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Siya Sonke – Interim Progress Summary March 2019

Background

We are situated in Makhanda where 80% of residents are unemployed, and their average annual income per capita is ZAR 28,856 (IRR, 2016). We work with people who have lived in poverty for many generations. We facilitate Asset-based Citizen-driven Development (ABCD) which is strength-based, uses a consciousness building approach and has gained traction within the Government, corporate and academic sector as key strategy for socio-economic development in South Africa. Income (for consumption) has been standard measure of poverty. But breaking intergenerational poverty seems to occur through accumulating a multitude of assets (Sherraden 1991, Carter and Barrett 2006, Moser 2008).

ABCD stimulates and supports citizen-led development because assets are catalyst for civic movements, have emancipatory value by providing us with capacity to act, with resources for our livelihood as well as form means for coping with life set-backs. Furthermore, they provide a sense of identity and meaningful engagement with world (ibid.).

Project Aims

-  Social cohesion
-  Economic independence
-  Sustainable community initiatives

Activities

“Siya Sonke” aims at social cohesion, economic independence and sustainable community initiatives. We facilitate 4-day ABCD training courses, promote and encourage self-sufficiency, advocate for (re-) building local economy, promote diversified forms of income generation among our Siya Sonke partners and their social networks and encourage the formation of meaningful alliances whereby people start to exchange knowledge and goods to handle crisis and to facilitate growth. The project closely involves 40 families from Joza community in Makhanda. Most of them are female-headed households. In these families, we are working with 45 adults and 46 children and their social networks (1200 people this year). We facilitated ABCD training with the adults and assisted with family visioning, asset-inventories, goal-setting and developing of plans of action. Uncovering hidden assets of individuals and families has helped to identify and link with opportunities. Family visits serve to check-in on plans and further steps and are facilitated once each term. The children have been engaged with weekly life-skills and tutoring sessions.

Siya Sonke was started in 2017 (pilot phase), gained momentum in 2018 and will last until June 2021.

Sustainability: ABCD uses a consciousness building and strength-based approach. People are key agents of change. With ABCD and Organisational Development workshops we share the necessary tools and people start working independently toward their vision.

Because people start with 'easy to reach' goals (easy to reach because they use and mobilise assets which are available) they build bargaining power (leverage) without much or any external help and re-invest and build from here.

Monitoring and research

With 'Siya Sonke' we wish to understand and show how socio-economic change at individual, family and community level can happen. Since its inception, we have recorded progress made. The most significant tool forms an asset-assessment which was developed by Ikhala Trust and Elamanzi. It has been used for baseline and annual repetition. It records family assets by using the following categories: human, social, natural, material and economic. This allows us and our Siya Sonke partners to track asset-accumulation but also to identify and prioritise the next work foci.

Interim Findings

Within the last 18 months, our Siya Sonke families have started mobilising different forms of assets and increases range between 13% to 27%. The most significant changes are to be found within the human (knowledge, skills, self-confidence and motivation) and social assets (social networks, unity). They are fundamental to mobilise and build other forms of assets: People have significant increases of 'land use' combined with food production (natural assets). Economic assets of families have grown between 10% to 20% - mainly through diversifying forms of income as well as small business. Savings and investment have grown between 17% and 40%.

Our Siya Sonke partners have formed five entrepreneurial groups with the intention to help each other establishing their projects and businesses. The focus for this year is entrepreneurial skills development and promoting community groups.