

Western Cape Community of Practice

BUILDING RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMES



May 2024



After School Programmes (ASPs) are crucial in providing safe, engaging learning environments for children beyond regular school hours. It is imperative that these programmes survive and grow in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. For these programmes to be effective over the long term, they must be both resilient and sustainable. This involves careful planning, community engagement, resource management, and adaptability to changing circumstances.

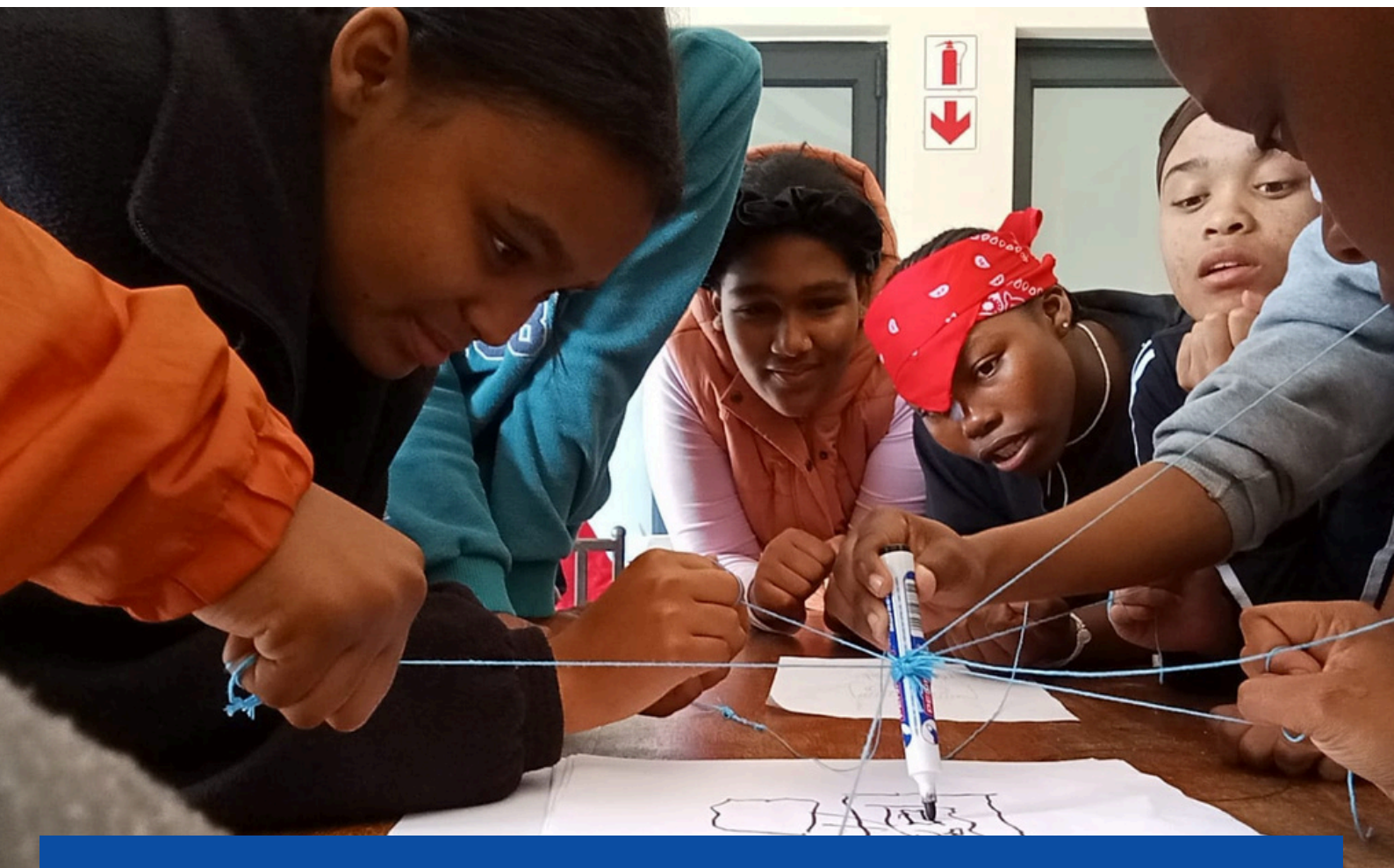
UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE IN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Resilience within ASP's refers to the ability of ASPs to withstand and recover from challenges, whether they be financial constraints, staffing issues, or external crises such as pandemics.

Key components of ASP resilience include:

- **Diversified Funding Sources:** Relying on a single source of funding can leave programmes vulnerable. Instead, developing a mix of funding streams, including grants, donations, partnerships, and fees, can help stabilise finances. ASP's also need an entrepreneurial mindset and explore various avenues of income generation.
- **Strong Leadership and Governance:** Effective leadership is crucial for navigating challenges. This includes having a knowledgeable board, a clear mission and vision, and a strategic plan to guide decision-making. Risk management is another cornerstone that assists organisations better manage their internal and external environments.
- **Adaptable Programming:** ASPs should be flexible enough to adapt to changing needs and circumstances. This might involve modifying activities, adjusting hours of operation, or incorporating new health and safety protocols.





STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY THAT ASPS CAN INVESTIGATE INCLUDE:

- **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Building strong relationships with local businesses, schools, and other community organisations can provide support and resources. Engaging families and community members in programme development can also foster a sense of ownership and commitment.
- **Capacity Building:** Investing in staff training and development enhances the programme's quality and prepares staff to handle various situations. Encouraging professional development and offering competitive wages can help retain qualified personnel.
- **Efficient Resource Management:** Maximising available resources and seeking in-kind contributions can reduce costs. This includes prudent financial management, leveraging volunteers, and utilising shared spaces or materials.



PRACTICAL STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- **Assessing Community Needs and Assets:** Conducting regular assessments helps ensure that programmes meet the evolving needs of the community. Surveys, focus groups, and data analysis can provide insights into what families and children need from ASPs.
- **Developing a Strategic Plan:** A strategic plan outlines the programme's goals, strategies, and success metrics. It should be revisited regularly to adjust to new challenges and opportunities.
- **Creating a Strong Communication Plan:** Effective communication with stakeholders, including parents, staff, and community partners, is essential. Regular updates, newsletters, and meetings can keep everyone informed and engaged.
- **Emphasising Programme Quality and Evaluation:** Regular evaluation of programme quality ensures that activities are effective and meet educational and developmental goals. Using frameworks like the Quality Standards for after-school programmes can provide benchmarks for success.
- **Securing Diverse Funding:** Writing grants, organising fundraisers, and developing partnerships with local businesses can provide financial stability. ASPs should also explore government funding opportunities and collaborate with other organisations to apply for joint funding.
- **Building a Supportive Network:** Networking with other ASPs and professional organisations can provide support, resources, and opportunities for collaboration.

Building resilient and sustainable ASPs requires a comprehensive approach that addresses financial stability, community engagement, adaptable programming, and quality assurance. By implementing these strategies, After School Programmes can continue to provide valuable services to children and families, contributing to their overall development and well-being.

CASE STUDIES: SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

IKAMVA LABANTWANA BETHU

Ikamva Labantwana Bethu (ILB), was started in 2012 by Siviwe Dlukwana in Crossroads Township Yanga, just outside Cape Town assisted by his friends from the University of the Western Cape and Crossroads. In 2024, the organisation will be celebrating its 12th anniversary. They have grown from having 52 learners in the After School Programme to over 400 learners in just under 10 primary and high schools.

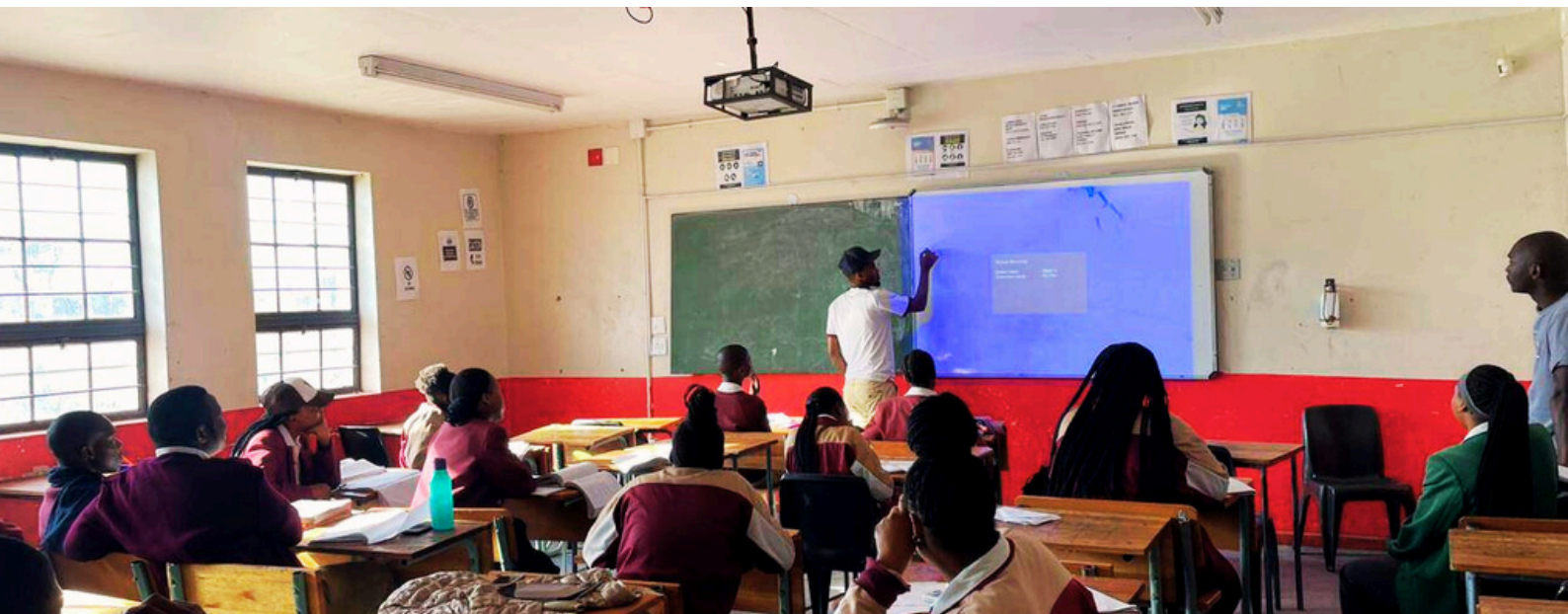
ILB assists learners from grade 4-7 and provides them with daily homework assistance, Saturday tutoring sessions, and academic enrichment programmes during the extended school holidays. They work with high potential, committed learners to help them maintain high marks and ensure a more promising future at university and beyond. To ensure that their programmes are strong, they have partnered with University of Cape Town students who volunteer as tutors. Tutors also serve as role models who are living examples of individuals who have successfully journeyed from township to university. Many of the tutors are alumni of ILB.

They saw the need to begin working with learners at an earlier age. Rather than waiting until high school, they start working with students in grade 4, when English is introduced as the medium of instruction in [township schools](#). The aim is to address educational gaps as they appear while helping learners develop good study habits, strong characters and a lifelong passion for learning.

Beginning in grade 7, ILB works with learners to place them in local, [high-performing "Impact" schools](#).

They have also partnered with the Crossroads Community Policing Forum (CCPF) to ensure that their centre is protected from vandalism and crime. The centre is based on a building which housed the local library in years gone past. They refurbished and partitioned the space to fit the needs to the organisation, which now boasts three programmes: academic support, youth skills and community development.





REGENERATIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (RNDA)

RNDA is an NPO based in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. It runs an exciting mix of academic support programmes and an environmental awareness programmes inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 (zero hunger), 4 (quality education), 6 (clean water and sanitation), and 8 (decent work and economic growth).

RNDA was established in 2015 by Andile and Vuyi Tumana in the community of Kraaifontein, which is 31 km from Cape Town. After identifying a social need, RNDA set out to promote the development of underserved communities by using education and environmental awareness to bring about social change. In 2024, they had more than 100 learners in eco-clubs and 350 receiving academic support in five schools.

RNDA's innovative programme mixture and approach was not a coincidence, but a deliberate strategy that the organisation adopted to differentiate itself from others. This unique approach has been key to their success and the positive impact they have made in the community.

The organisation runs academic support programmes in several high schools in the Cape Metro, including Sinethemba High School, Phillippi High School, and Kraaifontein High School. It also runs community food gardens and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics clubs.

Partnerships are at the heart of RNDA's work. They invest in staff training and establish partnerships with local schools, ensuring alignment with school curricula and shared goals. As a result of a consistent focus on school partnerships, they have ensured that programmes have excellent relationships with the schools they work with. This collaborative approach is crucial to their overarching goal of fostering alignment of interests amongst diverse stakeholders to create synergies and collaborations towards improving education outcomes—regeneration of peri-urban and township economies and environmental stewardship in each neighbourhood.