



**STAR FOR LIFE
SCHOOLS PROGRAMME AT
FOLWENI HIGH SCHOOL**

A report on SFL activities during August 2016 to February 2017 to the sponsor of the school

LOOF FOUNDATION

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1. Introduction

The partnership of the Loof Foundation and Star For Life (SFL) continues to have a positive impact on the life of many young people of Folweni. Despite numerous challenges facing the community the Folweni area, the school leadership, educators and learners continue to value education. The year 2016 has been significant for learners of Folweni High School and the surrounding community who have benefited from various SFL activities. There have been number of demonstrations due to number of service delivery issues. With the continued support received from the Loof Foundation, we have been able to implement our schools programme at Folweni High School. This time the intervention is aimed at empowering learners with various life skills and strengthening the school leadership.

The school remains a no fee school. This year the school enrolment is at 1450 learners with 55 educators (inclusive of teaching and non-teaching staff). The general climate at Folweni high school is good. The focus early this year was on enrolment but lately the attention has shifted towards the examinations of the first term. The staff members are very supportive as well as the community despite various challenges facing the school.

Our recent visits to school reveal that learners remain enthusiastic about SFL programme activities and eager to pursue their dreams. We observed that there is more interest amongst educators to teach and ensure that learners are successful. The Principal and the whole school continue expressed their appreciation for the partnership. The participation of the school community despite challenges and their responses to our activities suggest that they strongly believe in the programme and would like to see it continuing to produce a positive impact in the culture of the school and on learners' behaviour. The school is found in Umbumbulu Traditional Land and it serviced by Department of Education - Umlazi Ward.

This report has been prepared to provide a summary of activities implemented between August 2016 and February 2017. It presents some reflections from learners, educators, stakeholders and the programme implementers. The report provides information on (1) planned activities, (2) actual activities, (3) challenges facing the programme and the community, (4) some highlights of season, (5) Concluding remarks, (6) some reflections from the school coach.

2. Planned Programme Activities

This section presents activities that were scheduled to take place between 2016 and early 2017, in the attempt to continue to improve the quality of results and the general culture of the school. Different activities were intended for each specific group of the school community:

For the management

We planned special activities aimed at supporting the school management to provide effective school leadership and management in the effort to improve the quality of result and culture of the school.

For educators

We planned activities aimed at inspiring educators to perform their duties with dedication and commitment. All the educators were expected to benefit from this intervention.

For Learners

We planned activities aimed at ensuring that learners (high school and primary students) directly benefited from the Star for Life programme. In total five hundred learners were expected to benefit from this intervention. A life skill coach was assigned to this particular school to provide following services:

- One-on-one consultations
- Learners workshops
- Peer education activities
- Classroom sessions
- *Children arts festival and other events*
- *Children storytelling*

For the Community

Special events with specific themes were planned targeting the school community. This component of the essential is essential in the attempt to raise awareness of the values promoted by the organisation in the community and strengthen the link between the school and the outside community.

“We truly Value the good work you are doing with our children. We have seen the behaviour of many young people improve and others are becoming responsible able to take care of themselves”.

Parent at Folweni high school

3. Actual Programme Activities Implemented

3.1 Staff Focused Intervention

These were some of the key activities implemented for principals and teachers in this schools. These were activities aimed at inspiring educators to perform their duties passionately.

Leadership Development Workshop

The school principal participated in a leadership workshop aimed at inspiring principals to continue to provide effectively leadership. This workshop took place at Protea Hotel in Hluhluwe over a period of two days conducted Landelani leadership development. The principal of Folweni also was part of this special seminar organised for school principals as well as other principals from Durban.



Figure 1: After the principals' workshop

Educators' workshops

A good number of teachers' educators attended the arts and culture workshops. Another workshop was organised to support educators with lay counselling skills aimed at supporting the educators to provide psychosocial support and quality education. In total 55 educators benefited from this intervention.

Late last year, SFL conducted an inspirational workshop for school educators. The team building was necessary for teachers to be motivated and strengthen the good relationship and the spirit of working together.



Figure 2: A training session with management

*“The workshop inspired back the passion for teaching. Please keep on organising this kind of initiatives for teachers”
Teacher at Folweni High school*

3.2 learners centred activities

To address a number of challenges facing young people these are some of the activities that have been carried out in this schools during this period targeting on learners:

– *Classroom sessions*

The coach has been addressing number of issues that are particular to this area in different grades the last year covering a range of issues (reproductive health issues, career choices and other life skills). The year, most of the activities that have been conducted focused on grade 9 learners. The total number of the grade 9 in this period is about 300 learners. The sessions with learners in this period revolves around study skills. Learners are engaged in an interactive learning method in which they were asked a number of questions to determine which type of student they are between kinaesthetic, auditory and visual, thereafter, they were given tips on how each type learns best.

– *Awareness events*

Violence and drug abuse remain a major challenge that is affecting this community. To respond to this challenge, there was a campaign about violence and drugs which attracted many stakeholders such as the South African Police Services representatives and social worker s. They came to school to talk to the learners about the dangers of getting involved in fights, the dangers of bringing illegal substances to school and the dangers of substance abuse.



Figure 3: The coach making a presentation

– *Peer education activities*

Ten learners from Folweni were trained as peer educators last year. This training was aimed at empowering learners to support their peers through educational programmes and other activities in morning assemblies and other platform. This year peer educators were sent to a workshop that gave them basic understanding of legal issues that they may be faced with. A number of stakeholders (government departments and other organisations) were there to try and assist educate these learners and answer any questions they may have regarding health matters, crimes, leadership and other government programmes on community issues.



Figure 4: learners' presentation

– *Career Path Workshop*

We had a special workshop with our skill development unit special with all the grade 12 learners. These are learners that are doing their final year and preparing to exit school to face life issues in the world. The Skills component facilitator (Mmiseni) made a visit to conduct a Career Path workshop with the grade 12 learners to further prepare learners on committing to work towards attaining perfect pass marks that will results in their ability to study towards their ideal careers.

There was an excellent participation of learners. It is hoped that this year quality of results will continue to improve.

– *The Inspirational workshops*

The high level of crime, poverty and other socio economic problems has left many learners helpless and no hope for a better future. Thus we have been strengthening our intervention through our workshops with the intention of reminding our young people that there is possibility of turning things around. All workshops are talking to the reality of learners in different spheres of life. Thus, the life-skills coach conducted the standard 'inspirational and motivating' learner's workshops for grade 8 to grade 11. Grade 8: went through our learner workshop 1 titled "Dreams can be fulfilled", the Grade 9: workshop 2 titled: "The power is within me" and the Grade 10 and grade 11: "5 keys to success"

– *The inspirational workshop*

From about mid- October to December nothing much can be done at school because its exam time. Learners come to school just to write their exam and they leave once they are finished writing. By mid-November there are hardly any learners left at school.



Figure 5: Learners during a workshop

– *Psychosocial support through coaching*

The coach receives on average 5 learners who come to consult for various issues that are affecting them. As in many instances these learners either do not have parents and any other senior person they could share their issues with. The program is needed at the school as there are a number of learners who have issues that need to be addressed from a psychological perspective. Already there has been 3 cases of attempted suicide, cases of substance abuse, cases of career choice and other study related issues. Each week I'm at school there are always learners that I need to speak to. Either referred to me by the educators or they come to me themselves.

4. Facing the Odds, Challenges

We were able to implement successful our programme despite the fact that the school continue to face a number of challenges. It will important to mention that the school is currently facing the subsequent challenges:

– *Community and crime*

There is a high rate of crime. It is not only affecting the community but it is also having a direct influence in the life of learners

– *Unemployment & Learners*

Many of our learners at Folweni come from a very disadvantaged background. They have parent who are unemployed and in some instance illiterate which makes appreciating education quite a challenge.

– *Demonstrations, school and Academic Results*

There have been continuous protests taking place in the Folweni area due to various complaints coming from the communities to the government. Unfortunately quite often when the manifestations are taking place the school also becomes a target. Thus there has been some time interruption with the school and some programme activities.

- The school is in the periphery of Folweni township (a formal settlement) as well Umbumbulu Traditional Authority a rural dwelling (informal settlement) and both areas have a significant influence in lives of learners. The township life is generally believed to be a little bit affluent as compared to the rural in-formal life influences.

5. Highlights of the season

It is important to indicate that despite all challenges facing the community there has been number of positive event that also occurred during this period at Folweni:

- The event organised in partnership with the school has had a remarkable impact in the community. We hope to see more similar events happening
- Zodwa Maphumulo, One the Folweni learners received the Star For Life registration grant to study at the University of KwaZulu Natal.
- Folweni high school has continued to excel in different creative arts festivals organised by the district and in the community.
- Folweni peer educators have become a source of motivation for their peers through different activities. In different activities throughout the last year and this year we have seen learners influencing their peers.
- The school has committed to work closely with SFL as a partner organisation to ensure we bring down a number of ills that are affecting the school and the community at large.

6. A brief reflection on funding

All the funds received are utilised towards the implementation of the programme. The funds cover programme activities, programme implementers, programme administration, programme monitoring and day to day management.

7. Concluding Remarks

As it was indicated at the beginning, despite all the challenges faced in the community it is essential for us to acknowledge that the future of each community depends on the quality of education of its youth. We take pride in supporting the South African government programmes by supporting young people through various activities aimed at promoting healthy lifestyle and quality education. Our activities were generally implemented successfully. No major challenges were recorded. This report presented an overview of activities that were implemented in between August 2016 and early 2017.

We wish to indicate that for many young people, the implementation of Star For Life School activities have contributed significantly in their academic performance and attitude to life in general. It is also important to mention that although there are still number challenges still facing the school, we have observed a positive change in the general culture of the school. We hope this positive trend will continue to move in the positive direction.

We are immensely grateful for the support we have received from the school and all our local stakeholders in the implementation of the programme. We also wish to express our heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable contribution made by the *LOOF FOUNDATION*. We couldn't have implemented our programme without your support. We wish to continue improving the quality of our programmes and ensuring that more young people and children in primary schools benefit from our intervention.

“You have encouraged us to take good decisions”.

Folweni, (female)

“We are finding meaning to our education through Star For Life, Thank you coach”.

Folweni learner

Annexures:

ANNEXURE 1: REFLECTIONS FROM A GRADE 12 LEARNER

I am Mqondisi Mzulwini, the current (2017) Folweni High School Head-boy and i currently doing grade 12 in the science stream of subjects.

I am Mqondisi Mzulwini, the current (2017) Folweni High School Head-boy and i currently doing grade 12 in the science stream of subjects.

After passing grade 12, I will be going to study for Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting or Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. The choice of my career studies have been made clear by the assistance of the recent Career Path Skills workshop we received as grade 12's from Star for Life. This workshop helped me and hopefully others as well to plan accordingly of how will I perform/pass my grades in order to be able to pursue the career field of study of my choice. The grade 12's had another inspiring lesson which helped to change the attitudes of many of my fellows, the afternoon and evening studying classes.

From the time Star For Life first came to my school and the workshops and class lessons we have had with coach Busi, I feel there has been improvement to how I look life beyond schooling and how I behave. The basic teachings from Star For Life for me are about the importance of taking care of yourself, focusing on making education a priority and being respectful to others. Star For Life also helped our school in rebuilding the culture of teaching and learning through the moral lessons that encourages us to study and work hard since time is of essence.

We have also learned that there is scholarship grant towards tertiary registration awarded to any luck learner who pass grade 12 with good marks. In the community and my friends are envious of our school because we have this life changing organisation which they also wish to work with. Thank you Star For Life and your sponsors for supporting our school, we promise to do better than the potential you saw in us.

ANNEXURE 2: REFLECTIONS FROM THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE COORDINATOR AND LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHER

I am Mrs T.I. Mkhize – Social Committee Coordinator and TLO.

I wish to share how we (teachers) appreciate the role of Star For Life – Life Skills Coach: Busisiwe Mbatha in proving to be an important intervention. The challenging responsibility the coach has is because our school is characteristic of all sorts of psycho-social ills which in turn becomes the learning barriers for our students. Part of coach's recent challenging cases include bullying, illicit substance usage, carrying of weapons in school premises, teenage pregnancy, challenges of learners being heads of families, victims of rape and culprits to mention but some.

To make a direct reference of one case. There was an attempted suicide case that was referred to coach Busi and after a while since she intervened, there is a noticeable improvement in the conduct of the learner. This learner had issues with parents and then resorted to overdosing medicinal pills and subsequently collapsed. Parents admitted her to hospital for medical attention and then reported the matter to us at school. The educators team-building sessions helps us to strengthen working relations and share views/ideas of best can we make our school a Model Institution of learning. The training of learners as peer educators is of significant value in building leadership capacity within the school.

As educators of Folweni we are very grateful of the Lööf Foundation sponsorship to Star For Life programme as this allows us to focus more on teaching and learning process having a full confidence that there is a supporting structure dealing with psycho-social support of our learners.

ANNEXURE 3: REFLECTIONS FROM THE TEACHER LIASON OFFICER AT FOLWENI HIGH SCHOOL

I am Mrs N.O. Ngidi – Teacher Liason Officer at Folweni High School.

I have noticed over time since the introduction of Star For Life programme through Lööf Foundation funding that learners are receiving an important support which ordinarily educators would not be in a position to give. The presence of the coach has brought in the school counsellor factor who happens to be a neutral person that learners have no reservation to consult. This intervention has strengthen stakeholders partnership that includes parents who come to school to consult on psycho-social behaviour of their children. The grade 9 & 12 Career Path Skills workshop are an important support to educators since it gives a sense of direction regarding why our learners are getting educated. The Lay Counselling workshops for educators help to build more capacity in identification of troubled learners. Attending this workshop helped me to understand how to handle learners counselling sessions in a more professional manner and in a correct approach. Educators or teachers workshop are another ingredient needed to make teachers relations better for the benefit of our leaners. Peer Education for learners must continue each and every year since we believe that young people learner better and more positively from t heir peers.

ANNEXURE 4: REFELCTIONS FROM THE FOLWENI DEPUTY PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC.

I am Mr K.T.K. Ngwabi – the Folweni Deputy Principal Academic.

The very noticeable lessons from Star For Life engagements is the lessons with moral guidance especially to our learners and to educators as well and there is also a positive psychological effect. The school is benefitting since it has a lot of vulnerable learners and the benefits are sessions giving back to our learners a sense of hope and belonging. Sometimes our learners misbehave in sessions where they are in a large group, however I have noticed a different reaction altogether when they are having one-on-one consultations with the coach. These consultations help a lot in getting learners to deal with social issues and be able to deal with academic matters stress free. The interactions and sessions with educators are

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conducted in a very professional manner and in a non-threatening environment. Educators workshops also foster positive working relations which enables educators to deal with teaching and learning without compounding issues. Folweni and management is very much appreciative as well as grateful of the financial commitment shown by Star For Life and its partners in arranging different sessions that capacitate educators and learners. These initiatives are a greatest human capital investment this school can hope for.

The Folweni learner that Star For Life awarded the R5000 tertiary education registration grant wish to share his story of engagements with Star For Life programme but he will only be able to send it through late today after lectures.

I hope you find this in order and please do contact me for any need that may arise.

ANNEXURE 5: REFELCTIONS FROM THE RESIDENT COACH



"Learners find the workshop very helpful. Many have indicated this taking part of workshop has been helping them take good decisions about their lives".

Busisiwe Mbatha, Folweni Resident coach

Figure 6: Busisiwe Mbatha the resident coach