



Report:

Life Skills Programme Impact

Report Compiled by:

Next Level Outcomes

Date:

10th March 2022

Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
DBE	Department of Basic Education
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LO	Life Orientation
MMC	Medical Male Circumcision
OVSA	OneVoice South Africa
POPI	Protection of Personal Information
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TB	Tuberculosis
WASH	Water Access, Sanitation and Hygiene
YAB	Youth Advisory Board

Introduction to the Programme

The OneVoice South Africa (OVSA) Schools Programme is aimed at empowering young people to develop positive responses to important health and lifestyle issues by improving their knowledge and understanding of sexual health and rights, health, and lifestyle issues, to encourage positive behaviours, attitudes, and practices.

The OVSA Grade 8 Life Skills programme is presented in class, as an integral and high-energy part of the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum – and is aligned with the Department of Basic Education’s Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). OVSA contributes to and supports the overall educational Life Skills outcomes for the CAPS theme: ‘Development of Self in Society’, which is focused predominantly on developing resilience through the promotion of self-motivation and teaching learners how to apply goal setting, problem-solving and decision-making strategies to address critical health and lifestyle issues.

The programme is delivered by OVSA Facilitators who guide learners to develop their full potential within an educational workshop framework that provides learners with realistic opportunities to make informed choices regarding personal and environmental health, study opportunities and future careers. The Life Skills project involves activities such as icebreakers, group discussion, dialogues and debating, role play, brainstorming and planning. This style of delivery helps learners to engage on and internalise the content by making it relevant to their lives.

The programme content includes HIV/AIDS and TB prevention and transmission, sexual and reproductive health and rights, delaying sexual debut, gender roles, healthy relationships, human rights, Gender and Water Access, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). The programme is organised into six parts and includes 12 workshops as well as additional practical activities, which are presented over the course of 16 sessions through the schools’ academic year.

The Life Skills programme content and associated learner outcomes are included at the end of this report in *Appendix A*.

Programme Monitoring and Reporting

Programme effectiveness is assessed annually, by means of a one-group quasi-experimental pre and post-test research design, which means that one group of learners is assessed at two time points i.e., at pre-test and at post-test (pre intervention and post intervention).

Quasi-experimental designs aim to determine whether there is a causal relationship between a programme and observed outcomes. Learners’ knowledge, attitudes and practices are assessed prior to the implementation of the Life Skills programme and the same assessment is administered after completion of the workshops in order to assess knowledge gain and changes in behaviour, attitude and practices as a result of the programme.

Cumulative Impact

This cumulative impact report outlines the programme impact over the last six years (2016-2021, excluding 2020 due to disruptions to the programme as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic). The report focuses on the Life Skills programme's contribution to learners' academic performance in LO as a subject, and its impact on teenage pregnancy and school dropout rates.

Programme Reach

OVSA has reached more than 12 500 Grade 8 learners, over the past six years through the Life Skills programme, which has been implemented in fifteen schools located in the eThekweni, Ilembe and King Cetshwayo districts of KwaZulu-Natal.

The majority of schools that participate in the programme fall within the eThekweni municipal district, and within the Pinetown and Umlazi school districts, which are urban areas. Ilembe district is further from the Durban city centre and can be considered peri-urban. The King Cetshwayo district is furthest from Durban and is considered rural or deep rural.

Programme Impact

Knowledge Gain

There has been an improvement in scores from pre to post-test each year, indicating knowledge gain and improved understanding of the topics presented. The change in assessment scores was found to be statistically significant year-on-year (every year), which means that the improvement in knowledge can be directly attributed to the programme, rather than being as a result of other factors, external to the programme.

Learner assessment results improved by between 15% and 26% from pre to post-test over the course of the past six years. This is a significant improvement and is likely to have contributed to an increase in overall Life Orientation subject results in Grade 8.

It might be possible to obtain the overall LO results from the schools, however there are privacy issues that need to be considered in terms of the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act and Department of Basic Education policies. This could be further investigated.

Change in Sexual Health Attitudes and Practices

Increased condom usage

The Life Skills programme has had a significant impact on attitudes and reported behaviour, in terms of sexual health practices. Programme content focuses on shifting learners' attitudes towards condom usage, both to prevent pregnancy and the transmission of HIV and STIs, and in terms of where the responsibility for the provision of condoms lies.

After the programme, learners indicated that they would not have sex if their partner wanted to but did not have a condom available. They would say 'no'. This is encouraging with respect to prevention of pregnancy and transmission of STIs.

Furthermore, learners consistently shift their perspectives from the responsibility of providing condoms resting solely on the boy, to it being both the girl and the boy's responsibility to provide condoms and to encourage their usage, reflecting recognition of greater empowerment for females and that females must take control of their own health and lifestyle.

How gender roles are defined and the empowerment of girls are critical issues in South Africa currently, given the scourge of Gender Based Violence (GBV) the country is experiencing. GBV is also a factor that contributes to teenage pregnancy rates, which the programme aims to address.

Understanding female biology and pregnancy

Learners are educated on the fact that a girl can fall pregnant even before her first menstruation, and knowledge gain in this area is consistently evident in the annual pre-post programme assessment results. This new understanding means learners are made aware of the risks involved in early sexual debut and can take the necessary precautions i.e. use contraception.

Sexual predators

The Life Skills programme also addresses the issue of 'sugar daddies', a problem that is rife in South Africa in poorer communities of low socio-economic standing. It involves a transactional sexual relationship typically characterised by an older wealthier man and a younger girl in need of financial support in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Learners are asked to answer questions based on circumstances a character, Ntokozo, is faced with. Their responses serve to indicate whether they can identify that Ntokozo is facing a sugar daddy situation and how best to handle this. Learner responses consistently demonstrate an awareness of the sugar daddy issue and the potential consequences thereof, including possible pregnancy without financial support for the baby, and the higher chance of contracting a sexually transmitted disease from an older, promiscuous person.

Exploring the relationship between love and sex

Learner assessment results demonstrate that learners are able to separate the emotion of love from the act of sex, in that they don't have to have sexual intercourse to show that they love their partner. This is important as making the distinction between showing love and engaging in sex has an impact on reducing unwanted pregnancies and the acquisition of HIV and STIs.

Sexual health

The programme demonstrates substantial knowledge gain in terms of the prevention and identification (symptoms) of sexually transmitted diseases. This includes the benefits of Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) in effectively preventing the transmission of HIV. The improvement in knowledge around transmission and prevention methods translates into

behaviour change, with a higher proportion of learners reporting that they had used a condom the last time they had sex, at post-test compared to at pre-test.

Conclusion

Knowledge Gain

It is important to note that whilst the OVSA Life Skills programme contributes to overall Life Orientation academic results, these overall results cannot be considered a direct reflection of the impact of the programme itself, due to the fact that there are numerous themes and content areas covered in the overall LO CAPS curriculum, that OVSA does not cover. The independent analysis of the OVSA pre and post assessment results conducted every year provides a better reflection of the uptake of knowledge, and the impact of the programme.

Change in Sexual Health Attitudes and Practices

Whilst the actual teenage pregnancy rate at the schools targeted by the OVSA programme are not available, the findings from the pre and post assessment results serve as proxy indicators for reduced rates. There is an opportunity to conduct further research in the form of a stand-alone study on teenage pregnancy rates and associated rates of girls who fall pregnant dropping out of school, and this could be considered for future research.

Appendix A:

Life Skills programme content and associated learner outcomes

	Content	Learner Outcomes
Life Skills	Introduction to WASH	1. Define what WASH is; 2. Understand some of the WASH access issues; 3. Engage on the link between WASH and disease burden; 4. Understand WASH as a Human Right.
	Personal Values	1. Identify personal values and recognise where their come from; 2. Understand what influences personal values; 3. Know that people have different values, and that these should not be judged as right or wrong; 4. Recognise how personal values influence decisions in life, including sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.
	Sexual Orientation, Gender Roles and Stigma	1. Discuss and understand Sexual Orientation; 2. Discuss and understand Sexual Identity; 3. How this ties into Gender and Gender Roles; 4. How stigma impacts on Sexual Orientation and Identity; 5. Understand the difference between sex and gender; 6. Understand what gender roles are and the consequences of stereotyping.
	Problem Solving	1. Identify a problem; 2. Find a range of solutions to a problem; 3. Analyse the applicability of each solution, and understand the consequences of the solutions; 4. Identify how to apply the solution to the problem; 5. Identify people and places where they can seek help for their problems; and 6. Solve personal problems related to sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.
	Identifying Your Strengths and Exploring Leadership	1. Compile a personal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) profile; 2. Identify opportunities based on strengths; 3. Explain the importance of managing your Career Aspirations; 4. What is Youth Leadership?
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	Puberty	1. Define puberty; 2. Identify the physical changes that girls go through during puberty; 4. Identify the physical changes that boys experience during puberty; 5. Identify the emotional and social changes that occur during puberty; and 6. Identify strategies that they can use to negotiate safer sex and delay sexual debut.
	Healthy Relationships and Human Rights	1. Discuss some of the different types of relationships that people have; 2. Identify the four qualities of a good relationship;

		- Critically analyse their own relationships to see if they are 'healthy' or 'unhealthy'; and - Make a personal plan for creating and maintaining healthy relationships in their lives. - Describe what human rights are and how they relate to their lives and personal values.
	HIV/AIDS Prevention and Management	- Understand HIV; - Understand AIDS; - Understand how HIV is transmitted; - List and understand prevention methods; - Link the five aspects of healthy living to living positively with HIV/AIDS.
	Exploring STI's	- Understand the types of STIs; - Understand how STIs are spread; - Identify some common STI symptoms; - Develop strategies to protect themselves against STIs.
TB	TB and TB-HIV Co-infection	- Explain what TB is; - Identify the symptoms of TB infection; - Explain how TB is transmitted; - Identify ways to prevent the transmission of TB; - Identify the different types of TB (MDR TB and XDR TB); and - Explain the link between TB and HIV.
	TB Treatment Adherence and Support	- Talk about the importance of TB treatment; - List the reasons for people discontinuing TB treatment; - Discuss the difficulties of continuing TB treatment; and - Understand what it means to become an advocate for TB treatment.
Advocacy Projects and Practical Tasks	Project Planning and Design with the Youth Advisory Board (YAB)	- Identifying a problem that the project will focus on; - Deciding on activities for the project; - Creating a time-line for the project; - Assigning tasks for the project; and - Working together in a democratic environment to complete a task.
	Project Monitoring, Implementation and Evaluating	- Identify the tasks that are still outstanding for the project; - Finalise the plan of action for the project; - Plan publicity for the project; and - Assess their ability to work together to achieve a goal.
Continuing the Journey	Evaluating the Programme and Post-assessment	- Identify what they have learnt throughout the OVSA Schools Programme; - Identify how they grew and changed as a result of what they learnt; and - Do a plan for continuing to learn and grow, even without the support of the OVSA Facilitator.