



CASE STUDY:

THE FARANANI INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

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PROLOGUE – APHIWE’S JOURNEY

Aphiwe¹ never thought she could make a difference in her community. She grew up in Braamfischerville and lived with her Granny and two younger brothers after her Mum died. She struggled at school but managed to get through Grade 12. But she had to work out how to help her family. She was stressed and anxious.

And then she heard about a project being launched in her community called the Faranani Infrastructure Project. People from the Trevor Noah Foundation and YouthBuild SA introduced the project, and she listened because she had seen Trevor Noah on TV and so she knew that the project wasn’t a scam. They spoke about the opportunity to get some skills in plumbing, building and carpentry and to use those skills to do some repairs. They mentioned the name of the school and it was the one that her little brothers attended. So, she was excited about the chance to improve their school even though she had never really thought about a career in building.

When she told her family and friends that she was joining the project, her boyfriend, Sipho, laughed at her and said real women didn’t become builders but her Granny encouraged her, and she decided to go ahead and take a chance. The application process was tough – there were over 800 people from Braamfischerville who applied, and Aphiwe was worried that her poor Grade 12 marks would count against her. But the people from YouthBuild SA who interviewed her assured her that they were seeking to give young people a second chance in life through the programme, and the fact that she was a leader of her church youth group showed that she is active in her community, and this is more important than her marks.

Aphiwe was delighted when she heard that she was one of the 100 who had been selected for the project, though she was also a little bit scared. When she arrived on the first day, she was relieved to see that half the class were young women, and the facilitators from YouthBuild SA were positive and encouraging. They started off with ‘Mental Toughness Training’ – Aphiwe had thought they were going to go right into construction skills, so she was a bit confused at first, but she loved the exercises on discipline, problem solving, trust, and teamwork, and she wished that she had had some of these skills in school. Through the training, Aphiwe found that many of the other trainees had also been depressed about their futures and stressed about how to help their parents or grandparents. It made her feel less alone to know other people were struggling, and positive that the project could help them find a way through these worries.

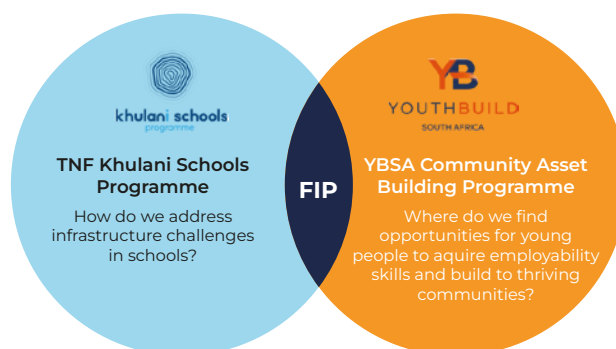
When the group began with the construction skills training, Aphiwe found that the facilitators were patient, explaining concepts clearly and going back to make sure that everyone understood. The group moved through training in bricklaying and plastering, carpentry and plumbing, together with occupational health and safety training as well as basic first-aid training. Aphiwe loved the training and was excited that when she learned about measurements - she could do maths!

But the best part of the training was going to her little brothers’ school where she could apply her skills in practice. YouthBuild SA had worked with the principal and the School Governing Body at the school to understand what was most needed and, based on this assessment, the team started on the toilet block. This work was really difficult as old pipes had collapsed and needed to be completely replaced, but the team was so encouraged by the learners and the teachers. And at break times, Aphiwe sometimes even had a snack with her brothers and their friends – they were so happy to show off to everyone that their big sister was helping the school so much.

¹ Note that Aphiwe is not based on a single person but rather is a composite story made up of different experiences shared during the research.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Trevor Noah Foundation (TNF), in partnership with YouthBuild South Africa (YBSA) facilitates the Faranani Infrastructure Project (FIP), a 12-month school infrastructure development and youth skilling project for youth who are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET). The project is part of TNF's flagship Khulani Schools Programme (KSP), which invests in teacher training, learner skills development, and the development of school community infrastructure. The main goal of the project is to promote fair and equal access to quality education for children and young people from underserved communities.

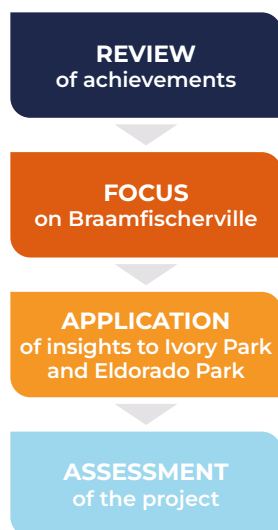


Through YBSA's groundbreaking 'Community Asset Building Programme', FIP has offered young people the chance to repair and maintain selected schools, and where possible, build new facilities. This allows them to give back to their communities, contribute to nation-building, and at the same time improve their education, training, income, and employability. The project aims to involve young people, from the communities in which the schools are located, in training programmes that teach technical skills, along with leadership, commitment and citizenship training. These skills are then used to repair and maintain selected schools and build a community asset.

The FIP launched in early 2021, and the first cohort of 83 of young people completed their training in Braamfischerville in 2022. The project expanded to Ivory Park and Eldorado Park in 2023, with a further 175 young people graduating from the project across those two communities.

About this case study

TNF appointed Singizi Consulting Africa (Singizi) to develop a case study on the impact of the FIP in Braamfischerville. The study focuses on the changes it brought to participants, schools (learners, educators, principals, SGB members), and other community stakeholders (community leaders and local suppliers). It also examines how the lessons learned from the Braamfischerville pilot were used to guide the project rollout in Ivory Park and Eldorado Park.



The case study looks at how these changes were brought about, and considers the factors that enabled or hindered these results, how the learning has already been applied in Ivory Park and Eldorado Park, and the implications for the replication of this model.

This report begins by examining the achievements of the project across the three communities in which the project has been implemented. We then delve into Braamfischerville, exploring the processes that were followed to realise these achievements and the challenges encountered along the way. The report continues by outlining how the insights gained from Braamfischerville were applied to the work in Ivory Park and Eldorado Park, including reviewing how these insights leveraged the project's strengths and addressed the challenges faced. Finally, we assess the project using the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency, and highlight key recommendations, including those related to the sustainability of the project, and its potential for scale, and replication.



khulani schools
programme



Khulani Schools Programme

The Trevor Noah Foundation (TNF) launched the Khulani Schools Programme (KSP) in 2018, in partnership with the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), to ensure inclusive and equitable access to quality education for primary and secondary school students. The programme enhances educational excellence by investing in teacher training and support, learner skills and development, and infrastructure, in order to ensure that young people have access to the educational foundation and opportunities needed to emerge from school with the best possible chance of succeeding in life.

The schools selected for the KSP are some of the most underserved schools in the Gauteng province, and face severe financial, physical and human resource constraints. Each school was hand-picked because, despite these challenges, they demonstrated purpose-driven leadership and a commitment to excellence. As part of a community driven approach, the schools themselves identify their priority needs for TNF investment, and TNF then facilitates partnerships to address these priorities. Currently, there are 15 partners and grantors involved in the Khulani Schools Programme. Some of these partnerships include:

Partner	For	Addressing	Format
	✓ Educators	✓ Psychosocial needs	✓ Workshops
	✓ Students	✓ Psychosocial issues	✓ Referral system
	✓ Highschool students	✓ Career counselling ✓ Tertiary transitioning	
	✓ Teachers	✓ Basic computer skills ✓ Digital tools for education	✓ Training sessions
	✓ Students	✓ Enriching classroom experience ✓ Coding	✓ After-school programs ✓ Annual coding competition
	✓ Students & teachers	✓ Coding ✓ Robotics	✓ Robotic Infrastructure ✓ Training ✓ Kits ✓ Teaching material
	✓ Primary Schools	✓ Reading skills	✓ Khula Funda Literacy Project
	✓ School Management Teams (SMT) ✓ School Governing Bodies (SGB) ✓ Representative Councils for Learners (RCL)	✓ Project management ✓ Governance ✓ Policy implementation	✓ Workshops



Faranani Infrastructure Project

The partnership between TNF and YBSA in the Faranani Infrastructure Project (FIP) is one of these key partnerships within the KSP: during the implementation of the KSP, the poor state of school infrastructure, and the lack of maintenance in schools, was repeatedly raised as a critical challenge for schools in the programme. One of the contributing factors to the lack of maintenance was a limited sense of ownership over school assets. And of course, the ever-present problem of the lack of developmental opportunities for youth.

The partnership between TNF and YBSA was formed after recognising these problems and seeing an opportunity to create a project that addresses both school infrastructure issues and the lack of opportunities for youth, while simultaneously strengthening connections between schools and their communities, fostering a sense of ownership, commitment, leadership, citizenship, and responsibility.

Respondents from YBSA and TNF noted that there was often a disconnect between local communities and the schools in those communities, and that this lack of connection contributed to the neglect of these schools (and even vandalism and theft) and to the undervaluing of schools as important community assets. A TNF respondent noted that this disconnect was demonstrated by the theft of a computer lab from one of their partner schools during the COVID pandemic, indicating that:

"...We realised that there was a huge disconnect between schools and the surrounding community ... co-ownership of these assets became really important for us. [Not only] that we extend the longevity of these assets, but that they're extended because the community is proud that they contributed to that asset standing."
(TNF respondent).

While wrestling with the problem of poorly maintained schools while addressing the lack of co-ownership, leadership of the Trevor Noah Foundation and YouthBuild South Africa found each other at a networking function. As observed by a respondent from TNF:

"...We were on the lookout for partners that could help us address infrastructure. When we... heard about YouthBuild's model, ...there was immense values alignment: ...it was a very clever way to improve infrastructure while also achieving better outcomes. ...[W]e realised that by using a model like YouthBuild, we can ...upskill young people in the area, [give them] an opportunity and skills and income, ...ensuring that the solutions remain community based."
(TNF respondent)

YBSA had been partnering with various government departments to implement their 'Community Asset Building Initiative'. This initiative integrates accredited construction training (theory and practice), life skills training and the on-site experience through community service to ensure that graduates are confident, technically competent and equipped to manage their work life, use their skills to generate an income and build community assets that will serve the community.

TNF and YBSA entered into a 12-month partnership in 2021 to implement the FIP, with TNF as the key facilitator, including to leverage relationships and resources, and YBSA bringing its implementation experience and partnerships around the delivery of the core modules.

This partnership has paved the way for the implementation of the project in three communities ensuring that a total of 18 schools have benefitted from access to improved infrastructure across Braamfischerville, Eldorado Park and Ivory Park.

A vital synergy that could simultaneously support skills development and livelihoods opportunities for this population, while also investing in school infrastructure to contribute towards making schools "friendly environments for the school learners in order for them to look forward to going to school as well as feel safe and increase their potential for performing well academically in safe and clean school environments."
(YouthBuild SA)



OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

We evaluated the project's overall success in the three communities by looking at how it helped young people access opportunities, how it improved school infrastructure, and how it strengthened co-ownership between the schools and communities.

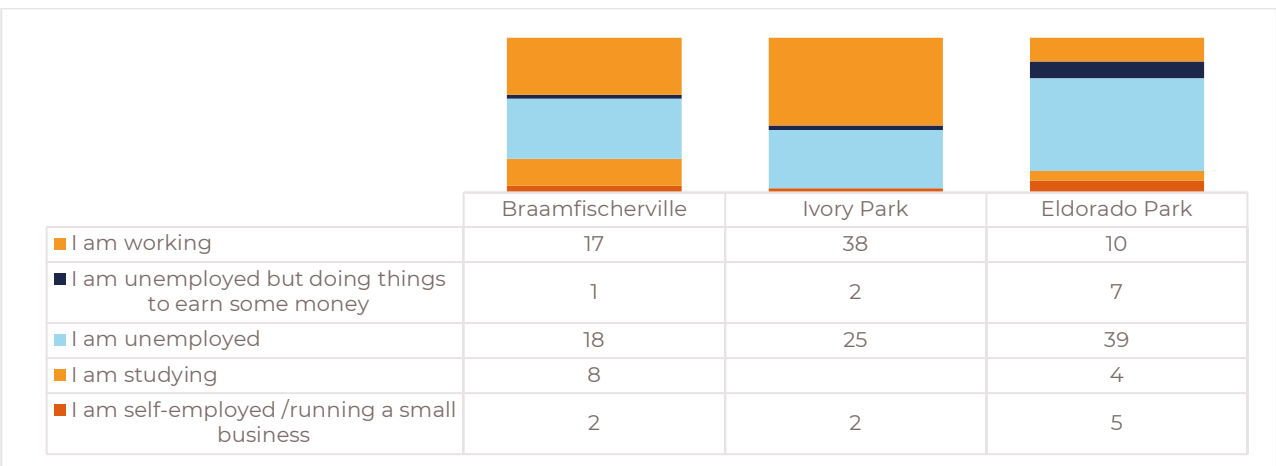
Advancing pathways for young people

We found that in relation to upskilling young people for employment and income generation, **more than half** of the young people who went through the project have secured different opportunities – a major achievement in the underserved communities in which the project is implemented. Specifically, 36% of all participant respondents interviewed indicated that they are working, 6% are unemployed but are doing something to earn some money, 5% are self-employed or running a small business, and 7% are studying. 46% of all respondents indicated that they are currently unemployed.

Those who are unemployed “but doing something to earn money” refers to young people who are not employed but are doing a range of ad hoc jobs. This is short-term, unplanned work, often using skills gained from the programme, and includes tasks like unblocking pipes, plumbing, carpentry, ceiling installation, and assisting with community construction. Such work varies in frequency, ranging from weekly to occasional. Other ad-hoc jobs include promotions, hairdressing, or domestic work.

Self-employed individuals are actively running their own businesses, such as construction companies, hairdressing salons, spaza shops, and selling clothes or PPE. Additionally, 7% are pursuing studies in fields like Civil Engineering, Office Administration, Records Management, Business Studies, Electrical Engineering, Accounting, Plumbing, Education, Operations Management, and Public Management.

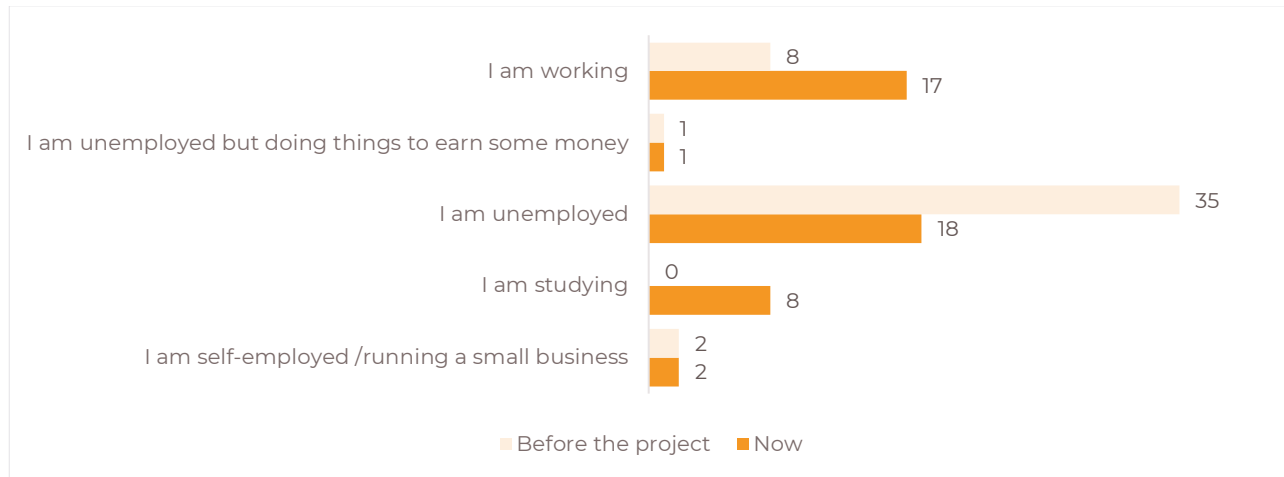
Figure 1: What are you doing now?



Looking specifically at responses from Braamfischerville participants, we see that, nearly two years after the project ended in that community, 61% of respondents are pursuing different opportunities, which is higher than the average across the three communities. These opportunities are disaggregated as follows; 17 respondents (37% of all Braamfischerville respondents) interviewed indicated that they are working, 2% are unemployed but doing things to earn some money, two respondents (4%) are self-employed or running a small business, and eight respondents (18%) are studying. 19 respondents (39% of all Braamfischerville respondents) indicated that they are currently unemployed.

A look at how the situation of the young people had changed when we did the CATI interviews, as compared to when they entered the project, shows that in Braamfischerville, there are double the number of young people in work (than was the case at the beginning of the project), half the number of young people unemployed, and a significant number of young people studying:

Figure 2: Changes from before the project to July 2024 (Braamfischerville respondents only)



Improved infrastructure

Going back to the achievements of the project as a whole and looking at the core deliverable of improved infrastructure in schools, we see that over 200 classrooms or classroom blocks, accommodating 23 261 learners were refurbished in the duration of the project across the three project sites, and around 143 toilets/sanitation facilities were repaired and refurbished. Of these, 106 classrooms accommodating more than 9 014 learners were refurbished, and around 31 toilets/sanitation facilities were repaired and refurbished in Braamfischerville. In addition to this work on classrooms and toilets, a soup kitchen was built at Heerengracht Primary in Eldorado Park, and boundary walls were erected at four primary schools across the three communities:

Figure 3: Infrastructure work in three communities

BRAAMFISCHERVILLE	IVORY PARK	ELDORADO PARK
6 Primary Schools	4 Primary Schools	5 Primary Schools
✓ Wall cracks filling & plastering ✓ Roof sealing ✓ Ceiling replacement ✓ Painting ✓ Carpentry ✓ Replacement of broken fixtures ✓ Plumbing ✓ Electrical installation (plugs) ✓ Construction and refurbishment of sanitation facilities (toilets) ✓ Boundary walls	✓ Wall cracks filling & plastering ✓ Roof sealing ✓ Ceiling replacement ✓ Painting ✓ Carpentry ✓ Replacement of broken fixtures, ✓ Plumbing ✓ Electrical installation (plugs) ✓ Construction and refurbishment of sanitation facilities (toilets)	✓ Wall cracks filling & plastering ✓ Roof sealing ✓ Ceiling replacement ✓ Painting ✓ Carpentry ✓ Replacement of broken fixtures ✓ Plumbing ✓ Electrical installation (plugs) ✓ Construction and Refurbishment of sanitation facilities (toilets) ✓ Construction of a Soup Kitchen in Heerengracht Primary ✓ Boundary walls
1 Secondary School	1 Secondary School	1 Secondary School
✓ Earthworks and diversion of storm water drainage ✓ Brick laying	✓ Construction of a school hall (to roof level)	✓ Starting construction of a school hall (plans approved)

This significant work put into repairs and maintenance at the schools was obviously much needed and well received by learners and stakeholders:

“Mr Trevor Noah, before you built this kitchen it was very uncomfortable, we had to sit on the floor when it was full inside, and we had to sit outside and, on the stairs when it rained.”
(Grade 6 learner, Heerengracht Primary, Eldorado Park)

It is noted that initially the project design had included the construction of multi-purpose community halls at a secondary school in each of the communities in which the project was implemented. While the community hall at Ivory Park is near completion and plans for the one at Eldorado Park have been approved and construction is about to begin, there have been significant delays in starting construction on the hall at Siyabonga Secondary School in Braamfischerville due to challenges with municipal planning and compliance requirements.

Towards co-ownership

Despite these challenges, there is strong evidence across all three communities that there is a move towards co-ownership of the schools as community assets. We found that selecting young people from the communities where the schools are located was crucial in fostering co-ownership.

“The learners as well as the teachers were... fascinated by the fact that the very same learners who had attended this school are now coming back to the school as training adults to assist with repairing the school infrastructure. This meant that these young people cared about the community and the school.”
(Educator)

Additionally, the training has cultivated a strong sense of community commitment among participants, with many using their new skills to continuously benefit their communities. Other local stakeholders, including educators, School Governing Bodies and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), indicated during interviews for this case study that they appreciated being involved in discussions and decision-making around the project.

One reason for the project's implementation approach was to foster a sense of community ownership over the assets, encouraging community members to take responsibility for safeguarding these facilities. This strategy was well-received, as noted by one stakeholder who observed that community members responded positively:

“These schools, some of them had been previously vandalised and some had been destroyed by weather conditions. Two years post the projec ... the schools are still in good condition, the renovations are still maintained.”
(Supplier, Braamfischerville)

While there may of course be challenges this does highlight the extent that this approach is contributing to a greater sense of social cohesion.

2021: LAUNCHING THE PROJECT IN BRAAMFISCHERVILLE

Establishing a working partnership

The primary project partners, TNF and YBSA, brought different skills and expertise together to drive the project: TNF's focus on education and its strong networks in education was combined with YBSA's expertise in implementing youth focused projects in the construction sector to manage the FIP. This laid the foundation for project that was considered innovative, as observed by a respondent from the DBE:

"This is an innovative solution because it has different pillars and solves a variety of problems at once. Firstly, it addresses access to infrastructure while it ensures conducive learning environments for children. At the same time, it ensures the upskilling of young people. While it gives these young people a second chance to be able to be active economic citizens. Additionally, this project includes an element of community asset building ensuring the involvement of the community while ensuring that these communities are also held accountable for maintaining and ensuring that these renovations and this critical infrastructure that has been provided is maintained and protected by the community for its own good and for the good of its own children."

The partners formed a project team to manage the project and held regular meetings to maintain a productive working relationship that enabled them to adapt the implementation process to address the challenges they encountered. The implementation of the project is discussed in more detail below.

Planning the project in Braamfischerville

As outlined, the project design process centred around three key goals: upskilling young people; renovating and refurbishing township school infrastructure; and creating opportunities for young people to become economically active with a shared commitment to maintaining community assets.

The project began by identifying the schools in which the service work would take place. As indicated previously, TNF was already working in Braamfischerville schools through the Khulani Schools Programme (KSP), and these schools were invited to apply to form part of the FIP. Based on a discussion with the community, in the town hall meeting, school applications were received and reviewed, and six primary schools and one secondary school were selected to participate in the FIP in Braamfischerville.

The selected schools were notified by TNF and YBSA who then convened briefing sessions for School Governing Bodies (SGBs). This session was attended by 10 SGB members and school principals from various selected schools and provided detailed information about the project. The project then selected 100 young people from the Braamfischerville community to go through the YBSA training programme to develop skills in civil and building construction with a focus on carpentry, plumbing, masonry (brick laying and plastering) as well as soft skills, and then to apply these newly acquired skills by upgrading school infrastructure.



Initial engagement with stakeholders

As noted above, a key focus of the project was to build 'co-ownership' and so the project partners prioritised engagement with stakeholders at the outset of the project.

The project began by holding discussions with the Gauteng Department of Education, building on the relationships established through the implementation of the KSP:

*"We have been involved in the project since the beginning ... and we have been supporting the project and advocating for the project. We understand that the project had identified the needs of infrastructure development and improvement at different schools ... we have been contributing by including our inputs on the design of the project as well as the key actions that took place within the project. We think the implementation of the project was a success and all the intended outcomes we achieved."
(DBE representative).*

A further step in this process was the convening of a town hall meeting, held in Braamfischerville. The community stakeholders that attended the meeting included members of the relevant School Governing Bodies (SGBs), School Management Teams (SMTs), local civil society organizations (CSOs) and local councillors, and representatives of political parties, including the African National Congress (ANC), the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). This engagement was focused on sharing and discussing the goals and objectives of the project with stakeholders, providing a safe and open space in which they could contribute their knowledge to the design of the project and raise any questions and concerns that they might have.

Recruiting and enrolling youth participants

The recruitment of youth participants for the FIP took place in April and May 2021. The process began with the establishment of a committee (comprised of staff members of YBSA) to develop the selection criteria for participants as well as select the youth. Given that this was a 'second chance' programme for young people, criteria for selection were that applicants had to be aged between 17 and 34 years old and have a minimum of a Grade 11 and up to a completed Grade 12, and an ability to read and write in English. The advertised criteria noted that some work-related experience and/or skills in construction, an interest in serving their community (preferably demonstrated by some previous involvement in community projects) and leadership skills were preferred. And it was specified that only one person per family could apply.

The project was then advertised locally using social media, as well as in schools where the project was going to be implemented, and at community venues that were to be used for briefing sessions. The selection

criteria and processes were shared with community stakeholders through town hall meetings to ensure that they were understood and were satisfied with the process that was to be followed. Over 800 CVs were received, and 100 participants were selected: 51 young women and 49 young men.

Subsequent to the SGB sessions, YBSA held pre-project briefing sessions in each school for the youth. The purpose of these sessions was to share application information and processes with local youth, youth NGOs/CBOs, political youth leagues, school representatives, and TNF/YBSA representatives.

Rationale for applying for the project

In order to understand this process for the perspective of the young person, we sought to understand what had motivated young people to apply for the project and therefore explored the expectations that young people had of the project: most respondents from Braamfischerville said that they wanted to gain skills to increase their employability (43%) or because they thought it would help them to get a job and/or workplace experience (41%).

Figure 4: Reasons for participating in the FIP (Braamfischerville respondents only)



Young people clarified their responses further, emphasising that they were attracted by the range of skills in the project, and by the fact that they thought acquiring these skills would allow them to become employable:

“I wanted an opportunity to equip myself with skills in carpentry and plumbing. I signed up because I saw an opportunity where I could gain skills and become employable/work for myself.”

The extent that the project met these expectations are outlined further in this case study.

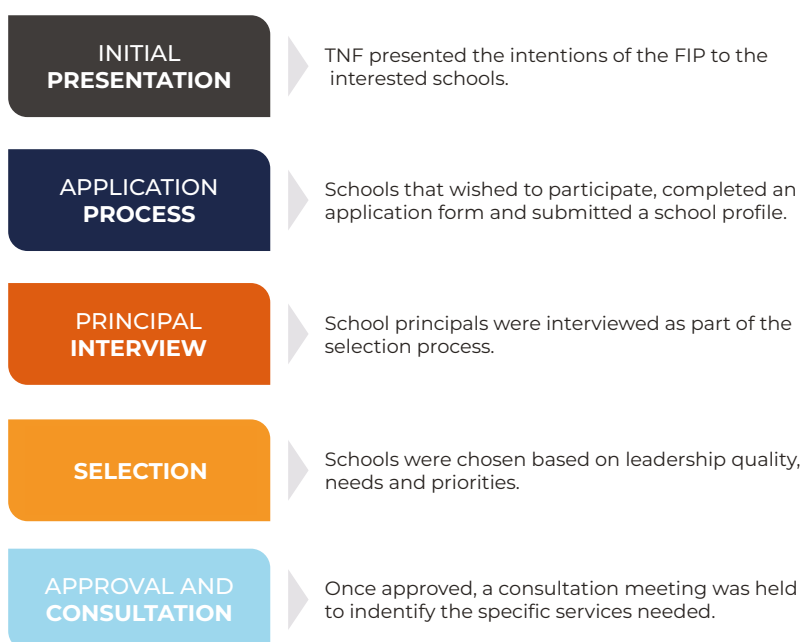
Identifying service activities for participating schools

Parallel to the selection of the young people the project worked at ensuring that they had the right kinds of service work to fully involve the young people – working with the primary schools to identify the repair and maintenance requirements, and with the community to identify sites for the community halls.

A respondent from a school in Braamfischerville described the detailed process of consultation, engagement and selection that the schools went through to be included in the project (summarised in the diagram to the right).

Once the school was selected, the project team (TNF and YBSA) and school's management team then collaboratively made decisions on what renovations and refurbishments would be undertaken.

Respondents confirmed that these engagements defined which renovations and repairs were necessary in the school. Once these needs were identified, a scope of work was established and agreed upon by TNF and the school principal. And, at the end of the project, after all renovations were completed, the principal was required to sign a completion sheet confirming that the agreed-upon work had been fully carried out.



Implementing the training

As indicated above, YouthBuild SA brought an innovative approach to skills development to the project, which not only involved the integration of technical construction, repair and maintenance training with practical experience, but which also included a number of modules designed to support the participants on their life journey.

Technical Training

YBSA contracted Mthoms Trading (Pty) Ltd, a SETA accredited training provider, to conduct the vocational training (theory and practical). Young people received training in a range of different trades in the fields of building, civil construction, and plumbing, together with occupational health and safety training as well as basic first-aid training. This training was completed in September 2021, with project participants completing summative assessments to finalise their portfolios of evidence in support of three qualifications:

- National Certificate in Building and Civil Construction (Bricklaying and Plastering).
- National Certificate in Building and Civil Construction (Carpentry).
- Further Education and Training Certificate in Plumbing

Young people reported that their facilitators were knowledgeable and that they enjoyed the process of learning the various skills in the project. Although some participants found the theoretical aspects of the programme challenging, they noted that the facilitators were patient and attentive and would try to help them if they noticed that they were struggling with a particular element in the training. The training had a one-on-one approach that enabled participants to receive continuous individual attention. This allowed the

facilitators to help participants address their strengths and weaknesses more consistently and fully without competition from other participants.

"I really liked... the programme – the practical part, I did not really like the theory part. I enjoyed the plumbing where we did measurements and calculation of pipes, and on the building side I liked when we learned how to put a brick with all the cement and tapping the brick."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville).

"The practical and theory was interesting, I have no complaint there. I really enjoyed the set out of waste pipes. I did not like doing fault finding. I acquired skills in plumbing and became competent because I was able to get a job in less than a month after completing the programme."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville).

The YBSA learning model places great emphasis on engaging and involving participants in learning processes that consider their varied learning needs and preferences. These learning processes include integrating theoretical and practical learning, and using a combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetics approaches to enable participants' to actively engage and take responsibility for their own learning processes, generate new knowledge and share their ideas with others.

The emphasis on integrating theory and practice in ways that built the problem-solving skills of the learner was reinforced in the assessment process: *"assessment activities... make use of a variety of assessment methods and tools that measure not only the learner's knowledge and ability to perform practical tasks and activities within a familiar context, but which also challenge learners to demonstrate their ability to deal with problem situations that might or can arise in the workplace from time and which require learners' to demonstrate their ability to adapt their performance to meet the requirements of changed circumstances and to reflect on what they are doing and why".*

The other aspect of this inclusivity is through the 'Second Chance' assessment process. During the formative assessment, participants are given more than one chance to take up an assessment to accommodate individual learning abilities or challenges.

The non-technical training

As noted above, the first element of the programme that young people went through was YBSA's Mental Toughness training, between the 3rd and 7th May 2021, which focused on instilling discipline and commitment amongst project participants. The training also included a focus on problem solving, trust, and teamwork. The next component of the non-technical training provided through the FIP was life skills training, which focused on conflict management and resolution, assertive communication, substance abuse, bullying, and gender-based violence.

Participants reflected on the value of these different forms of training indicated that,

"Prior to participating in the programme, I was an introvert, I use to isolate myself a lot, but after participating in the programme I am now able to engage with different people at different levels and I can socialise; so, the programme has really had a great impact on my confidence levels and communication skills."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville).

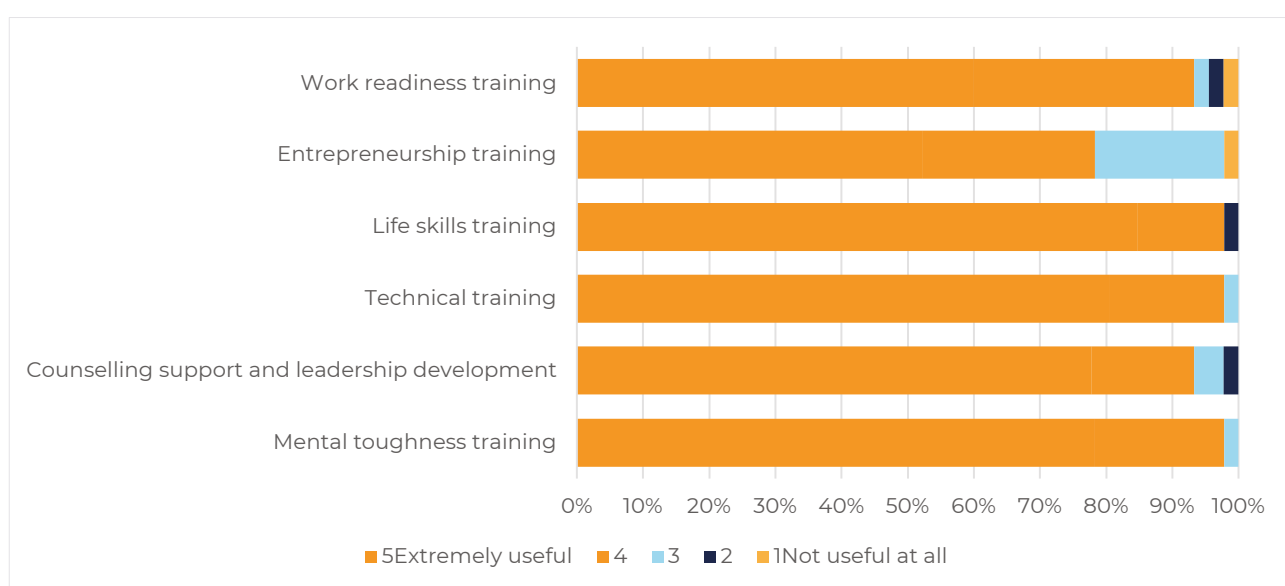
"This project has changed how I can engage with people I was not able to speak up in front of a group of people and even right now if it was two years ago, I wouldn't be able to speak up in this focus group."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville).

Participants then went through a module on Counselling Support and Career Development, which was provided in partnership with the Department of Employment and Labour (DoEL). A further three career development workshops were conducted by the DoEL, which covered a range of issues, including registration on the DoEL database, tax education, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and financial management. The final component of the non-technical training was the Entrepreneurship/Livelihood Readiness Training, which was conducted in the third quarter of the FIP.

FIP participants from Braamfischerville commenting on this training were overwhelmingly positive in their assessments of the value of the various trainings they received (as reflected in the CATI survey). This is shown in Figure 5 where it can be seen that over 80% of participants rated all the training received as either 'useful' or 'extremely useful'. The Mental Toughness training, counselling support and leadership development, and life skills training were all rated as 'extremely useful' by around 80% of youth.

Figure 5: Perceptions of the value of the various elements of the training programme, Braamfischerville respondents only



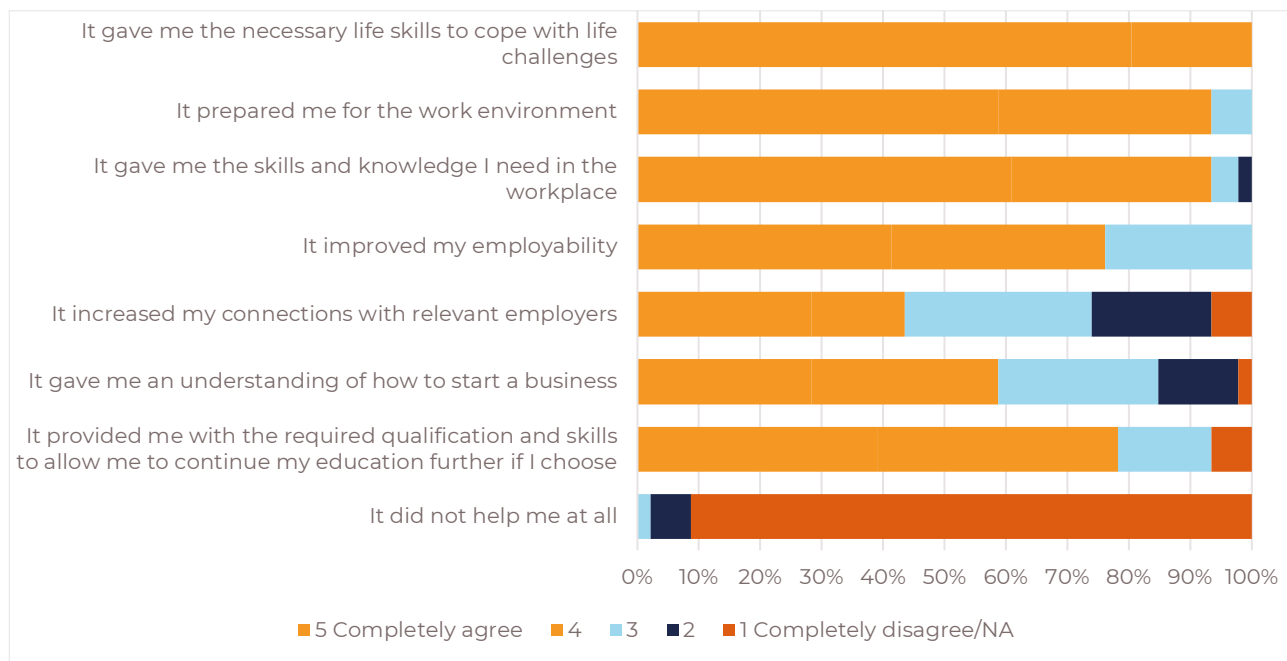
Participants reported that the inclusion of life skills modules, and the counselling and attention to psychosocial wellbeing set this project apart from other programmes:

“What was also different was that they kept track, and they understood that we are from disadvantaged families. So, at the beginning of the day, they always checked if we are in the right state of mind and checked if you are emotionally okay for us to be able to perform throughout the day. They also provided counselling services for us when we are facing personal issues that could have prevented us from completing the project.”

“This project is different because it offers life skills counselling and support, we had sessions where we would debrief in the mornings and check our psychosocial well-being before going to class and before going on site, so this was different.”

Further, in the CATI, young people from Braamfischerville were asked what they had found most valuable about participating in the project, and it can be seen that 80% of respondents strongly agreed that participating in the project gave them the skills that they needed to cope with life challenges, while around 60% strongly agreed that participating prepared them for the work environment and gave them the skills and knowledge that they needed in the workplace.

Figure 6: What was most valuable about the training? (Braamfischerville respondents only)



This highlights the extent that young people felt that the training prepared them to access opportunities when they completed the project.

Implementation of the service

During the course of the project service activities were completed at the six primary schools that had been identified. This work included filling and plastering cracks in walls; sealing roofs; replacing ceilings; painting; carpentry; replacing broken fixtures; plumbing; installing electrical fittings; and brick laying. And, while the building of a hall at Siyabonga Secondary School was delayed due to problems getting the plans approved, work done at the school included earthworks and the construction of drainage for the diversion of storm water, as well as some bricklaying.

The young people reported that seeing the impact of their work on the way that children felt about their schools made them feel happy and valued.

"We worked in the primary school and what I liked the most was doing the painting and art drawing on the Grade R classes, the smile and the excitement on the children's faces was heartwarming; also doing plumbing on the toilets was great and seeing the children using the toilets and being happy was a great feeling."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville)

"The children were very excited to see their newly painted school because it looked bright and neat, they were also able to use the toilet because before we did the renovations, they would need to block their nose when entering the toilets because of the smell but after we renovated, they were happy to use a clean and hygienic toilet."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville)

Several participants reported feeling proud of their ability to contribute to improving the quality of the educational experience of children in their communities:

"I am very proud because we did art drawings [in] the classrooms, we painted the schools and repaired the toilets. I was proud to see that the toilets were now hygienic, and the children were happy to use the toilets, and they were smiling when they saw their painted classes."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville)

"We also worked on a house in the community, and we did roofing, I am always proud of the work I did, and I make sure I pass that house each day to see the work that I have done, and it makes me feel great."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville)

"I worked at my own primary school where I attended school before. I was very proud and everyone else around me was proud."

(FIP participant, Braamfischerville)

This highlights the importance of each aspect of the model and the different contributions that these made to learners in the school and the youth participants.

And what happened when the implementation of the training & service component of the project was complete?

The case study began with an indication of the outcomes achieved through the project and highlighted the number of young people in Braamfischerville that had accessed opportunities once the project was complete.

In addition to the preparation to access opportunities that were provided during the project, as noted previously, FIP also included aftercare a (as a component of the training programme), which sought to provide FIP graduates (Alumni) with support to access different opportunities or pathways in areas such as employment, self-employment, and further learning. This process is coordinated and facilitated by YBSA Placement Coordinator and supported by Programme Coordinators and Leadership Officers. Graduates receive different forms of support such as preparing their curriculum vitae, preparing for job interviews, linkages to opportunities, starting their businesses, registering their businesses with different authorities, information on bursaries and scholarships and other forms of training that will enhance their employability.

In the engagement with some of the graduates that had secured employment, we found that several of graduates indicated that although they were not working in the fields in which they trained through the FIP, the life skills training they received had enabled them to secure and retain employment in other industries.

"My first job after the programme was directly linked to what I was doing and now in my current job I am still able to use the skills that I received in the programme, I have a lot of confidence, I understand how the workplace operates, I know I need to be punctual when going to work."

"I got a job after the programme and they assisted me to get the job, I stayed in the job for a year. Now I am in another job, and I do quality control and inspection in an Electrical engineering field/industry. The programme prepared me well for the industry for example I did not know what a toolbox looked like and now when I see it in industry, I know which tool is used for which job; I learned how to carry myself in a workplace, I know about housekeeping and time keeping."

"I found a job not relevant to the skills I received from the programme; I work as a consultant at Vodacom, but the programme assisted me with skills such as punctuality and workplace ethics which I am now using in my workplace."

Graduates of the FIP from Braamfischerville generally felt that the project had prepared them well for the process of finding employment and livelihood opportunities. However, respondents reported varying experiences of the type of support that they had received from the FIP after they graduated, with some suggesting this may be linked to who was assigned to them. The most frequently reported support that participants remembered receiving was help with formatting their CVs, information on how to answer interview questions, and information about jobs that were available.

Some participants suggested that they would have liked more support after the project ended, with several stating that they would have appreciated more support related to entrepreneurship, advice on submitting job applications, and opportunities to network with potential employers. Yet YBSA members indicated that in some cases participants did not attend interviews that they had helped set up and the supplier in the community indicated that he had offered to distribute participants' CVs for them, but that only one graduate had taken up his offer.

During the evaluation process, only one of the 17 employed graduates indicated that they were directly assisted by the project to find employment. The remainder found their jobs primarily by sending out their CVs or asking family and friends for leads. The graduates generally reported that participating in the project had a positive impact on their preparedness to enter the job market. However, both respondents who were running a business stated that the project had influenced their preparedness to run a business, indicating that the FIP gave them quality equipment, tools and skills to get them started, and that it taught them how to work with people from different backgrounds with different personalities.

All of the eight respondents from Braamfischerville who were studying at the time of the follow up survey indicated that the FIP had influenced their preparedness for further studies positively. For example, respondents stated:

"The course motivated me to pursue as many opportunities as I can, that's why I am studying for a different qualification so that I broaden my skill set."

"It gave me the sense of discipline and motivation and studying methods I now apply in my studies."

"It gave me the confidence and motivation to further my studies."

The most common reason cited by unemployed graduates for being unemployed was, "I was working, but the contract ended", followed by, "there is not enough information about available jobs", and "there are no job opportunities at all in the area where I live". When asked what they thought the FIP could do differently to support graduates in finding employment, 15 respondents said that they would have like more information about available jobs, while 11 noted that they would have benefited from opportunities to network with people who might assist in them in the process of finding employment.

Sustaining the involvement of the community through the life cycle of the project

Finally, ensuring that the local community remained interested and invested in the project was an important aspect of the FIP. As mentioned as part of the introduction of the project in Braamfischerville, a town hall meeting was convened by TNF to brief and consult with a broad spectrum of stakeholders. This included local councillors, ward committee representatives, political parties (youth leagues) representatives, civil society, school representatives as well as local youth and the general community over

100 individuals attended this briefing and consultation meeting. During this meeting, the selection criteria for schools and participants was shared.

After the schools and participants were selected, stakeholder consultation sessions with COJ representatives were then again convened by YBSA and this was attended by six local councillors, municipal personnel and TNF / YBSA representatives.

TNF also convened a local stakeholder consultation session aimed at securing broader project support and referrals. These meetings were attended by over 20 civil society organizations representatives, local business suppliers, and community policing forums. These sessions were seen as integral to planning the next steps of the project.

In addition to these consultative meetings, the project found creative ways to actively connect with parents. For example, at the end of the mental toughness training a commitment ceremony was held and attended by the participants, parents, local leaders and district officials from the Department of Education as well as project partners. During this ceremony participants pledged their commitment to the project and established a code of conduct for the project.

The project also sought to involve local companies in the project. This included a focus on the supply hardware and building materials but also encouraged a wider role. One local supplier noted that he was motivated to participate in the project because he wanted to give young people from his community skills that would enable them to have a better future, while also exposing them to the practical aspects of entrepreneurship.

Further, the youth themselves were encouraged to play an active role in the project. Youth respondents in the Focus Groups and interviews generally reported that they were able to provide feedback during their training, and that their feedback was considered and resulted in some changes in project implementation. For example, a participant reported that they asked to be assigned to a school closer to their home after telling the project team that they were struggling to get to the work site on time. Another participant noted that the team responded to their struggles with the theoretical components of the training by changing the daily schedule to enable participants to focus on theory in the mornings when they were “still active and awake”. In contrast to these reports, one respondent said that they thought some participants were worried that if they gave negative feedback, they would lose the opportunity to participate in the project, while another participant felt that their complaint about delays in the delivery of equipment was not well received.



2022-2023: EXPANDING THE PROJECT TO IVORY PARK AND ELDORADO PARK

What did the project learn from Braamfischerville as it sought to replicate the implementation of the model in Ivory Park and Eldorado Park

As the team set out to replicate the model in other communities they sought to build on its strengths, including successfully engaging young people from the schools by connecting with them in their own environments, making them feel valued. These changes are explored in this next chapter of the case study – and the project – which outlines how the project built on the lessons learnt to enhance the project. As observed by a respondent from YBSA, who highlighted the importance of learning through the implementation process,

“We were learning and implementing as we were going. And it became a success. So, when we moved to the other communities, we already had idea of how we're going to run things, the dynamics that we might come across in other communities.”

Key areas of change included:

Refining the design

The selection process: while partners were positive about the selection criteria and process there were a few participants who dropped out after the mental toughness training and had to be replaced as well as others who dropped out during the implementation of the project.

One test of the selection process is the throughput rate in the project: YBSA reports that of the 100 young people selected for the project in Braamfischerville, 100 started, and 17 dropped out before completing the project, so 83 young people graduated. In interviews for this case, YBSA respondents indicated that the attrition rate of 13% is slightly lower than other projects working with youth in South Africa, which average a 15% drop out rate. Of the 13% young people who left the project before completion, about 53% exited directly into other employment and learnership opportunities.

When reflecting on the implications for the selection process, partners considered whether there was a need to place a stronger emphasis on whether young people have an aptitude for the construction industry at the point of selection. However, the partners agreed that they did not want to exclude people and so the project team explored how to better tailor the support the young people would require during the implementation of the project. For this reason, based on the experiences in Braamfischerville, the project team defined the competencies that are required by the Building and Civil Construction industry and worked with the Department of Employment and Labour who conducted an Aptitude Test and Skills Audit on participants. The results of these assessments were then utilised by the project to better support participants and close any identified gaps.

The service component: A key issue that arose during Braamfischerville related to the need to ensure young people were able to implement service activities as planned. In this regard, some concerns were raised about delays in obtaining practical equipment and materials and the lack of communication about the reasons for these delays or about when this would be resolved: the project team explored how this could be avoided in the continued implementation of the project. The team recognised that in reality these delays could not always be avoided but that where this happens there needs to be clear communication with participants and others effected by the delays and this mechanism was introduced into the project.

Related to access to service opportunities, the steep learning curve encountered by the project team when it came to building the school hall at Braamfischerville was identified by several respondents as an important challenge that forced them to adapt, learn, and engage with a wider range of individuals and organisations:

“...The hall is also our first experience because we have never built a hall before. There are a lot of things involved that we were not aware of ... We are building in Ivory Park, and we learned from the experience in Braamfischerville about the importance of planning and ensuring all the paperwork and approvals are in place.”
(YBSA respondent).

However, as will be evidenced in this chapter, this thorny issue is not yet resolved and will require decisions as the project is replicated further. This is returned to in the final section of this report.

Aftercare: the project therefore retained the 12-month integrated model, which had been very effective, but sought to strengthen the aftercare component of the project. In this regard the team focused more strongly on entrepreneurship and livelihood training. As learnt from the experience in Braamfischerville the entrepreneurship and livelihood training were implemented in the third quarter of the project after learning through feedback collected by YBSA this youth training component went well in that they were able to see impact. For example, some young people started using their technical skills to access ‘side hustles’ like building perimeter and security walls for their neighbours.

Determining what worked, the aftercare then included this Entrepreneurship/livelihoods training component in addition to support to access employment and further studies.

Strengthening the partnership and wider collaboration

In terms of building the **partnership between TNF and YBSA:** we found that while initially TNF played more of an oversight role there was increasingly a recognition that the strengths of the partnership needed to be translated to a local level. TNF therefore shifted to playing a more hands-on approach in communities, working more closely with YBSA, to ensure the on-going building of relationships. This also pointed to as an important aspect of the project’s successful implementation:

“It has improved a lot over the months where we have TNF coming down, wanting to know, wanting to see the young people and see the work that is done on ground. So, I think that was one area, but I have seen a lot of improvement. I’ve seen the programs manager coming down, seeing the actual work that’s being done compared to just being behind the scenes and saying, “How is it going?”
(YBSA respondent).

Efforts were also made to **strengthen the collaboration with partners in the community.** During the process of implementing the FIP in Braamfischerville, the core project partners (TNF and YBSA) recognised the need to expand and strengthen partnerships across role players. The respondent from TNF observed that these partnerships are vital to enabling them to progress more quickly than might have otherwise been possible. Discussing the role of government in the FIP, for example, they noted that the project:

“...needed to be owned by the community, but it also needed to have government at the table as we are making decisions about the way forward ... making sure that the government was a party that was allowed to make decisions and help us troubleshoot challenges when we encountered them. A lot of what we’re leveraging with the government is their access to understanding how these processes work. But also, be quickly introduced to key individuals who can help us find information that we need and also help us fast track the approvals or anything else that we need.”

The core project partners also spoke to the value of establishing and maintaining productive partnerships with built environment professionals as a means of accessing specific expertise and advice and promoting joint resource mobilisation efforts with organisations that shared the project's vision.

They therefore decided to establish a project steering committee, including architects, land surveyors, and civil engineers, which would be responsible for managing the technical aspects of project implementation. This committee ensured that the process of designing building plans and conducting site surveys was completed. Representatives from the infrastructure division of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) were also part of the steering committee enabling them to provide input into the design process for the SDPs before they were submitted to the COJ Town Planning Department for approval. Building plans were subsequently approved for school halls at Eqiniswa Secondary School and Willow Crescent Secondary School.

A respondent from GDE noted that their contribution to this committee supported the effective coordination of the project as they were able to provide the required information and inputs as well as connect project partners with internal experts within the department. This gave the department access to expertise that ensured that all the protocols were followed in getting the building plans approved for both Ivory Park and Eldorado Park.

The civil and structural engineering firm that partnered with the FIP also pointed to the value of being able to sit down with the other partners to explain the range of potential considerations that needed to be accounted for in undertaking construction projects.

Engaging with the wider community

The implementation team also understood the importance of identifying and engaging with the wider community prior to project implementation. This was undertaken in a manner that integrated their experience in Braamfischerville, while ensuring that these processes took the differences across communities into account. A respondent from YBSA observed that each community in which the project was implemented responded differently to the team's proposals. They noted that this made it critical to establish strong community level relationships to mitigate possible challenges around local social and political dynamics that might affect access to the project for schools or trainees.

"You will not always get the same response or buy in, especially at the beginning of implementing the project. Therefore, it is necessary to create solid relationships with community stakeholders from the time of introducing the project to the time of approaching the schools."
(YBSA respondent)

And, as observed by another respondent there was a need to ensure that local suppliers were aware of the opportunities that could be generated through the project indicating that these should be *"communicated upfront so that the message to the community about how they would want to [participate], and that the benefit goes beyond just the learners and having the asset, but there will actually be economic opportunities"*.

The engagement of the community, including local councillors, from the very start in the 'townhall' meetings was an important factor in ensuring that there was a supportive environment for the project's implementation process.

This engagement was sustained throughout the implementation of the project in Ivory Park and Eldorado Park. A similar approach was followed in these two communities. Initially, town hall meetings were held with over 100 stakeholders in each community, these stakeholders included local councillors, ward committees' representatives, political parties (youth leagues) representatives, civil society, school

representatives as well as local youth and the general community. The selection criteria for schools and participants were shared during these briefing and consultation meetings.

This was followed by briefing sessions specifically for SGBs and attended by 20 SGB members and school principals from various selected schools across the two communities and provided detailed information about the project.

Youth pre-project briefing sessions were then held to share application information, and they were attended by over 350 young people (200 attendees in Ivory Park and 150 attendees in Eldorado Park), Youth NGO's / CBO's, political youth leagues, schools' representatives across both communities. Subsequent to this, stakeholder consultation sessions with COJ representatives were convened by YBSA, with municipal personnel and TNF / YBSA representatives (attended by 6 people in Ivory Park and 20 in Eldorado Park) to negotiate for training venues and project support with building plans. Finally, local stakeholder consultation sessions aimed at securing broader project support and referrals were held and attended by 20 people in each community.

This process of deep community engagement allowed the implementing team to address difficult issues confronting the project. This deepening of engagement was found to be critical to the implementation of the project: for example, in Ivory Park some councillors wanted the project to only benefit their wards and in Eldorado Park a few councillors wanted to change the implementation process to work at two primary schools in each ward. These issues were resolved by highlighting the importance of the project to the community as a whole and encouraging all role players to see the value of the project to building social cohesion.

A school principal from Eldorado Park reflected on the process of engaging with the project team, noting that they were responsive to the community's needs. She discussed the fact that their local principals' forum met with TNF to discuss which schools should benefit from the project, and that an agreement was reached to focus on the no-fee schools in the community, as these were in greater need of maintenance and support.

YBSA observed that while ongoing stakeholder management, engagement, and communication can be challenging, it is extremely effective in building trust and understanding among stakeholders.

Rolling out the project

Recruitment and selection

A total of 200 youth were recruited across the two communities (100 in each community). Project partners reported that they were generally impressed with the calibre of the youth participants. The positive value of the project working with young people from the schools was again reinforced in the implementation in these two additional communities. Having these young people work with their former teachers reportedly contributed to building their confidence and sense of pride.

The one issue that was raised by one principal is that the school experienced difficulties with some participants who were battling with substance abuse and who stole some equipment and copper piping from the school. They felt that participants should have a background check conducted as part of their recruitment to limit the potential for this type of problem. These individuals were dismissed from the project following

Appointment of team leaders from Braamfischerville

When the project was established in Ivory Park and Eldorado Park, the decision was made to hire former participants from Braamfischerville as facilitators and team leaders. This aimed to enable the passing on of experience gained during the initial year of project implementation, and to create employment opportunities for youth from the initial parts of the project.

the incident, but this did require decisions within the project: including whether to assess young people at selection and to either exclude these young people or, alternatively, as suggested by a principal that was interviewed, put in place further support for participants to overcome their substance abuse prior to engaging in the work. A respondent from YBSA noted that they were “aware that young people were facing a lot of challenges, and this relates to family issues and traumas as well as substance abuse”. However, they decided as a team to ensure that that project remained inclusive and therefore emphasised the focus on substance abuse in the life skills curricula and engaged with organisations such as SANCA and others to strengthen the counselling and support services component of the FIP in those communities.

Rolling out training

The technical training was again provided by Mthoms Trading. Training in Ivory Park began in September 2022 and was completed in January 2023. Summative assessments of the technical training were completed in February 2023. An additional training focusing on green and efficient energy was also conducted in Ivory Park.

Technical training in Eldorado Park was challenging due to the lack of access to an appropriate venue, and the initial training processes were conducted by dividing participants into smaller groups deployed in different venues within Eldorado Stadium. An alternative venue was secured later which could accommodate all the staff and participants.

The life skills, leadership, work readiness, entrepreneurship, and career development training followed the same process as was used in Braamfischerville, with the *Mental Toughness* training being implemented as both a project orientation process and a final stage of participant selection. This was followed by Life Skills Training, focusing on conflict management and resolution, assertive communication, career guidance, substance abuse, bullying, and gender-based violence.

The *Counselling Support and Leadership Development*, training focused on assisting participants in dealing with the psychological and psychosocial challenges they faced. This training also included information on applying for bursaries, institutions of higher learning, and entrepreneurship development.



Finally, once YBSA participants have graduated from their respective projects, the Placement and Project Coordinator was tasked with a responsibility of identifying placement opportunities for them in areas such as employment, assistance with business start-ups and further learning or training opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge. The aftercare support provided through YBSA focused on preparing CVs, starting businesses, and applying to institutions of higher education. The level of support provided in the aftercare for project graduates was adapted based on feedback from the graduates themselves. This entailed providing more information about jobs that were available through registering participants on the YBSA Alumni Group -WhatsApp. Additionally, the entrepreneurship and livelihood training were included in the Aftercare instead of during project implementation as previously done in Braamfischerville.

A respondent from YBSA discussed the need to manage participants' expectations, reporting that a number of project participants thought that they would be placed in jobs after they had completed their training. The respondent said that they responded to this expectation by providing information about job vacancies to participants in the aftercare programme.

Rolling out service activities for participating schools

Schools from Ivory Park and Eldorado Park had to apply to be considered for inclusion in the FIP. This process was managed by TNF. Five primary schools and one secondary school were selected in each of the participating communities. School halls were also planned to be built at the secondary schools that were selected for inclusion in the project.

A principal from an Ivory Park primary school noted that he did not have specific expectations about what the project would deliver, but that the FIP completed the work that needed to be done at their school. In addition, a teacher and SGB member in Ivory Park reported that the project participants were enthusiastic and hardworking, and that they "went the extra mile because we had additional requests, and they never reacted in a negative way or said that it is not part of their job. We asked them to fix other small things that were not in the scope [of the project's work] like fixing chairs and cupboards, and they did that with no complaints".

However, as mentioned previously, there were still some concerns about delays in the delivery of building materials, which meant that young people did not have the resources to do their work.

In addition to this, as alluded to previously, there were still challenges relating to the building of the hall. As noted by a project partner from a civil engineering firm:

"The key lessons we've already learned for Eldorado Park. Get the land usage approved first, before we can start building. Not just go ahead and build. I arranged the earthworks, the earthworks were done, and then we got a person on site with a spade in the ground, because there's no official approvals in place."

Given these challenges, the extent that new construction is possible as part of service requires consideration. This is returned to in the recommendations contained in this report.

KEY INSIGHTS: PROMOTING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR GROWTH AND BUILDING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

An innovative partnership that built on the strengths of both organisations

One of the most frequently identified factors contributing to the project's success was the strength of the partnership between TNF and YBSA. As shown in the case study, each organization was addressing a similar challenge but from different perspectives. TNF was primarily concerned with the deteriorating infrastructure of schools in the KSP, and the recurring issue of vandalism and neglect, which stemmed from a lack of community ownership over the schools. On the other hand, YBSA was concerned with equipping young people—often products of these under-resourced schools—with skills and a sense of responsibility, inspiring them to protect rather than damage the schools. This joint focus on a common problem made for a meaningful partnership that yielded important results.

And the extent that this has evolved into a meaningful partnership which has yielded real value is evidenced in this case study. This collective commitment was shown by the TNF and YBSA team, as noted by respondents:

“What made this project a success was the commitment from the team, especially the team leaders from Youth Build SA. We witnessed them leading these young people and [assembling] them in the mornings and keeping them motivated and supporting them.”

The partnership was strengthened by ongoing, structured, engagement between the lead partners: a respondent from YBSA reported that holding these weekly meetings enabled them to problem solve on an ongoing basis.

A focus on building community ‘co-ownership’

Partners held a range of community level meetings across the 3 communities. These included:

- SGB briefing sessions which were convened by TNF and YBSA
- Stakeholder consultation sessions (including with civil society organisations, local businesses, local churches and the police)
- Consultation sessions with local government representatives (including councillors and City of Johannesburg officials).

This was further strengthened by the partners' ability to expand the partnership where needed to ensure the success of the project. As indicated in this case study, the inclusion of built environment professionals, such as architects, land surveyors, and civil engineers to work alongside representatives from the Gauteng Department of Education's (GDE) infrastructure division in the Steering Committee, addressed the challenges encountered in the planning for the community hall in Braamfischerville, and it significantly increased the project's capacity for maintenance and infrastructure development. This ability of the project to bring players together who had not traditionally worked together before was also seen as a real value-add of the project. The team also expanded the collaboration to include the Community Policing Forum in response to challenges like theft of construction materials and equipment.

We have shown that, within the implementation of the project, the management team was responsive to issues on the ground relating to stakeholder engagement and was able to quickly step up to address potential challenges. For instance, to address possible political interference, a Community Liaison Officer was appointed to the TNF team to explain the recruitment criteria and process to the community. The officer also engaged with the school's SMT and SGB to discuss labour recruitment processes.

This co-ownership was further strengthened by hiring former participants from Braamfischerville as facilitators and team leaders. The project also created space for participants to provide feedback during the

project. During the focus groups conducted as part of the development of the case study young people confirmed that they felt comfortable providing feedback and engaging project management around issues which arose.

A respondent from the Department of Basic Education observed that these engagements are critical but suggested that this could be further strengthened in future implementation if government is involved from the very beginning so that they can alleviate any conflict that may arise with community stakeholders. They also emphasised that these relationships will be critical for sustaining community ownership and responsibility for the assets.

The one area that may require further attention in the implementation of the project relates to the involvement of the parents. While we highlighted the ways in which parents were involved in the project, we found that we could not reach parents whose children may have benefitted from the project, despite multiple attempts. This may indicate that they are insufficiently involved in project design and implementation. This echoes the challenge of SGBs in these communities who also struggle to retain the involvement of parents. This suggests that finding ways to involve parents considering their multiple responsibilities needs to be explored.

A responsive youth-centred project

A respondent from YBSA emphasised the importance of maintaining a flexible approach to implementing youth development work, noting that they had to repeatedly adapt their approach as they worked across different communities and in different contexts.

“...With youth development specifically, it is important to be flexible. And we are willing to chop and change things as we go. So, there are instances where we have changed how we procure materials, for instance, in communities as part of the intervention of getting materials. And there has been instances where we had to change how we do training, whether both the technical training, life skills, or entrepreneurship training, because at that time we were either experiencing challenges with regards to training or unavailability of training venues.”

The ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and to strengthen and build partnerships to deal with the challenges that arose, ultimately contributed to the success of the project. This was also evident in the changes made in the approach to working with local suppliers.

A respondent from YBSA noted that the multifaceted nature of the project, including technical training (including practical application), and life skills training, as well as wrap around support such as building resilience, leadership development and access to counselling, which was provided through FIP had enabled young people to grow:

“...We also witnessed the young people face their troubles anxiety and depression through the various counselling support that was provided. We engaged with different organizations to assist the young people to cope with these challenges.”
(YBSA respondent)

The team working on the project also understood young people and how to support their development in more tacit ways. As observed by one respondent,

“TNF put people that have knowledge and skills to work with young people in the community and to motivate these youngsters and to make them understand that they still have a chance and can still further their education, further their skills and can still be active economic citizens.”
(Local supplier partner)

By meeting these recruits where they were and remaining flexible, the project enabled them to perform at their best. The ability to work with young people in a responsive and empathetic manner was particularly important when it came to working with the social issues confronting young people.

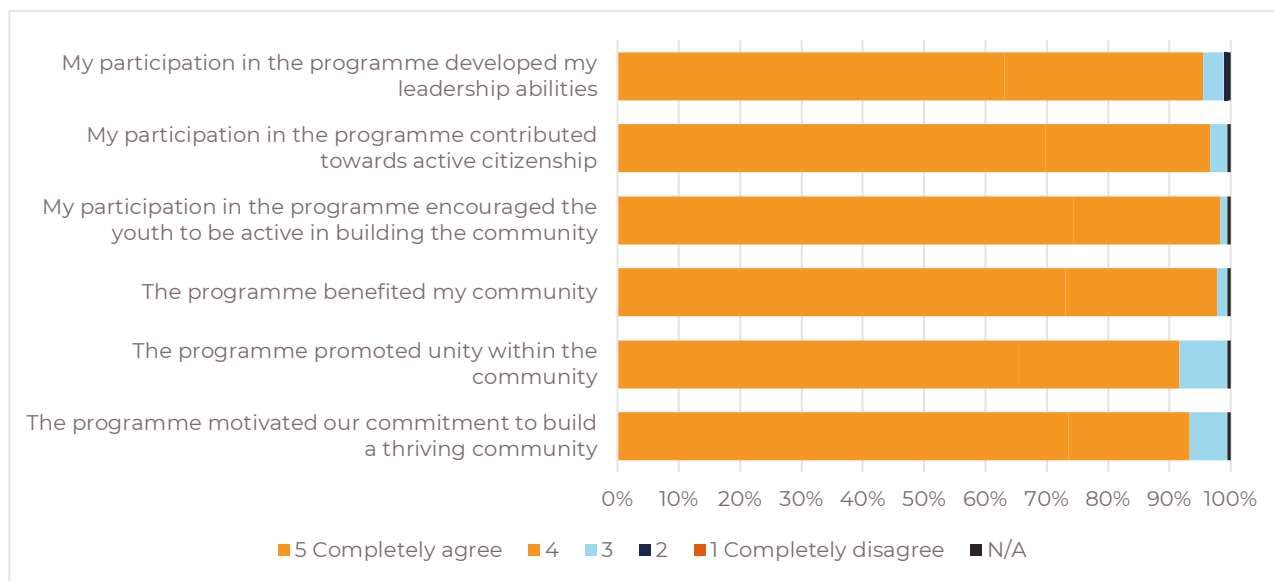
Although we note that the employment outcomes for the Braamfischerville cohort are good, we also see that there were a few missed opportunities for getting young people into employment or even into a 'hustle': the supplier interviewed for this research indicated that his offers to print business cards for the graduates and circulate their CVs to customers at his hardware store was only taken up by one graduate.

Additionally, the project partnered with social workers and wellness organisations in response to psychosocial challenges and wellbeing as well as substance abuse challenges that transpired.

The value of service

The service was selected in ways that benefitted the schools as well the young people themselves. With respect to the provision of upgraded infrastructure at township schools through the FIP is an important outcome of the project. As shown, respondents noted that these improvements had direct benefits for learners in schools. The principal of the primary school commented on the soup kitchen built by FIP indicating that this had created a space where it was "easier for the children to be served with dignity" and had opened up a room that can be used as a classroom. Young people confirmed the sense of pride that this work had yielded. This is illustrated in Figure 7 below, which shows the results of the CATI survey, which shows that most respondents strongly agreed that the participating in the project had a positive impact on both community building and personal development:

Figure 7: What effect did participating in the project have?



Educators and school management confirmed the extent that the involvement of youth in these services had been exciting for the youth and was seen as important by the community. As indicated by a respondent,

"We observed the trainees to be excited about the work. They came in on time and we could see that they were proud of the work that they were doing. We also saw those who have children at [the] school bond with their children [at] breaks. We don't know whether they have access to jobs or further education at the moment, but our perception of them while they were at the school was a positive attitude and appreciation for the opportunity."
(School principal)

Respondents also confirmed that the project had built a sense of commitment - amongst FIP participants - to their communities indicating that many of them used the skills they had learned to benefit people in their communities. One respondent discussed how one of the young people who had completed the project had used their skills to refurbish their mother's kitchen, while another had taken it upon himself to fix the bridge connecting his informal settlement to the main road.

However, the one issue that needs to be confronted to ensure the service can contribute to the intended outcomes of the project is that it is critical the service is able to continue without interruption. This requires plans to be put in place to ensure that the building materials are delivered on time and that schools that are selected are ready and have sufficient opportunities for maintenance.

Leveraging partnerships to manage risk and share costs

One of the challenges faced by many youth service projects is the high cost of service activities. This project encountered similar issues due to the high cost of construction materials and various administrative expenses involved in managing its different components. However, partnering with the GDE helped reduce some of these costs by avoiding duplication of efforts. From the start, the FIP aligned its renovation plans with the GDE's schedule, and throughout the project roll-out in Ivory Park and Eldorado Park, there were ongoing discussions between GDE and FIP regarding planned infrastructure improvements. For instance, in one Eldorado Park school where the FIP had planned maintenance activities, it was discovered that these tasks were already scheduled to be handled by GDE contractors. Through the Project Steering Committee, it was decided that the FIP team would focus on refurbishing the plumbing system, which was an urgent need for the school at the time.

In other cases, school principals had arranged for maintenance work, such as paving, and the project participants were able to assist with these tasks. A respondent from TNF shared that some school principals in Braamfischerville contributed paint, painting supplies, and other building materials from their own budgets at the outset of the project. In another case, a principal from Ivory Park reported that participants helped complete painting work that had been funded by a private donor.

Additionally, when budget overruns occurred, the project partners secured additional funding from other donors. Notably, TNF, through a referral from YBSA, obtained a R13.5 million grant from the Oak Foundation. YBSA also secured further funding from JP Morgan to support project implementation staff. The Construction SETA contributed by funding the training of 20 young people in tiling and paving during the construction of Eqinisiweni Hall in Ivory Park and is currently subsidising their salaries. The project has also applied to the Construction SETA for salary subsidies for the young people who will be employed in the construction of the upcoming Willow Crescent School Hall in Eldorado Park. Lastly, GIZ provided toolboxes to all graduates at the project's conclusion in Ivory Park.

The ability to secure this extra funding was viewed as a positive reflection of the FIP's value. However, there was a concern that these over-runs should have been better planned for, and a respondent indicated that there was a need for a more comprehensive "end-to-end budget" that could account for unknowns, contingencies, and emergencies. Some examples of such unknowns and emergencies includes the unexpected costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the project faced challenges related to the construction costs, particularly the widespread theft of equipment, tools, and materials in some of the schools. A respondent notes that this problem could have been anticipated such that there was a budget for a central storage facility.

The other risk that respondents suggested needs to be better managed in the future relates to the delays in construction because compliance issues had not been fully addressed. For instance, there were challenges experienced in obtaining the necessary documents and approvals for Siyabonga Secondary School from the GDE and the municipality, as well as dealing with land survey complexities and the acquisition of land. These issues led to delays in implementing key project activities and incurred additional, unbudgeted costs. These kinds of potential risks need to be identified, and plans put in place to mitigate

these risks. The partnership put significant efforts into trying to address this issue, but it is clear that resolving the issue is beyond the scope of the project. However, the consequences of the incomplete construction extend beyond the absence of a valuable community resource; it also affects the employment and training opportunities for young people. The establishment of the project steering committee was critical in the success of obtaining building plans approved in Ivory Park and Eldorado Park.

The need for a stronger Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system

According to some project team respondents, the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system was not sufficiently robust. The challenges in monitoring and evaluation, together with the absence of a project baseline, made it more difficult to consistently collect relevant project data to track and measure the implementation and outcomes of the project, which according to one respondent, compromised the ability of partners to understand change and learn through these processes.



CONCLUSION

The FIP is an innovative approach to addressing multiple challenges facing township communities in South Africa and has demonstrated its effectiveness in the three communities it has operated in, to date.

A summary of these achievements is that:



Participants used their skills to access income generating options and to improve their homes and communities. Others pursued their studies in higher education and training. In so doing they also became recognised community leaders,



School learners have accessed improved and critical infrastructure that encourages them to look forward to a school day while producing a conducive and safe environment for learning. They also had a chance to see what graduates from their schools could achieve and how they could contribute to their schools and communities.



Township suppliers have created networks within the community while growing their businesses and expanding their customer base as well as increasing sales since the project. Thus, the project both built their brands and encouraged them to become active members of their community.



Schools: The project benefited the schools by enabling the teachers and the learners to access critical infrastructure. This represented an important development as the schools really lacked maintenance and this project provided the services that the schools have not been able to implement for years due to budget constraints. Additionally, learners have benefited from safe, clean, up to standard and conducive learning environments.



Communities: The project was supported by the Office of the MEC, Ward Councillors, School Governing bodies, principals, teachers, parents, learners and FIP participants. Additionally, this project included consultation and engagement with the community from the onset especially through townhall meetings. Communities were made aware of the design of the project and timelines, the election of wards and schools and participants as well as the intended outcomes and gain for the community.



Partners: The partners have expressed how they have learnt an effective partnership model through this project indicating that it was a success because of transparency, communication, proper planning and passionate leadership. The partners as well as stakeholders have committed that they are willing to be part of this project in the future highlighting that the project was a success in that it involved clear and consistent communication and engagement, professionalism, passionate leadership and transparency as well as clear goals that were set with joint decision making.

In summary, we found that the project:

RELEVANCE	Is seen as highly relevant for youth, for schools & for communities. The FIP effectively addressed township school infrastructure and youth unemployment, gaining support from various partners due to its innovative approach. This relevance allowed the project to tackle both fundamental problems effectively.
COHERENCE	Is very integrated, where the different pieces reinforce each other. The FIP integrated technical and life skills training to address local issues, ensuring that all involved parties understood how the project components worked together to achieve the overall goals.
EFFECTIVENESS	Has many effective aspects but has experienced some challenges. The model was effective in meeting its objectives, but improvements are needed in screening youth for substance abuse and ensuring timely delivery of materials. The simultaneous upgrading of school infrastructure and skill development for unemployed youth showed promise but may require refinement. Most respondents felt their expectations of the FIP were met to some extent.
EFFICIENCY	Was by and large efficient, although there were some delays around delivery of material etc. The FIP faced challenges such as delays in project plan approvals and unexpected costs for securing building materials. Despite these issues, the project met its objectives on time and successfully engaged financial partners.
SUSTAINABILITY	Is definitely sustainable. The net benefits of the project are likely to continue. Improved school infrastructure will enhance educational quality, while the skills and qualifications gained by youth participants will have ongoing benefits. The project also increased youth resilience, commitment, and active citizenship, fostering a sense of responsibility towards local schools as community assets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emerging from this case, we propose recommendations in seven broad categories:

01. Selection of young people

- Clearly define selection criteria and selection for project participants in the project design (considering positive feedback when young people are from the schools and how this in turn builds community ownership and sense of pride of schools and young people as well as sense of aspiration of school-going children – can this criteria be factored in? What would that look like?)
- Develop a plan to communicate these criteria together with the selection process (who is involved and how it is done) in a transparent manner to all key stakeholders to assist to manage competing pressures pertaining to who should access the project.
- Consider inclusiveness within the selection criterion in terms of focusing on the selection of young people with learning challenges. (Again, considering the positive feedback from young people who indicated that they received continuous individual attention and that the facilitators were able to help them address their strengths and weaknesses during the theoretical and technical learning)

02. Integrated model

- The model is working very well and young people are able to learn, develop confidence and apply their skills but need to reflect on how entrepreneurship is both part of the project and part of aftercare.
- Consider potential pathways that young people could access at the end of the project: while the construction field is the focus of the project there is a need to explore other opportunities that might be accessible to graduates. This would allow the project to customise its support enable young people to find their passion.
- This wider lens on opportunities should be part of the process of encouraging more young people to taking up 'hustle' opportunities.
- Build and strengthen aftercare:
 - Consider ways of extending support provided to graduates: could be tailored based on an assessment of what discourages young people from taking up opportunities.
 - Encourage graduates to network with potential employers and to take up opportunities that are made available to them.

03. Selecting schools & projects for service

- Consider how to strengthen engagement with GDE to allow the project to align their selection of schools with renovations planned by the GDE.
- Ensure that the selected schools have 'enough' repair and maintenance opportunities for project participants to apply their skills.
- Include 'enabling management' as a criteria for school selection.

- Consider conditions for building school halls (to ensure there are not too many delays): one key opportunity emerging is to explore the possibility of implementing larger projects when permissions have already been granted as part of GDE plans (building on partnership with GDE).

04. Understanding who the community 'is'

- Note the extent that participants and stakeholders reflect a sense of co-ownership but questions about who needs to be consulted/ involved - how this is sustained through the life of the project and beyond?
- Need to identify who the community is (this may differ for each community) – should it involve which stakeholders and what role should community members play (particularly those who are parents of the young people in the project and those who are parents of children in the schools where the project is being implemented) and define what role for each stakeholder/ role player.
- Ensure there are processes in place to sustain stakeholder engagement and management throughout the life of the project
- Effectively engage with SGB across KSP schools as there are more opportunities to link with parents and encourage their active participation in the project which in turn could encourage community co-ownership.

05. Monitoring the process

- Make sure that processes are in place to monitor activities (track) and to discuss and address challenges as they arise.
- Consider ways to include 'the community' in the monitoring process (seeing any challenges that need to be addressed)
- As part of building the MERL system for the project there is a need to find ways to measure whether community co-ownership has been achieved and assets are valued).
- Share this review with the community as part of building learning and tackling issues of sustainability.

06. Sustainability

- Explore ways to enable school leadership to protect and maintain assets at the end of the project – this could include support on fundraising skills, including involving the community in fundraising to maintain the infrastructure (or even initiate new maintenance projects independently)
- Consider how the eco-system built through the project can be sustained to continue to support the young people to access opportunities (such as through the work with suppliers, local government, etc.)

07. Replication

- Explore ways of replicating the model through engaging with willing partners to take the project to other communities (note GDE has expressed an interest in replicating the model and so this could involve working with GDE to identify the districts to implement this project – where they have plans)

EPILOGUE – APHIWE’S JOURNEY CONTINUED

Throughout the project there was support: this included check-ins to make sure everyone was fine and access to counselling services when participants encountered certain challenges. When Aphiwe was facing some tough issues because her boyfriend was pressurising her to leave the programme, they provided her with support, and this was extended when she chose to continue the project and to stop seeing Siphso. So by the time the project was complete and they were all getting ready for graduation day Aphiwe was excited although she also knew that this was only the beginning of her journey.

Graduation Day was a big event! Aphiwe’s Granny, her brothers and even the neighbours came to the ceremony to see her receive her certificates in Building and Civil Construction, and in Plumbing skills. Again, the team from YouthBuild SA was there to support her and the rest of the group with aftercare. They helped Aphiwe prepare her CV and practice for job interviews, and they gave information on employment opportunities. But there were not many jobs. Aphiwe decided that rather than get discouraged she would use her skills to make a special Christmas present for her Granny. She spoke to three of her friends from the project and the four of them worked together to completely renovate her grandmother’s kitchen while she was away visiting her sister.

When her Granny returned, she was speechless with joy. And some of her neighbours saw what could be done, and asked the ‘Big Four’ if they could assist in some renovations at their houses. And so, the possibility of running a business became something real and Aphiwe and the team went to the YouthBuild Placement Coordinator who helped them to register their business and reminded them that Joe, the hardware shop owner, was very keen to support the graduates. The team set up a meeting with Joe who helped them to work out costs for supplies, and to develop a quotation for their first real job renovating Mme Makatleho’s bakery.

Since then, the ‘Big Four’ have successfully completed three other projects. And they haven’t forgotten about their community – for every project that they get paid for, they spend a small part of the profit doing repairs or maintenance that benefits everyone. They are now looking at ways to grow their business and their next step is to get registered with the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), and they are hoping that with more contracts, they will be able to bring in more of their classmates to work with them.



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