



67 Bathurst Street
PO Box 712 Grahamstown 6139
Tel: (046) 622 8831 Fax: (046) 622 8832
Email: info@raphaelcentre.co.za
Website: www.raphaelcentre.co.za
027-238-NPO PBO 930 016 816



Project Report

Siya Sonke Youth Camp (11-16 years)



Project Composition: Child and Youth Camp
Venue: Hobbiton at Fairewood

Date: 3rd – 7th October 2016



*“Resilience is the process of continual development of personal competence while navigating and negotiating with available resources in the face of adversity (...) People who have happy and fulfilling lives have positive life skills that help them grow through life’s inevitable challenges, rather than being damaged by them”
(The Resilience Report).*

Project Background and Overview

Adolescence is the phase when children and youth are developing and defining their identity (“sense of self”) – which is not an easy discovery path: “Their bodies kick into overdrive. They find themselves disoriented, scared and alone. They become moody, secretive and sarcastic (...). In the teenage years, young people begin their quests for identity”. (<http://psychcentral.com>)

Peer pressure, the search for acknowledgement, and rebellion are only some of the factors which increase the likelihood to engage with health risky behaviors. Recent statistics show that the highest infection rate occurs in the ages from 15-24 years. Here, particularly at risk are young women. But also young gay men are at risk to contract the virus from older sexual partners (UNAIDS 2014 a + b). Approximately 300 000 teenagers are living with HIV in South Africa and will need treatment to remain healthy and physically well. The limited research that exists in Southern Africa suggests that only 20% of adolescents maintain optimal adherence to antiretroviral treatment (Nachege, 2009).

This project is part of the Asset Based Community Development Programme. Through building resilience, promoting purposeful living and foster caring we try to encourage and assist our young generation to develop to purposeful and responsible members of the society.

Project Objectives:

The Siya Sonke youth camp is one of our projects where we seek to assist our adolescents in developing healthy identities, which is especially difficult in their teenage years. In doing so, we hope to get and/ or keep them well: “Young adults who have a strong sense of self are resilient, have a healthy self-esteem and are independent.”¹

What we try to achieve during the camp week is to trigger positive and confident thinking about “the self”, an awareness and appreciation about individual resources of strengths and support as well team thinking, generosity and kindness (versus peer-pressure and exclusion).

References:

Nachege, J.B. et al. (2011) Survival of HIV-Infected Adolescents on Antiretroviral Therapy in Uganda: Findings from a Nationally Representative Cohort in Uganda. PLoS ONE 6(4): 1- 6.

The Resilience Report: <http://www.resiliencereport.com/>, last access: 26.09.2014.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2014a: The GAP Report. Geneva: UNAIDS.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2014b: Ambitious Treatment Targets: Writing the final chapter of the AIDS epidemic- Discussion Paper. Geneva: UNAIDS.

¹ http://parentingteens.about.com/od/agesandstages/f/teen_identity.htm, last access: 26.09.2014.

Project Details

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role	Name/ position	Organization	Contact Information
Project Coordination (planning, supervising, facilitation at the camp, watching kids at night)	Sanelisa Mtwalo	Raphael Centre	sane@raphaelcentre.co.za
Project assistance	Nomfundo Thobi	Raphael Centre	nomfundo@raphaelcentre.co.za

Attendance

The Youth camp at Hobbiton/ Fairewood attending were 19 children and youth. Together with their parents, all of them are taking part in our Siya Sonke project. Furthermore, we invited four teenagers who are associated with Grahamstown Hospice. All youngsters were between 11 and 16 years old (among them 8 girls and 11 boys).

Sanelisa and Nomfundo were planning, supervising and coordinating the camp-activities together with Hobbiton staff. Also, they facilitated the YOLO (You Only Live Once²) activities.

The outdoors and teambuilding exercises were instructed by five Hobbiton staff members. In addition, there was Basil Mills who taught outdoor skills and about snakes and his son who volunteered during the activities as instructor-assistant.



Camp Overview:

The Camp took part from the 3rd until the 7th of October 2016 at Hobbiton/ Fairewood. Under the supervision of Josh Paton, the Hobbiton staff instructed teambuilding and outdoor activities in the mornings. And, Sanelisa as well as Nomfundo facilitated YOLO in the afternoons and journal time in the evenings. For the purposes of mutual respect, responsibility, applying to rules and showing good attitude the youth was involved with the “Hobb-Dollar-Games” which works like a reward-system (see in “Highlights” below).



² YOLO was a pilot-project by Department of Social Development and involves a 5-module-resilience training for learners from High Schools

Camp Highlights:

The children and youth enjoyed very much the activities provided by the Hobbiton facilitators. In particular, what stood out for them, were the team building games and acquiring special skills during activities such as the night hike, wall climbing, abseiling, the Hob-Dollar games and finals (e.g. auction), preparation of the bonfire, as well as the survival camp. In addition, they had great joy in attending aerobics (morning sport) and the talent show where everyone had the chance to show what they can perform best (fashion design, dance, acrobatics). What stood out here was how the fashion designers prepared their costumes with material which was randomly available at the facilities. Basil Mills taught interesting outdoor skills, such as how purifying water, how to do long distance communications without phones, how to make fire without matches. Very exciting and important to learn was how to behave in cases of encounters with snakes as well as first aid on snake bites.

Nomfundo and Sanelisa did YOLO with the children. The modules that we covered were 1) self-identity, self-esteem and self-confidence, 2) assertiveness skills and personal boundaries (versus peer pressure), 3) risky versus healthy behaviour, 4) burning issues, such as HIV/AIDS and other STIs as well as TB.



Before our children went to bed they were given journal-time each evening. Journal time means that they reflected their day at the camp, what stood out for them during the day in writing and by drawings.

Reflection

Our Siya Sonke teenagers appreciated and enjoyed very much the days at Hobbiton. They participated in every activity and given tasks with great enthusiasm. Also, all applied to Camp rules and dealt with one another with great respect. What touched us and feels like a very important story to tell is the disclosure of one of our teenage girls: She is HIV positive and she felt encouraged and comfortable to disclose her status to one of our team members.

What we possibly will suggest to change is the structure of the day. From experiences made at the Camp we would propose to start the day with the Raphael Centre programme. The reason is that in the morning the minds of the children are still open and awake for any intellectual input. And the outdoor and teambuilding activities – as they are mostly physical – seem very suitable for the afternoon!

One other activity to conclude the YOLO programme could be for the teenagers to identify “healthy” role models.