline in teenage pregnancies in all the 5 high schools we serve. We are committed to help the young people with issues of their reproductive health and rights. Education is taking centre stage in the lives of the young people who participate in YOSA programmes.



Engaging holiday activities at the Centre

Sustainable Nutritional Gardening

Gardening provides a learning space for the children at the Centre as well as providing nutrition during our afterschool and holiday programmes. YOSA friend, Sherwin, from the Qantas Airways actively support us with provision with garden seeds and direct work in the garden whenever he comes to the Centre. The garden has improved our nutrition at the Centre. Sherwin bought a blender for us that we use to make green smoothies for children and the grannies during our activities.



Sherwin assisting us to plant seeds in the garden and making green smoothies for the grannies.

Grannies Support Group

The grannies support group is growing in popularity in the community. It meets once a week. We are grateful to Janine for the promise of sawing machines for skills training for the grannies to improve their economic status. Gradually, the grannies have realized that there is dignity in labour and are not merely relying on the social grant.



Sherwin and Vivian participating in the grannies' support group.

Trevor's Visit to YOSA

One of our Australian friends, Rev. Trevor Lunney, visited YOSA from 7 to 18 March 2023. Trevor brought with him bags of clothes for our beneficiaries. Trevor spent most of his time on the YOSA programme addressing staff and beneficiaries that included learners and grannies. The YOSA community appreciated spending time with Trevor, that included attending the funeral of one of our grannies together. Trevor was very instrumental in the motivation of learners and staff.

Karen Glass also arrived the following week and brought a lot of baby clothes and knitted jerseys that were very beneficial to our vulnerable beneficiaries. Trevor and Karen also spent some time with our beneficiaries emphasising learner motivation towards self-development and moral regeneration. YOSA staff and beneficiaries still cherish the lessons learnt from Trevor during his stay here.



Trevor and Karen addressing YOSA staff and Grannies' support group.



Karen handing over baby clothes to Yonela, who later distributed to babies.

Social Work Interventions

Social work interventions have been very vital in addressing the many learning barriers in school communities. The barriers include substance use, violence and teenage pregnancies in school communities. Social workers employ various intervention methods that include one-on-one sessions with learners, small group meetings and class-based workshops.

YOSA social workers also provide a vital link between schools and communities. Home visits to ascertain the circumstances of the learners and providing family interventions have been key to resolving confronting learners in schools.



YOSA Social Work intern on her home visit to an informal settlement to address the plight of a learner

Food Relief for Vulnerable families

YOSA still supports vulnerable families with food parcels, a school-based soup kitchen and provides cooked meals at the Centre. This programme is sometimes limited by lack of resources yet, it facilitates learning for many young people who leave home without eating breakfast. A significant number of learners whose families depend on social grant are suffering food deficiencies due to the worsening economic situation in South Africa. When resources are available, YOSA provides for these children to facilitate learning. Education is, therefore, the last hope for at least 200 of these learners on our programme.



Delivering food parcels to child-headed households

Conclusion

YOSA programming is productively occupying the young people's otherwise, idle time. The motivation of learners and curriculum coaching activities have yielded results. There are indeed so many challenges in the community we serve, but YOSA refuses to give up hope of a better life for all! We truly acknowledge and cherish the support of our friends and well-wishers to realise our dream.