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Don’t walk in front of me
I may not follow

Don’t walk behind me
I may not lead

Walk beside me
and just be my friend

– Albert Camus
MISSION

South African Youth Education for Sustainability (SA-YES, formerly Off The Street Kids/Siyaphambili OTSK) is a registered non-profit organisation operating in Cape Town. SA-YES was founded in the UK in 2008 to provide guidance and support for marginalised young people making the transition from living in residential care homes to living responsibly and independently in South Africa.

Young people in South Africa face a number of challenges, especially those who have lived in care without the support and guidance of loving families. While residential care homes provide much needed support for them as children, when they reach the age when they must leave care, many young people end up living on the streets. Ill-equipped to live by legitimate means, too often they end up in prison having fallen into a downward spiral of drug use and crime.

SA-YES has developed a programme to fill the gap between care and independent living. Each young person in the programme is matched carefully with a trained mentor who offers advice and assistance with housing, employment, education and skills training, personal development and support with family and community reintegration.

Our aim at SA-YES is to prevent young people leaving care from ending up on the streets by getting them into further education and training so that they become employable and can sustain themselves. We source scholarships, bursaries and employment opportunities with corporate partners while at the same time facilitating and supporting them during their transition to respected, contributing members of their communities.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

SA-YES has adopted the ubuntu philosophy, which emphasises the need for unity and a humanitarian ethic in decision-making. We work with the youth in planning their individual development programmes and aim to bring them from a point of disenfranchisement to one of self-empowerment and self-sustainability.
The SA-YES TIL programme is a mentorship programme that prepares young people living in residential care for independent life when they branch out on their own. Young people are invited to join the programme from the age of 16 so that preparation for independent living can begin before they have to leave the home at age 18, when government funding ceases.

The programme provides trained volunteer mentors who offer guidance across the following five areas: education and training, employment, housing, personal development and community reintegration. Access to the programme is not only available to young people while they are preparing to leave care, but it continues once they have left and are living independently. This period can be the most difficult, when loneliness and isolation is often overwhelming.

The TIL programme is being piloted from January 2010 to December 2012. Each young person taking part in the programme is matched with a mentor with whom they meet each week for a minimum of one hour. Each mentor and mentee attends compulsory training before being accepted onto the programme and being matched. This match provides the mentee with a consistent, non-judgmental friendship with an adult. In many cases, this is the first positive relationship they will have had with an adult, which is crucial to their personal development.

“Young people leaving state out-of-home care are arguably one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society ... they face particular difficulties in accessing educational, employment, housing and other developmental and transitional opportunities.” – Philip Mendes

On completion of the pilot programme at the end of 2012, TIL will be made available to children’s homes throughout the Western Cape and ultimately throughout South Africa.
2010 has been a great year for SA-YES. We launched our TIL pilot programme in four residential care homes in Cape Town to boundless enthusiasm and support from all the homes and young people that took part.

Young men and women in residential care often don’t have access to resources and positive role models that can help them achieve their goals. Despite the great need, there are very few support services for young adults to help them get to a position of self-sustainability once they leave care.

Following the positive change we were able to bring about in 15 young people’s lives this year, we plan to expand the programme to 25 mentees from six different homes during 2011. In addition, in response to a number of requests from organisations and individuals, we plan to extend our youth mentorship programme to township communities in Cape Town.

To achieve this, we need mature volunteer mentors who already have a bit of life experience. Young people in the programme learn so much from their mentors, who usually have a completely different mind set and background from what they are used to. Mentorship is about opening doors and giving the mentee access to opportunities and options that they hadn’t dreamt of before, because without the support of another person, such dreams would seem impossible. The mentor-mentee relationship can be very refreshing for both people, as their perspectives and life experience are so vastly different. Our mentors are usually professional people who can help mentees to plan for their own futures.

Mentors and mentees undergo compulsory in-depth training and receive ongoing support from SA-YES staff. We are very thankful for the high calibre of people that have come on board as mentors, and for the enthusiasm with which the mentees take to the opportunities and challenges that the process brings.

Ultimately our aim is for mentees to find steady employment and become self-sustainable. We encourage mentees to study further, and coach them in skills they will need for success in their careers. Mentees complete questionnaires every quarter, which helps track their personal development and the potential for reintegration into their families. Each mentee has an individual transition plan, and the SA-YES staff meet with the homes to discuss the issues that the mentee has brought up in the questionnaire. This helps ensure that everyone is on the same page, and that the mentee can get support from the homes they are staying in. Thanks to the generosity and support of everyone involved, the pilot is going well and steadily growing.

In 2012 we are planning to extend our programme into township communities in partnership with local non-profit organisations. While we continue to specialise in working with young people transitioning from institutional care, partnering with other non profits means we’ll reach a much wider cross-section of the youth population.
In February 2010 we launched our Transition to Independent Living programme with 15 young people from Beth Uriel and Marsh Memorial homes. We carefully matched each beneficiary with a mentor, who meets with them on a one-to-one basis each week. After a year, beneficiaries are paired up with new mentors so that, by the time they leave the programme, they have established a great support network with a variety of adults. Meet a few of the fantastic volunteers and beneficiaries, and find out how the programme has enriched their lives.

**Masakhane and John**

Masakhane Mndende is a 22 year old from the rural Eastern Cape. He moved to Cape Town during his early teens with his siblings after his parents got divorced. He is now a trainee chef and meets with his mentor, John Harding, on a weekly basis.

**Tell us about life growing up**

MM: After my parents’ divorce, my dad refused to have us at his place because of the overcrowding and noise, so we moved to the township with my mom. My older sister had to get her own place so that some of us could stay with her. It was quite difficult because my sister didn’t have a secure job and my mom was sinking into depression and drink. We moved around a lot from one township to another. It was difficult.

No one in my family had ever spoken to me about what was happening to us, or about the divorce. I had to work it all out by myself, just by paying attention, which made it difficult for me to adapt. I think my parents were trying to protect me by not telling me, maybe scared that I would join a gang or go down the wrong path.

**Were gangsters a part of your life then?**

MM: I would hang out with them [gangsters] in the township, but I never involved myself in what they were doing. They would go do their thing, and I’d go do mine.

**How did you move from the township to Beth Uriel home?**

MM: At some point I realised that I had to make peace with the situation and move on. It was a difficult decision to leave my family behind in the township and start building my own life at Beth Uriel with other guys who have the same struggles as me.

**What has been your experience since you’ve started the TIL programme?**

MM: Being involved in the programme and having a mentor by my side makes me feel that there are so many great opportunities for me. Having that support, not just for material needs, but also the coaching, friendship, a sense of family, being able
to spend the day with someone who I can talk to and who can help me, it’s a great advantage. I appreciate that there is someone I can call up and say ‘Hey I’ve got this going on, can we meet up and talk about it?’

JH: I think the programme is amazing. The more I learn about it the more I see the massive need out there. It’s not just for people like Masakhane who recognise that they need help, but there are thousands of people out there who aren’t aware of what a difference such a programme could make to their lives.

“I appreciate that there is someone I can call up and say ‘Hey I’ve got this going on, can we meet up and talk about it?’”

Why did you want to get involved in this programme?

JH: I believe the world is full of balance. There’s balance in everything; there’s balance in give and take. When I saw the SA-YES ad in the newspaper, I saw that there was a need, and that I had a resource which could satisfy that need. I’ve been around a long time. I’ve raised a couple of daughters, and I see how much they need continuous guidance. There are a lot of people out there who don’t have the resource of loving parents, or they’ve been brought up away from a family base, so they aren’t getting the guidance and support they need. Helping seemed like a great thing to do.


MM: We actually talk about everything. I’m quite open – girlfriends, work, men’s stuff – it’s all up for discussion. John and I have built an open friendship.

JH: As Masakhane said, we talk about lots of things, whatever his needs are – relationships, work, budgets. He’s recently moved into a flat and has started paying rent, so we talk about responsible spending. He’s been granted a bursary for a cheffing course, which is great, but it means he won’t be earning as much money now that he’s not working full-time anymore. It’s pretty much what every youngster faces – the transition into their own life. My role is to give him whatever support he needs in that respect.

On studying to be a chef

MM: I’m so happy that I get to do this, especially that I get to work with professionals from the top restaurants in Cape Town. I feel like this opportunity has always been there, just waiting for me to come and claim it.

JH: The chef training means long hours and hard work for Masakhane, but every time we meet, I see more passion for the job. The initial nervousness is wearing off, and I think he’s starting to thoroughly enjoy the work. He made the most amazing apple strudel for a family braai the other night. Just watching him chopping and mixing dough, it comes across as very natural and accomplished. I think he’s doing very well.
Nicole Hugo is an 18 year old from Brooklyn, Cape Town. She recently matriculated and is now studying towards a business degree. Her mentor is Jaci van Niekerk, a scientist who holds degrees in Zoology and Environmental Management.

Tell us about the mentor–mentee relationship

NH: A mentor is an older person that you can talk to about your life, and who can help you with advice, guidance, and support. To be honest, the idea of a stranger wanting to be my friend and giving me advice freaked me out a bit. It's not something that was normal for me. It was awkward at first, not knowing what to speak to her about, but it improved over time as we became more comfortable with each other. She gives me her opinion and advice on my career, which has really helped me grow. We did have a few arguments, but mostly as a result of misunderstandings between us, but I think that is a normal part of the relationship process.

“"I can’t believe how much I learnt and was able to achieve with my mentor’s help.”"

How did your relationship with Jaci make a difference in your life?

NH: 2010 has been a great year for me because of the support and encouragement that Jaci gave me. She helped me get to a position where I am able to study further, which I wouldn’t have been able to do without her.

Would you recommend this mentorship programme to others?

NH: I can't believe how much I learnt and was able to achieve with my mentor's help. I would advise every final-year student in a difficult position to have a mentor. In this important phase where you are deciding what to do with your life, a supportive relationship with someone who's been there can make a huge difference.

“I felt that the programme was well grounded and that it would definitely make a positive contribution”

Jaci, What attracted you to SA-YES?

JvN: Mentoring is something I've always wanted to do. I found myself in the fortunate position where I could help someone, perhaps guide them through some of life's decisions and through that important stage where you're becoming independent. I partnered with SA-YES after we had an induction session that included a lot of pair work and group discussions. I felt that the programme was well grounded and that it would definitely make a positive contribution to young people's lives.
Cecil Bester is from Vredenburg on the West Coast. He loves sports and gardening. His mentor is Andrew Planting.

Tell us about your family
CB: I am the second-youngest of six kids. I have two older brothers and three sisters. When we are all home, we all live in a small house in Vredenburg with our parents. Living ‘on top of each other’ in a crowded house causes a lot of friction and unpleasantness in the family, especially because my brothers don’t work, so they’re always at home. I moved to Marsh Memorial when I was younger, the same as my brothers did before they were 18.

What about school?
CB: I went to a school that had quite a bad reputation. There was a lot of ‘drama’ at my school. People would bunk often, drug use was common (even among the prefects) and there were often gang fights. Eventually it became so bad that the school allowed random police raids, which helped with the drug problem. I usually managed to stay out of trouble.

Was it dangerous not to belong to a gang?
CB: If you weren’t in a gang, you were an easy target. It’s a frightening environment to be in, because they would want to hurt you for the slightest mistake you made. The students even carried knives on them, which made the threat of violence more serious. One of my friends was stabbed in the ribs in a fight about someone’s girlfriend. The guys at my school were very territorial over their girlfriends.

How did you find out about this programme?
CB: Michelle [Potter] visited Marsh Memorial last year to invite us to take part in the mentorship programme. We were the first group from the home to hear about it. During the training, she introduced us to the mentors, and gave us time to talk to each other. That’s where Andrew and I met.

Tell us about your relationship
CB: I joined the programme because I wanted to change. I used to be someone who kept to myself, but as time went by I started opening up. I finally had a chance to talk to someone, not only about my problems, but about whatever was on my mind. We talk about everything – girlfriends, relationships, career ...

AP: We discuss lots of things. It’s not just around work, schooling and housing. We’ve gotten to know each other on a personal level. We often just go for a walk around the Marsh Memorial grounds while we chat, as that’s where he spends his time and develops his interests.

Tell us about your interests
CB: I love my sports, especially soccer. Sport has always been a good influence in my life. It gave me something to focus on and kept me out
of trouble. I want to bring soccer back into my community through soccer coaching clinics, because it gives kids something constructive to do and keeps them off the street.

“I finally had a chance to talk to someone, not only about my problems, but whatever was on my mind.”

AP: We’ve focused on sports often in our mentorship, because it’s an area that Cecil’s been very successful in. He’s put in the hard work, commitment and practice, and has won accolades in athletics, swimming, rugby and soccer. We’ve been able to use this success as an example of what you can achieve if you put in the work. Sport keeps you healthy, it keeps you off the street. Those are great lessons he can take back to his community and teach in his football clinics.

What are your plans for the near future?
CB: I’m going to college to study carpentry. I think it’s a useful skill to have, especially since I already have years of woodwork experience behind me. The other thing I’m good at is working with plants. Some of the kids used to call me ‘green hands’.

Do you think you’ll still keep in touch when these 12 months are over?
CB: I think I’ll still be phoning Andrew, especially for work advice. He’s very clever about business and how it all works. It’s very helpful to have someone much older than you who has more experience, who gives a lot of feedback.

AP: We’ve agreed to keep our relationship going next year. He will have a new mentor then, but I visit the home regularly so we’ll chat and catch up. I’d like to be involved in his further development, and to see how things go with work and the coaching clinics. Of course, I’m interested in how he takes the lessons forward into his own community, where he ends up working ultimately, and every time Liverpool beats Man United I’ll definitely phone him up!

Andrew, why this programme?
AP: There are no other programmes that I know of that focus on this particular age group. We’ve got these young adults who are starting to live their own lives. It’s such an important age, and it’s especially difficult for young adults who are coming out of children’s homes to adapt. To be honest, if there’s an area that we can effect change in, it’s in this age group where so little focus has been given before. It’s an amazing programme, and it’s been great working with Cecil.

Would you recommend this programme to other youths?
CB: The mentor programme has been a good experience. Some children make the wrong decisions about how to live their lives, and programmes like this can help prevent them from getting involved with drugs and keep them off the streets. I think it’s a great idea to bring to my area, I’d love to spread the programme there.
I started my internship at SA-YES in October 2010. Cape Town was certainly a long way from home in Seattle, Washington. From day one, SA-YES welcomed me with open arms, and gave me a wonderful experience being part of the organisation for the following months.

I do believe that there is a gap in services for those transitioning out of children’s homes and moving towards independence. SA-YES is working to fill this gap.

I was able to see firsthand how dedicated those involved with SA-YES are. The Transition to Independent Living (TIL) programme is making a life-changing impact on the individuals involved and also in the community as a whole.

I do believe that there is a gap in services for those transitioning out of children’s homes and moving towards independence. SA-YES is working to fill this gap. The organisation partners with several children’s homes, working with the home to provide the most that they can for the young people in the programme.

Youth sign up to be in the programme. Once involved, they are guided in how to access information on education, employment, and housing. Perhaps more important than all that, they are matched with a mentor, a friend, to walk beside them and support them as they begin their journey towards independence.

As I got to know many of the young people and their mentors I was able to see firsthand the strong relationships that were forming. The mentors not only had a positive impact on the young people but the beneficiaries had a strong impact on their mentors as well. Both were invested in each other and willing to work hard towards positive change.

“I learned a tremendous amount during my time with SA-YES ... It was great to be a part of an organisation that is driven by purpose and need.”

I learned a tremendous amount during my time with SA-YES and it was a rewarding experience. I enjoyed getting to know some of the mentors and many of the mentees in the TIL programme. It was great to be a part of an organisation that is driven by purpose and need. SA-YES continues to flourish and grow as an organisation, striving to meet the needs and expectations of those involved.
The following figures give an overview of income and expenses to March 2011, taking into account that the South African branch of SA-YES began operating from 1 January 2011.

Although the operating costs for the year ended with a deficit, there were sufficient funds brought forward from 2010 to cover it and still provide a reserve for 2011. Income prospects for the 2011–2012 financial year are looking better and it is anticipated that the following year will end with a surplus.

Sustainability of the programme is of paramount importance and ways are being explored by management to make it a reality within the near future.

**Profit & Loss Statement for Period April 2010 to March 2011**

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| Operating loss for 2011 | -9891 |
| Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2010 | 17009 |
| Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2011 | 7118 |

* Note: All figures in British Pounds
Gillian Anderson (Co-founder, UK board) is an actress and writer, best known for her role in The X-Files. She supports numerous charities including Artists for a New South Africa, the Treatment Action Campaign and Neurofibromatosis, Inc.

Lisa Bryer (UK board) is a co-founder of Cowboy Films, which produced the Oscar and BAFTA award-winning feature film The Last King of Scotland, among others. Lisa is a trustee of Action on Addiction and the Westside Independent School.

Diana Gerald (Treasurer, UK board) has 20 years’ experience in a range of business, public sector and not-for-profit settings. She specialises in organisational change and was previously the Deputy Chief Executive for the Girls Day School Trust, one of the UK’s leading educational charities.

David McCoy (UK board) is a senior clinical associate at the Centre for International Health and Development at University College London. He previously held a fellowship at the Child Health Unit of the University of Cape Town and spent six years with the Health Systems Trust, a South African NGO that developed a research and evidence database to inform the transformation of the apartheid healthcare system.

Marit Mohn (Chair of UK board, Trustee of SA board) is a qualified chartered engineer and solicitor, with specialisation in civil litigation and employment law. She is a trustee of the Mary Ward Legal Centre in London, and was previously chair of Women’s Pioneer Housing Ltd.

John Pinkerton (UK board) is a Professor of Child and Family Social Work at Queen’s University, Belfast. He has researched and published widely in the areas of young people leaving state care, family support and the application of research to policy and practice. He is a board member of the Children’s Institute at the University of Cape Town.

Anna-Louisa Psarras (UK board) holds an MA in Social Anthropology and Pragmatic Religion. She has worked in the third sector specialising in political conflict and has extensive experience working with NGOs, governments and key individuals including Nobel Prize winners.

Malcolm Charles (Treasurer, SA board) holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Accounting, Business Administration and Commercial Law. He has spent the past ten years as a portfolio manager at Investec Asset Management.
Mfundo Kevin Galada (SA board) holds a National Diploma in Sport Management. He works as a youth care worker at the Beth Uriel home for young men. He previously worked as the Youth Programme and Projects Coordinator for the Desmond Tutu HIV Research Foundation.

Leanne Gordon (SA board) co-founded and directed two companies before becoming the assistant fashion director of British Vogue, and then the fashion director of British Tatler. She now lives with her family in Cape Town.

John Harris (SA board) is the Country Director of DKT South Africa. He has managed programmes for family planning, AIDS prevention, malaria prevention, and child survival in various African countries, and is an award-winning photojournalist. He holds an MA in communications management from the Annenberg School for Communication.

Iain Low (SA board) is a Professor of Architecture at the University of Cape Town. He has designed an award-winning installation for the Iziko SA Museum and is published in several local and international journals. He is the editor of the Digest of SA Architecture and the Digest of African Architecture.

Andrew Planting (Chair of SA board, Trustee of UK board) is a co-founder and Executive Director of Market Makers, a specialist venture-capital company. He is a co-founder of the Dialogue Group, Africa’s largest call-centre outsourcing company, and a former Managing Director of Robert Walters South Africa.

Rahla Xenopoulos (SA board) is the author of A Memoir of Love and Madness. She studied drama in education at the Market Theatre Laboratory and has been counselling and teaching street children and abused women since 1988.

Michelle Potter (Co-founding Executive Director, SA board) holds a BA (Hons) in Education from Roehampton University. She received the Froebel Guild Award for her dissertation on children in care in South Africa and the UK. She moved to Cape Town in 2008 to work for the upliftment of marginalised young people.
Beth Uriel provides a home and family life for 26 previously disadvantaged young men. They live as a family, have their own chores, receive schooling, and attend church together every week. http://www.bethuriel.co.za

Marsh Memorial Homes is a multi-cultural residential care facility that provides a safe haven to about 60 at-risk children. They offer family support services to address the social problems and facilitate the reunion of children with their families. http://www.marshmemorial.org.za

Girls and Boys Town provide small family-style homes for children who have been found in need of care by the Children’s Courts. The children attend community schools take part in activities such as church youth, soccer, rugby, horse riding, cycling, muay thai, walking and running. http://www.girlsandboystown.org.za

Heatherdale Children’s Home is a child and youth care centre that operates under the auspices of the Methodist Church. They assist families in addressing problems in the home, and equip the youth in their care to return to the community and live normal, healthy and independent lives. http://www.heatherdale.org.za

Coaching for Hope taps into the global passion for football and uses it as an avenue for delivering HIV awareness and life skills lessons to young people in west and southern Africa. http://www.coachingforhope.org

The Shine Centre is a non-profit organisation that provides literacy and language enrichment through regular volunteer-led tutoring to children in Grades Two and Three who are learning EAL (English as an additional language). The Shine Centre offers mentorship in organisational development to SA-YES. http://www.theshinecentre.org.za

Mulholland After Care Services (MACS) is a support programme for vulnerable young people in Northern Ireland. They offer general life skills support, mentoring and housing support, helping young people to live independently and confidently. MACS shares training resources with SA-YES. http://www.macsni.org

St George’s Home for Girls takes in children who are abused, abandoned, neglected and orphaned. Children from failed foster placements and those with behavioural problems are also cared for. They provide specialised care and education, and teach life skills in a nurturing environment that closely resembles a warm, loving and caring family home. Overall care is provided by a Relief Child Care Worker and the Social Welfare Coordinator. http://www.st-georges.org.za

St. Michael’s Home for Abused Teenage Girls is an innovative therapeutic and developmental residential environment for 25 vulnerable young women from the Cape Metropole and surrounding areas. http://www.st-mikesct.org.za
In 2010 I was honoured to be appointed a trustee of SA-YES. I joined SA-YES as a mentor, but wanted to be more involved in growing the programme and the organisation. I am now focused on fundraising and overseeing the programme. I am delighted at how well the programme has grown from a concept that Michelle had in 2008 to the professionally run organisation that it is today.

Most charities focus on young children, and offer very little support for the kids when they enter into the next phase of their lives. Very few organisations focus on helping young adults entering into ‘real life’.

This year’s report describes the success the programme has achieved in working with young adults that have been mentored and supported towards becoming self-sufficient.

In 2010 we had 15 young people in the TIL programme. The results achieved were surprisingly good.

- Three young people are now at university
- Four are at college
- Three are still at school
- Three returned to their communities
- One left the country
- Another is working full-time and living with a host family
- And the last one moved from Marsh Memorial to Beth Uriel while he gets further skills training.

“My experience as a mentor opened my eyes to the huge need of young adults for assistance in their transition into independent living.”

The success of this programme is due to the dedication and selflessness of the volunteer mentors and mentees who have followed through on their commitments to each other. I would like to thank all the individuals who have contributed to SA-YES, specifically the existing founding Trustees in the UK who have donated so generously in their personal capacity as well as through various ongoing initiatives. During 2010 we received donations totalling £22,790.00. In addition, fundraising activities during the year brought in £13,067.00.

“Our biggest asset is our volunteers, who provide much-needed mentoring and support for the young adults in the TIL programme.”

Our biggest asset is our volunteers, who provide much-needed mentoring and support for the young adults in the TIL programme. The commitment, dedication and generosity of the trustees has ensured that the programme effectively and efficiently delivered on its objectives. I would also like to acknowledge Michelle Potter and Amy Beckett for their unwavering commitment and professionalism in managing the charity’s affairs.
SA-YES would like to thank the following people for their generous contributions and ongoing support.

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Fraser Jackson, Elaine Fattal, Sophie Bender, the Foundation for Social Improvement, Monika Kneisch, Prof. Tim Oliver, the Ackerman Foundation, Martina Bedregal, Jackie Pendleton, D Short, Rahla Xenopoulos, Patricia Moran
There are many ways you can support SA-YES, regardless of where you are in the world. We need volunteers to assist with fundraising, mentoring and researching the availability of local resources, from skills training, employment and internships to housing opportunities.

You can make a difference to a young person’s life by making monthly donations of £10 to SA-YES. Your donation will help provide essential support, training and scholarships to youths in the TIL programme. All sponsors automatically become a Friend of SA-YES and are listed on our website (unless you choose to remain anonymous).

If you would like further information on how to help, please email us at info@sa-yes.com.

South African Youth Education for Sustainability