

LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL

SOUTH AFRICA

#helpkidsrecover

Shining the spotlight on the individuals and programmes changing children's lives

LAUNCHED BY THE AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE (U.S.) IN OCTOBER 2000, LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL! IS AN ANNUAL CAMPAIGN THAT BRINGS AWARENESS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMES (ASPS).

It draws attention to the many ways that these programmes offer learners opportunities to learn new things and unlock their potential.

In 2020, South Africa was the first country on the continent to localise the campaign. With co-ordinating efforts driven by The Youth and After School Programme Office,

Western Cape Government, The Learning Trust and The Community Chest of the Western Cape, the hope is to scale the campaign this year. Everyone can participate in the campaign and the coordinating team have created an online repository with resources, activities and social media kits that can be leveraged by organisations across the country.



After School Programmes even more important since COVID-19

Before COVID-19, South Africa was facing a learning crisis and the plight of children was dire. COVID-19 has exacerbated this crisis and widened inequality and the learning divide. Educationalists believe almost a decade of educational gains have been lost in the last 18 months. Helping children recover is our collective responsibility.

Many ASPs that focus on academic support provide a number of lessons as to how we can address these losses. These programmes have often been designed to build learners knowledge in foundational concepts and competencies instead of being directly the formal curriculum and with almost two years of adjusted schooling there is much to be learnt. Some of these programme adopt a Teaching At the Right Level approach which is different to focusing on the grade specific requirements. After School Programmes also offer additional spaces for learners for to grapple with the gaps in their knowledge and they get more time to practise. This will be important in how we go about our plans to #helpkidsrecover.

Further, at the start of the lockdown period more than a year ago we saw that many programmes were agile and able to quickly adapt to lockdown regulations. Through various adaptations, ASPs leveraged and strengthened their learner and parent relationships, also providing much needed at home learning resources and support to ensure and help learners to continue their educational journey.

The WCG YearBeyond Programme Primary School Academic stream is designed using the TARL approach. It provides struggling Grade 3 and 4 learners with support to 'catch-up' and build the core competencies needed to succeed at school. The programme uses unemployed youth as big brothers/sisters to provide fun, interactive literacy and numeracy support. Started in 2015, the programme provides support in 95 schools and provides a first work experience to over 500 youth who are having a statistically significant impact on learners language and maths performance. (Reference YearBeyond in Review) COVID-19 forced the programme to focus on parents as well as learners further strengthening the programme's impact.

After School Programmes play a key role in diversifying the formal education sector



What we know is that the gap between resourced and under resourced learners is high. We also know that education consists of so much more than what is taught in the formal schooling system. Education includes what we learn in the home, what we read, what we see and what we experience.



After School Programmes (ASPs) have been addressing



learners' unequal access to quality education for decades. These programmes close the gap between under-resourced learners and their resourced peers. They provide spaces for learners to connect with their educational journey in new ways. They provide access to new experiences, books, sport, arts and so much more. They also provide access to caring

adults and champions, the absence of which impedes learning for many. Through these programmes under resourced learners outcomes have improved including reduced school dropout, reduced absenteeism, improved health outcomes, improved academic results, improved wellbeing and access to post-school opportunities and ultimately life stability.

Our second pandemic – a wellbeing crisis

We are also all cognisant of the psychosocial and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19. Many have called this our second pandemic. ASPs have always been instrumental in providing safe spaces for learners and will continue to play a role in helping address the issues of alienation, grief, loss and trauma of COVID on their lives. One of the challenges to NGOs and government departments going forward is to think about how they will build this into their programmes more intentionally, whether through academic programmes, arts, sport and life skills programmes.



Another YearBeyond Stream was developed in direct response to COVID-19, @HomeLearning. This is a partnership between YearBeyond, WCED, DEDAT and NGOs. Previously unemployed youth work as education activators in communities. They offer fun interactive learning for Grades R to 6 learners who have dropped out of school and those who are at home due to COVID-19 restrictions on classroom numbers. They also help facilitate parent and caregiver workshops. The programme provides opportunities for over 125 youth in 8 locations and aims to promote a stronger culture of learning in homes and in the community.

How you can get involved

To find out more visit, www.enriched.org.za/lightson and for more information, resources and activities email afterschool@westerncape.gov.za

Follow all the activities by liking our Facebook page www.facebook.com/afterschoolwc

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