

Final Report to Open Society Foundation

Safe School Project

For period

November 2000 to April 2001

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Independent Projects Trust

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Report Structure

This report comprises a narrative account of the project progress over the period identified, an evaluation report conducted by an independent researcher and the financial statements relating to the project activities.

PART 1: NARRATIVE REPORT ON PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Executive Summary

The project was conducted among 14 schools in the Durban region. The project aimed at establishing whether a small-scale, simple and inexpensive intervention within a cluster of schools could assist in improving school security and safety.

In attempting to meet the objectives of the project two sets of training workshops were conducted. The second set, reported on in this document had as their purpose the facilitation of School Safety Plan implementation and the provision of opportunities to address security problems that remained unsolved by the school Security Committees.

Schools within the Umlazi South Cluster appeared to have made good progress in their work towards safer schools. Relationships with the SA Police Services Youth Desk Co-ordinators was good and attempts were under way to independently replicate the work of the project within other schools in Umlazi.

The Greenwood Park Cluster had established School Security Committees and were working very closely with the Community Policing Forum in the area. These

schools had now however developed School Safety Plans, and cited a number of reasons for this. It is possible that training focussing on enhancing management capacity in these schools could impact positively on their progress towards safer schools, and generally towards holistic school management.

The Chatsworth East cluster had made positive moves towards developing their plans and interventions. However, schools had not progressed at a uniform pace towards their goals.

Although learners in the Inanda Newtown A cluster were eager to become involved in the work of the project, progress in this cluster has been slow. Again, school management skills appear to be lacking within this cluster and training in this area could assist in positive work towards meeting project goals and general school operation.

With regards to networking and outreach, much activity was evident. A range of platforms were provided for addressing parties interested in the work of the project. These facilitated both sharing and learning.

The project has received positive feedback throughout its duration. Although, at times, developments were slower than anticipated, the project was able to respond with flexibility to the unique contexts of each school. It is clear that projects of this nature, if flexible and creative, can and do make a positive contribution to school safety and security.

Introduction

This is the final report for the second phase of a pilot project for safe schools. This project was intended to establish whether a small-scale, simple and inexpensive intervention into a geographical cluster of schools might help to improve school security and safety in a relatively short time span.¹

The project was conducted in 14 schools within the Durban Metro area, drawn from the Durban South region (Umlazi South and Chatsworth East) and Durban North (Inanda Newtown A and Greenwood Park).

Activities

Training Workshops

Subsequent to the Interim Report, a second set of Training Workshops for the schools have taken place.

The workshops aimed to:

- Establish whether the schools had been able to implement the Safety Plan formulated by the School Security Committee, and
- To provide an opportunity to deal with the security problems which they could not solve.

¹Harber, Clive AProtecting Your School From Violence and Crime: Skills for Creating a Safe School@ April 2000

The workshops were conducted over two days each and took place as follows:

CLUSTER	DATES
Umlazi South Cluster	6 th and 7 th October 2000
Greenwood Park Cluster	24 th and 25 th November 2000
Chatsworth East Cluster	21 st and 22 nd February 2001

A detailed description of workshops are attached as Appendix A.

All the schools had formed a School Security Committee comprised of educators, learners and the SGB. Schools were encouraged to involve community stakeholders such as the SA Police, Community Police Forums, local businesses and local government in the composition and work of the School Security Committees. It was noted that some schools had informal links with external stakeholders who are contacted when needed.

Umlazi South Cluster

All the schools in this cluster were able to establish School Security Committees and all have gone some way to develop security plans. In sharing their plans with each other the schools also realised that their plans could be more comprehensive and inclusive and, because this is an ongoing process, they were encouraged to continue to share their ideas and plans with each other. The schools will now be discussed individually:

Strelitzia Secondary

The security committee consists of the principal, four educators, two learners and two Governing Body members. This committee had met several times after the completion of the 50-point questionnaire based on

their concern around the number of points scored (48). The committee's objective are:

“to offer quality education in a safe / secure / pleasant / disciplined environment conducive to teaching / learning, and to ensure that the full potential of each learner is enhanced.”

A School Security Plan has been drafted which includes all the stakeholders in the school and have also included a section on safety procedures in their draft security plan. This follows a recent poison gas leak from a nearby factory, which caused injury to numerous learners. Members of both the learner and educators bodies attended a First Aid course to prepare them to deal with any future disasters. Parents have also volunteered their services as Guidance Councillors. (Appendix B is a draft copy of the school safety plan.)

Reunion Secondary

This school has established a School Security Committee with similar representation as Strelitzia. Their mission statement reads as follows:

“Reunion Secondary’s Safety Committee is committed to ensuring a safe environment which is conducive to teaching and learning, and, at the same time ensure the safety of all those who enter the campus.”

The committee drew up a questionnaire that was distributed to all stakeholders at the school to fill complete (including the security guard and cleaners). The information gathered through this process was then used to draft their security plan. (Appendix C is the questionnaire and Appendix D is the Draft Security Plan)

Isipingo Secondary

Isipingo Secondary's safety committee consists of the principal, six educators, two SGB members and two learners. This school has not yet formulated a mission statement but have concentrated on a detailed Emergency Plan and Security Plan. These are included in this report as Appendix E & F.

Windy Heights Primary

This security committee consists of six educators, one Governing Body member and the security guard. The school completed a SWOT analysis and has based their school security plan on these results.

Enclosed as Appendix G is the copy of the analysis and a draft copy of the school's safety plan.

The relationship between the SAPS Youth Desk Coordinator and these schools is excellent and they are presently working on a way of replicating this project in schools in the greater Umlazi South district.

Greenwood Park Cluster

At the end of November 2000 the second workshop with the Greenwood park cluster was held. After the first workshop, the Principal of Parkhill Secondary, Mrs Dwarika was promoted to acting Senior Education Manager for the Greenwood Park area and the Deputy Principal, Mr Ismail, promoted to acting Principal.

At the time of the second workshop all three schools had School Security Committees in place and one school had a fire evacuation plan. None of the three schools had a School Security Plan. The reason for all schools having a Security Committee is attributed to the activities of the local Community Police Forum which has been building relationships with the schools in the area. The reasons given for schools not drafting safety plans were:

- Insufficient time to consult stakeholders.
- Parents not wanting to be involved.
- No support from the police.
- Examination preparations.

It is important to note that problems in the management of schools impact on the nature of action taken by and within schools. It is clear that a need for the development of competent management strategies (and concomitantly, competent managers) in schools exists. It is clear too that further development of school safety programmes must include, as a critical element, aspects of school management development as this will contribute positively to a holistic school development programme.

All schools were experiencing problems with learners being mugged on their way to and from school. The schools have representation on the Greenwood Park CPF and they have been encouraged to discuss the issue with the CPF and SAPS. They were also experiencing problems with parent involvement, because the majority of the learners live outside the Greenwood Park area and either have parents who work full time, or live with surrogate parents.

Chatsworth East Cluster

The second workshop for this cluster was held on 21st and 22nd of February 2001. Time constraints within the school system and examination pressures resulted in this workshop being held over to the new academic year. Two of the three schools had a School Security Committee. At that stage one of the schools had a Safety Plan and the other two were working on theirs.

Meadowlands Secondary has built a new wall around the perimeter of the school. According to the Principal this has reduced learner's late arrival at school and also prevented outside influences/persons from entering school premises and harassing the learners. A security guard is posted at the main entrance to the school and meets and records visitors entering the premises.

Chatsworth has diverse demographics, with high unemployment and also areas of great affluence. Alcohol abuse is prevalent and there are high levels of alcohol abuse among both learners and their parents. Educators find themselves filling a dual role of counsellor and teacher, and this role often extends to parents as well.

Provision of Two Day Workshop for Representative Council of Learners (RCL)

These workshops took place as follows:

AREA	DATE
Inanda Newtown A	23 rd and 24 th February 2001
Umlazi South	13 th and 14 th March 2001

Greenwood Park	15 th and 16 th March 2001
Chatsworth East	3 rd and 4 th April 2001

The purpose of these workshops was to assess RCL needs and define their role in school safety.

The needs audit suggested that the following areas required attention:

- Negotiation skills,
- Communication skills and
- Group problem solving.

These issues provided the framework in developing workshop content. Attached as Appendix H is a synopsis of the workshop.

Inanda Newtown A

These learners were eager to learn more about school safety and the functions of the RCL. The team building exercise had a great impact on the schools and details of this are enclosed in the Addendum.

Umlazi South

This was the first time the three RCLs from this area had come together. At first all learners tended to remain in school defined groups, however as the workshop progressed the learners began to mix and talk. When asked for their opinions and impressions of the programme the following comments were offered:

- Security guards are stricter at the school gate.
- School buildings have been repaired and painted.
- School uniforms are checked.
- Learners are consulted before school decisions are made.

- School rules are implemented more consistently

Greenwood Park

The Greenwood Park schools have been working together in the SAPS Youth Desk Committee. All schools have representatives on the committee and have held seminars on racism, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse. In addition school safety has become part of their public debate. The schools have formed clubs and societies eg TADA (Teenagers Against Drug Abuse), the Enviro Club and Religious Clubs.

RCL members expressed the need for increased parental involvement. However, it was noted that many parents worked during school hours or normal business hours, or lived in areas some distance from the schools.

The learners have also seen changes in the schools, viz:

- The schools are stricter with pupils regarding uniform
- Toilets are monitored and smoking in the toilets seems to have reduced.

Chatsworth East

Learners noted that there were obvious changes in the schools. These include:

- Security guard and teachers visible at break time
- The school gate locked once the school day begins
- SGB members checking uniforms
- Fire drills / evacuation drills take place regularly
- Monitoring of toilets
- New rules have been added to the code of conduct and these codes were implemented.

Learners agreed that the presence of SGB members at the school gate was, in the long term, beneficial. The learners of Meadowlands Secondary wrote a report on the workshop for their Principal and the report is attached as Appendix I

General Outcomes of RCL Workshop

The outcome of each of the workshops was a decision by learners to form a joint safety club that would help make both the school and the community a safer place.

The learners also expressed an interest in working with younger children in primary schools in the areas, to inform and teach them about the duties and functions of the “representative council of learners” and so prepare them for later participation in these bodies. SAPS Youth Desk Coordinators have been kept informed of this potential training development.

Networking

CRISP (the Crime Reduction in Schools Project, formerly based within the University of Natal’s Community Outreach and Service Learning Office, and now merged with IPT as of 1 May 2001) offered educators the opportunity to participate in a three day Trauma Debriefing workshop. Participants were selected for this training on a “first come, first served” basis and the workshops were 100% subscribed.

Educators were grateful for this opportunity to upgrade their skills because the

increased occurrence of child abuse, teen suicide, alcoholism, and the impact of AIDS on families has placed an added burden on them. The workshop was held on the 12th, 13th and 14th December 2000 at the University of Natal. The schools had already closed for the December break, but educators gave up their time to attend.

Durban Metro Police have also volunteered to visit project schools and demonstrate road safety and discuss personal safety with the youth.

Meetings and Conferences attended

Safe Schools Launch - Umlazi

On the 8th November 2000, the project coordinator (Val Smith) addressed those present at the Safe Schools Launch in Umlazi South. The SEM Mrs Moodley, had seen the results and successes in her schools and decided to get all the schools in the area on board the programme. At the launch all schools were given the school safety guide “Protecting Your School From Violence and Crime” and encouraged to use the guide and contact IPT or any of the four schools involved in the project if they needed more information. This is a great step towards cascading the project process.

CSIR Crime Prevention Centre Conference on Gangs

On the 20th February 2001 the project coordinator presented at the CSIR Crime Prevention Center’s Conference on “Gangsterism in South Africa.” The conference was held in Pretoria and the presentation focused on the link between the project and its potential to respond positively to reduction in gang activity.

Forum for Democracy & Human Rights Education

The project was represented on the FDHRE (Forum for Democracy and Human Rights Education) which is hosted by The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies (University of Natal) in Durban. The project coordinator attended a retreat in Rustenberg from the 28th February - 2nd March 2001. The aim of the retreat was to strategically plan our way forward and the future of the forum. An important agenda item was Peace Education and its inclusion in the new curriculum.

KwaZulu Natal Education Council

The KwaZulu-Natal Education Council met on the 15th March 2001 in Pietermaritzburg. The council advises the provincial Minister of Education on any policies and concerns in education. One of the major concerns in education at the moment is the safety of schools. The project coordinator presented on the project and requested inclusion as an observer on the Council.

KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

The Department of Education held a meeting on the 28th March 2001 in Durban. The subject of the meeting was discipline, safety and security in KwaZulu Natal schools. Principals and SGB members of some schools in Durban attended the meeting. Again the project coordinator presented an outline of the project at this forum. As a follow up to this a province wide meeting on school safety has been planned and the project will be represented at this meeting.

Web Page Support

We continue to maintain our Internet Web Page and our resource centre. Both are frequently used by teachers and others who need to access information. The resource centre is also used by university students conducting research on school safety and also by other NGOs.

The fifty point diagnostic questionnaire is now available on-line. People complete the questionnaire on-line and it automatically calculates the score for their school. If the results indicate that help is needed, they can download the Safe Schools Guide or email the IPT.

Some specific Outcomes

Through monthly support visits, the following specific outcomes not yet mentioned previously in this report were noted:

- In March 2001, the security guard of Reunion Secondary in Umlazi South was shot during an incident involving three armed assailants. No property was removed from the school. As a result of this incident the school has noted the need to increase community involvement in school safety and security.
- In January, Ziphembeleni Secondary School in Inanda Newtown A was vandalised. The staff room was set alight and classrooms were vandalised. The school held a meeting with the community and have reported the

incident to the Inanda Police Station.

- Meadowlands Secondary in Chatsworth East has built a new fence around the perimeter of the school grounds. This has reduced late arrivals and negative external influences.
- Many of the schools have made changes of various kinds. They have noted that although some changes have been small, these actions have had a positive impact on the school.
- The Greenwood Park Youth Desk has held a meeting with all the schools where they introduced the new Police Commissioner and discussed school safety. For many of the schools the greatest danger is posed to primary school learners who travel to school by train and bus and face potential risks to their safety in transit. The CPF (Community Police Forum) will work with the community to alleviate this problem.
- Both the schools and their learners have said that just coming together and talking about issues of mutual concern, and sharing potential experiences and solutions has had a positive impact on their functioning.

Planned Activities

Certificates for all the schools who participated in our Safe Schools Workshop as well as the RCL reps have been awarded. These schools will also receive a poster with the slogan “Our School Fights Crime”. Learners of the entire school will be asked to sign the poster as a pledge against crime in their school and community.

The second planned activity will be a Breakfast Briefing based on the outcome of the intervention and research. This Briefing² will take place at the end of May 2001. All key role players in school safety will be invited.

Research and Independent Evaluation

An independent evaluation of the project was conducted by Kaylene Jackson forms Part 2 of this report

Conclusion – Part 1

The project has, with certainty, proved to have a positive impact within the participating schools, and at times beyond. Clear expressions of this were provided by participants and at times allied bodies within the greater community. Although the contexts within which the schools functioned were diverse and dynamic, this diversity facilitated project implementation that was flexible and able to adapt appropriately.

It was clear that the level of management skill and leadership varied across contexts. This appears to have impacted upon the speed at which schools placed in action issues and plans raised during the project process. This recognition of contextual variables and the uniqueness of each school is important and allows for learning of process at the pace comfortable for each school.

² Due to school priorities, disruptions due to examinations and contextual variables, the briefing has been held over to end of May 2001. An amount of R5000 has been budgeted and held over for expenses related to the briefing.

The issue of management skill development is an important one to consider. It is clear that focussed attention needs to be paid this issue in future as the lack of management skill within schools has an impact on the entire school system and its ability to respond appropriately to the array of needs of its learners and community.

School safety can not be seen in isolation. It is part of the broader notion of whole school development. School safety issues are however, often in the forefront of the school, community and public awareness and can most certainly be responded to appropriately in relatively quick and concrete ways. This project has demonstrated that this is indeed possible.

Valerie Smith

Project Coordinator

PART 2 – EVALUATION REPORT

Executive Summary – Evaluation Report

The completion of the three phase “Safe Schools” project in 14 predominantly disadvantaged schools in the greater Durban region has left in its wake significant positive sentiment from educators, School Governing Body (SGB) members and learners alike. Although it is not feasible at this stage to attempt to assess the project’s direct influence on reducing criminal activity within schools, it is valuable to evaluate its impact on participants. It is essential that participants at all levels consider the project to be a worthwhile exercise in order to commit their personal and functional resources and energy to its continued involvement.

Interviews with 14 educators, 14 SGB members and 28 learners representing all the schools involved in this project yielded valuable insights into the perception of participants of the “Safe Schools” project. Significantly, 93% of educators considered the project to have had a moderate overall impact within their school. The only exception was the perception of one educator who rated the contribution of the project thus far as “excellent”. SGB members similarly were favourably disposed toward the project and its value to their respective school contexts. Learners provided the most significantly favourable feedback and have greatly benefited from the input provided at a workshop level.

Of further interest is the level of perceived increase in safety in the schools. Although not based on empirical data, 71% of educators responded that their schools felt safer now. Over half (64%) of the participating schools reportedly have

existing School Security Committees with Security plans in place. These measures have facilitated the implementation of practical security measures such as panic buttons, security guards, walls and fences as well as improved security at a broader level via greater interaction with SAPS and other community structures.

Learners provided the most favourable feedback and have greatly benefited from the input provided at a workshop level. They reported that the project has afforded them an empowering learning experience with opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills and develop their leadership qualities. Teambuilding and communication skills were by far the most valued skills acquired. All of the learners interviewed were positive regarding the potential benefit of this project to the broader school body.

A call for the strengthening of commitment and ownership of the project by school principals and management teams in order to ensure continuity and sustainability will provide a meaningful focus for further intervention into these contexts.

Introduction

In evaluating the pilot phase of this project that ran in 1999/2000, Clive Harber makes the following strategic observation:

“The overall and important message stemming from the project is that there are no grounds for fatalism and an attitude of ‘there’s nothing we can do’ in South African schools. Schools are not helpless in the face of an onslaught of crime & violence....schools can nevertheless be helped to find simple, relatively cheap and practical measures to reduce crime and

violence and improve safety and security in the relatively short term.”

It is this spirit and attitude of determination that has seen the way forged for the “Safe Schools Project” to be extended to a further 14 schools within the greater Durban area in 2000/2001. Given the overall positive effect of the pilot programme this extension is a welcome contribution to the ongoing struggle to establish an environment conducive to optimal learning.

The demographic details of this project have been documented extensively in previous reports and will thus not be included in this report. This document intends to erect a platform of qualitative feedback from the participants that will serve as a basis for the assessment of the effect of the project thus far. It is imperative to hold in tension immediate, tangible effects that are visible to the observer with the long-term potential benefits of a project of this nature. This assessment is concerned with the former and its outcomes neither add weight to nor detract from the projected impact of this project. The conclusions drawn therefore are cemented in the present with the immediate conclusion of the intervention strategy. Sustained impact is an aspect that will need to be revisited at a later stage.

The “Safe Schools Project” ultimately intends to function as an external facilitator for schools in identifying salient security issues. These are then addressed through the development of appropriate Security Plans and carried through under the auspices of school based Security Committees. Multi - level involvement is key to the success of the project and intervention has focussed on School Management groups, learners as well as community organisations where appropriate. The project is grounded in the commitment of participants to active implementation.

Clarifying The Context

As a baseline assessment of the condition of safety and security in each school, management teams responded to a 50-point diagnostic questionnaire designed to rate existing security levels. Of the 14 schools that responded FIVE schools fell into the bracket of “ many serious security problems to address”. A further FOUR schools have “ a security plan that helps but needs much improvement” with TWO other schools reportedly having “ many elements of a sound security plan but there remain difficult areas of security to be addressed”. Only TWO schools claimed to have “well advanced” security plans.

These results cannot be viewed in isolation. The actual level of criminal activity in each school provides the lens through which these results should be viewed. A dilemma indeed since the clarity of the view may be obscured by the distinction between “actual” and “reported” levels of criminal behaviour. Management teams have been encouraged to keep Incident Records that are valuable only in so far as they reflect the actual state of affairs. The politics surrounding reporting crimes in any context is complex and it is not the intention of this document to unravel and examine these. It is imperative that this aspect remains in consideration as the assessment unfolds.

At this point it is considered futile to include numerical data on school “crime statistics”. This outcome-based approach would be misleading for two primary reasons. Firstly, due to the actual vs. reported dilemma highlighted above the figures have potential to skew the assessment radically – favourably or unfavourably. Secondly, it is unfair to attempt to use such clinical measures at such an early stage of a project since its impact is still being digested and its outcomes more qualitative

in nature.

It is thus into this context that the “Safe Schools Project” has been injected. The short term outcomes thereof the focus of this report.

Articulating The Assessment Strategy

A traditional assessment of the outcome of the project in statistically representative figures is not possible at this stage. Final workshops were conducted as recently as April 2001 and, as stated previously, it would be unwise to attempt to measure the resultant effect on safety and security numerically. Hence the need to adopt an alternative approach.

Data generated for this study are qualitative in nature and utilises personal and telephonic interviews as its foundation. Sampling procedures were random. Telephonic interviews were conducted with ONE educator per school who was directly involved with the project (principal or otherwise) as well as ONE governing body member also directly involved. TWO learners who attended the RCL workshops were interviewed directly. Standardised questionnaires were used for both direct and telephonic interviews and these are included as Appendix J and Appendix K.

The overall aim of the interviews was to gain insight into the participants’ commitment to and ownership of the project through the implementation of basic strategies since this factor would greatly influence its sustainability. It is essential that the project can be sustained in order to see long term, measurable outcomes.

Also, participant's personal responses to the project are valuable in determining how well the project has been received as this has similar implications for implementation.

It should be noted that due to the open – ended nature of the questions responses vary considerably across participants.

Discussion & Comments

There is much that can be learned from the feedback provided by educators, school governing body members and learners alike. Each offers a unique perspective that sheds light on the immediate impact of the project as well as touching on the long-term effect.

Educators rated the project “moderate” overall with the exception of one respondent who felt it was excellent. The most significant aspect of the project was perhaps specifically interpreted and suited to individual contexts and the issues presented there. Clearly though it was felt that schools were able to identify security issues and become aware of “gaps” within their own school settings. Specifically, 43% of educators credited the project with increasing their awareness of criminal activities and security needs. The project, according to 64% of educators, provided an opportunity to learn and develop new frameworks for intervening in security problems supported by organisations such as the IPT itself and broader community structures. Working within their respective clusters was deemed to be a positive experience in reducing isolation and establishing a forum for shared ideas and support. Having said this, FOUR schools did not find this experience beneficial. Only ONE respondent provided a reason for this: insufficient time. There was a

subjective experience of increased safety across 10 of the 14 schools involved in the project (71 %).

A total of NINE out of the 14 schools have established School Security Committee's and Security Plans. More than half of the participating schools have begun implementing specific strategies to improve safety (64%). FOUR schools are still in the process of developing these while one school has not made any attempt to do so due to lack of involvement from parents and time constraints. The efficacy of these committees is dependant on several factors but some insight into their value is provided by responses to Question 7. Incidents of criminal/disruptive behaviour are now reported and monitoring of related behaviour has been heightened. Committees are empowered to improve practical security by negotiating greater security measures such as panic buttons, security guards and gates/fences and walls around school premises. Furthermore, they offer a united effort to engage community role players such as the SAPS.

As far as respondents are concerned two aspects of the projects functioning require further attention. Firstly, two respondents are of the opinion that follow up/continuity, perhaps through short-term evaluation strategies, were lacking. Secondly, and by far the most consistent grievance, was the lack of time, money and personnel to implement the total strategy effectively. Despite this being a universal complaint across varying contexts it is necessary to assess its validity and introduce remedial measures where appropriate.

It was generally agreed that School Security Committees are primarily responsible for the sustainability of the project within schools under the auspices of committed management structures, although increased financial support would be invaluable.

General comments made by respondents were positive overall. Concerns regarding financial constraints in improving the security status of schools were reiterated. A re-evaluation of target groups for further intervention was also considered essential.

Responses from **School Governing Body** (SGB) members varied considerably as mentioned previously. The criteria and motivation for the selection of particular members for inclusion in this project as well as the quality of their involvement cannot be ascertained. Responses were generally positive with the exception of one.

The powerful impact made on learners from the respective **Representative Council of Learners** (RCL) was overwhelming. The vocabulary of responses speaks for itself:

“Opportunities”

“Empowering”

“Developing leadership”

“Increased knowledge”

“Learned skills”

“Changed perspective”

“Learning experience”

Personal benefits derived from the workshops ranged from increased self – esteem, better communication skills, more effective teamwork and enhanced leadership skills. All participants thoroughly enjoyed the workshops. Respondents all felt that they, as members of the RCL, would be able to effect change within their school environments if they were to implement what was learned.

The standardised questionnaire for learner interviews is attached as Appendix K.

Displaying The Data

It is not the intention of this evaluation to compare the impact of this project across schools. Furthermore, since the process of implementation has followed the same pattern within each cluster and hence each school, responses can be considered as a whole and not per school. The standardised questionnaire utilised is included as **APPENDIX A.**

TELEPHONIC INTERVIEWS: EDUCATORS

Please note that raw data are provided as Appendix J.

QUESTION 1:

**What is your overall experience of the Project in your school? Would you rate it as:
Poor – Moderate – Excellent.**

All participants indicated that they had experienced the project as positive, with 92.8% responding with 'moderate'. No respondents suggested a negative experience.

QUESTION 2:

What has been the most significantly positive contribution of the Project to your school?

Half (50%) of the participants provided responses that signified increased levels of awareness off security issues. Other regular responses related to the fact that

security plans could be practically implemented as a result of the intervention, and that monitoring processes could also be put in place.

QUESTION 3:

What are your comments on working within a “cluster” of schools for this project?

The majority of participants (64.2%) indicated a positive response to working within a ‘cluster’ system. Issues such as mutual benefit and learning and sharing responses to common challenges were provided in support of their opinion. However, it must be noted that some basic resistance existed. Indeed, 21% suggested outright rejection of this notion.

QUESTION 4:

Does your school feel ‘safer’ now than it was before the Project?

A high proportion of participants (71.4%) felt that their school was safer as a result of the project intervention. They suggested that reasons for this, as a result of the intervention, included reduced conflict, proactivity with regard their interaction with the Police, and increased attention to access issues.

QUESTION 5:

Is your School security Committee in place and active?

Sixty-four percent of the Committees were in place, with 21.4% in the process of being set up.

QUESTION 6:

Has your school security plan been finalised?

Just over half (57%) had finalised their security plans, while one participant was in the process of finalisation and the remainder (35%) had not. Time and staffing constraints were offered as reasons for not having implemented the plan.

QUESTION 7:

Provide examples of the impact of the School Security Committee and Security Plan.

A range of examples were provided from the ten participants who offered comment.

Generally (70%) these related to practical increases and attention to security matters which included monitoring system implementation and installation and increased contact with SAPS.

QUESTION 8:

Aspects of the project found to be unhelpful.

Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that there were no 'unhelpful' aspects of the project. The remainder suggested issues such as the demand on time and resources as problematic. However, it must be noted that this in itself is not 'unhelpful' *per se* but rather a factor hampering project development.

QUESTION 9:

Project Sustainability.

Here issues such as broader project ‘ownership’ within the schools and their communities were raised, as were the possibilities of SSC’s being the vehicles for ongoing support of the project (21%).

Additional comments:

A range of additional comments were offered by participants. Generally these reflected positive sentiments and an indication of the value of broader interaction in order to ensure school safety. The challenges, it appears, were seen to relate to commitment from key staff and the need for additional finances to ensure the project’s survival. Exact responses are presented in the raw data.

TELEPHONIC INTERVIEWS: GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS

Feedback from School Governing Body members was distinctly less formal in content since the interviews were less structured than with educators. The reason for this was the vast discrepancy in degree of involvement of SGB members across schools. Where some members are in touch with a vast array of school security issues other members are not. In order to achieve a manageable level of uniformity SGB members were merely asked to comment on the programme overall. Despite regular and repeated efforts to contact at least one SGB member from each school, feedback was only obtained from SEVEN of the 14 members. Their responses are as follows:

- Useful and valuable initiative stemming from the private sector not dependant on the Education Department

- Process needs to be driven by the Education Department since schools' have not taken ownership of the project
- Project has been good
- Useful and beneficial to the school
- Workshops were reactive and did not meet expectations. Need to expand membership as target group should include broader community members
- Project has been good
- Valuable workshops – future workshops with SGB's will be important

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS: LEARNERS

Learners were asked to respond to THREE questions designed to elicit feedback regarding the value of the project and the perceived impact personally and for their school. Again, the questions may appear to be over simplified however, considering that RCL workshops were only completed in April 2001 it would be unrealistic to expect more insightful responses at this point. A more focussed approach would therefore render more useful feedback. The sample of learners interviewed comprised TWO learners from each school who attended the RCL workshop. Their responses are as follows:

QUESTION 1: Do you think it is important for your school to be involved in this project? Why/ why not?

- Project provides opportunities to find solutions to problems / Project is empowering as it facilitates problem solving & learning new information like conflict management
- Increased knowledge about leadership & the role of the RCL / RCL can be

more involved since educators often too busy

- Develops leadership qualities & outline role & function of the RCL / Learn skills and impart to other learners
- Valuable in terms of developing security plan and open communication / Provision of valuable information
- Workshop changed perspective of RCL and created greater dedication to their task / Skills taught will result in more effective RCL with better teamwork
- Able to inform other pupils how to keep schools safe / RCL able to function more effectively with skills learned
- Enhancement of knowledge and empowering as RCL member and individual / RCL empowered in its role
- Great need for project due to high incidence of violent crime and drug abuse / provides increased self confidence
- Provided much needed information/learned a lot of new information
- Learned about leadership/ Yes
- Yes – learning experience/ good leadership training

QUESTION 2: What was the most significant thing you learned from being involved in this project?

- Teambuilding / Working together
- Increased confidence in expressing yourself / Inspirational, increased self esteem
- Proper use of authority / Communication, listening and teambuilding
- Increased confidence / Communication & problem solving

- Use of power & cooperation / Communication, teambuilding and power
- Working together as a team / Teamwork
- Communication & working together as a team / Development of leadership qualities
- School safety / Communication
- Teamwork/Working together and communication
- Communication/communication skills
- Communication skills/able to share and talk openly

QUESTION 3: How will being involved in this project make a difference in your school?

- Yes – establishing RCL responsibility and negotiation skills will have positive impact on school / Greater responsibility as RCL, improved relationships with other members of the RCL therefore more effective
- RCL will do their job better as there have been changes in people and behaviour / Confidence & trust in RCL has grown thus increasing effectiveness
- Change is starting to happen / No immediate benefit – will see in time.
- Yes, if what has been taught is implemented / Yes – provided skills that have been learned are spread
- Yes – provided RCL committed to implementing what has been learned / Commitment to putting skills into practice
- Not yet – too soon to see / Potentially yes if there is cooperation and teamwork
- With implementation the school can be changed / Yes, but cooperation and

communication are required

- Only if RCL reps communicate what was learned with the rest of the learner body / Yes if communicated in the proper way
- Are attempting to implement/can help other learners by liaising with educators
- If implemented/Yes
- Yes – the RCL will work better/ RCL now have more knowledge

Conclusion – Part 2

At the completion of the total intervention strategy for the “Safe Schools Project” in April 2001 educators, SGB’s and learners have reacted favourably to the immediate impact of the project for themselves personally as well as their respective school contexts.

The micro and macro politics of the educational system itself has coloured the perceived value and efficacy of the project and it was difficult to separate issues of a beaurocratical nature (funding, number of educators, learner numbers etc) with the implementation of the project. Commitment from educators and SGB’s in spite of these variables beyond the control of the project itself is imperative for the long-term benefit of crime reduction in schools. Securing this commitment requires intense effort in order to ensure qualitative sustainability.

It is clear that learners, as part of a disadvantaged educational system, have not been exposed to this level or kind of input previously. Disempowered and ill-equipped RCL bodies provide no benefit to the learner community.

Workshops allowed for the perspective of the role and function of the RCL to be expanded and learners commitment to its efficacy strengthened. Increased self esteem and enhanced interpersonal and leadership skills are vital if they are to have positive influence on peer behaviour.

The short term intentions of this project appear to have been achieved. Security issues have been identified and are being addressed to varying degrees. Establishing School Security Committees and Security Plans has been successful in part with a few exceptions. Multi – level involvement has been achieved although the quality of that involvement warrants improvement. Arguably the most vital adjustment for ongoing intervention is the need to strengthen the commitment of school management teams to the process. The sustainability and ongoing value of a project of this kind is dependant upon ownership of the project primarily by educators spilling over to SGB's, learners and eventually the surrounding community.

The measured effect of this project in terms of reduction in actual criminal activities will need to be revisited should this be deemed necessary. At the close of these initial stages of intervention the foundations have certainly been laid and it is only a matter of time before the concerted efforts of all involved begin to take concrete shape.

PART 3 : FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**SAFE SCHOOLS PROJECT EVALUATION
STANDARDISED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR**

TELEPHONIC INTERVIEWS with EDUCATORS

1. **What is your overall experience of the Project in your school? Would you rate it as:**

Poor – Moderate – Excellent.

2. **What has been the most significantly positive contribution of the Project to your school?**
3. **What are your comments on working within a “cluster” of schools for this project?**
4. **Does your school feel “safer” now than it was before the Project? Can you give an example to support your response?**
5. **Is your School Security Committee in place and active?**
6. **Has your School Security Plan been finalised?**
7. **Can you provide examples of the impact of the School Security Committee & Security Plan within your school?**
8. **What aspects of the project did you find unhelpful?**
9. **How will this Project be sustained in your school in the future?**
10. **Additional comments?**

**SAFE SCHOOLS PROJECT EVALUATION
STANDARDISED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR
LEARNER INTERVIEWS**

1. **Do** you think it is important for your school to be involved in this project?
Why/ why not?

2. **What** was the most significant thing you learned from being involved in this project?

3. **How** will being involved in this project make a difference in your school?

RAW DATA – EDUCATOR INTERVIEWS

QUESTION 1:

Overall experiences of the project and rating (poor/moderate/excellent).

- Moderate – security awareness began before project but supported by IPT
- Moderate – response from governing body & parents poor
- Excellent
- Moderate
- Moderate
- Moderate – learned a lot
- Moderate – not all positive
- Moderate
- Moderate - successful but too soon to measure impact on school
- Moderate
- Moderate
- Moderate
- Moderate
- Moderate

QUESTION 2: What has been the most significantly positive contribution of the Project to your school?

- Assessing security status put things into perspective and gave focus points to work on
- Awareness of security issues increased
- Security plan – specifically funding to implement aspects thereof
- Involvement of all role-players especially SAPS
- Conflict management
- Awareness of issues and reminder re safety; identify gaps
- Awareness of security increased
- Support structures for schools; RCL workshops
- Awareness of security, focus on specifics, identifying oversights
- Learning experience providing guidance on “how to”
- An eye-opener in terms of security issues
- Sound framework for close monitoring of security within schools
- Tackled majority of problems encountered within school environment.

- Greater awareness of security needs

QUESTION 3: What are your comments on working within a “cluster” of schools for this project?

- Function independently; areas different (high vs. low risk)
- Good – learning experience
- Helpful – common problems
- Sharing ideas
- Learning from others; supportive
- Yes
- Mutual learning experience
- No
- No
- Not enough time to take advantage of opportunity
- Reduced isolation and able to share problems and solutions
- NO
- Yes – similar problems and shared resources
- Yes – helpful.

QUESTION 4: Does your school feel “safer” now than it was before the Project? Can you give an example to support your response?

- Yes
- No major pre existing problems
- Yes – previous continual crisis management and racial tensions reduced
- Yes – definitely
- Yes – 4 years ago definitely not safe
- Yes – no drastic change from previous situation
- Yes - Declined crime since awareness and proactive attitude; no support from SAPS
- Yes - More aware
- No comment
- Yes - within school; external environment still dangerous
- Yes - Better
- No change
- Yes – improved, as outsiders no longer have access to the school grounds
- No significant increase or decrease.

QUESTION 5: Is your School Security Committee in place and active?

- YES – management team involved; assess situations daily
- No - In progress
- YES
- YES
- YES – meet regularly
- No - In progress
- YES – existing before now a more coordinated effort
- YES – teachers involvement limited due to time constraints
- No – teachers too busy and parents uninvolved
- YES – formalised through project
- YES – very irregular meetings
- YES – formulated but inactive
- No - In progress
- No

QUESTION 6: Has your School Security Plan been finalised?

- YES – looking for personnel to monitor
- No
- YES
- YES
- YES
- No - In progress
- YES
- YES
- NO - time and staffing constraints
- YES
- YES
- No
- No
- No

QUESTION 7: Can you provide examples of the impact of the School Security Committee & Security Plan within your school?

- Specific incidents brought to attention by committee rep, follow up by SAPS
- Practical measures like panic buttons introduced
- Increased number of security guards
- Built a wall to secure property and control movement
- Violent attacks and theft decreased with monitoring
- No comment
- Able to target areas of weakness
- Internal security increased
- Improved relationship with SAPS
- Meetings with SAPS
- No comment
- No comment
- Closing of unauthorised entrances/ exits has led to greater safety.
- No comment

QUESTION 8: What aspects of the project did you find unhelpful?

- None
- None
- None
- Follow up and continuity lacking
- None
- Too much to implement
- Cooperation from SAPS poor
- None
- Difficult to link school and community; time and resources limited to implement
- More people to be involved from each school to share load
- No comment
- Short term evaluation to ensure participants are “on track” was lacking
- None
- Coordinator very helpful and cooperative

QUESTION 9: How will this Project be sustained in your school in the future?

- Structures like SSC
- SSC
- Ownership of security plan and SSC
- Commitment of principals
- No comment
- Need for security will ensure continuity
- Coordinated effort of teachers, IPT and SAPS; financial resources
- Funding; management and parents
- Difficult due to time and resource constraints
- Widen the circle to extend involvement and ownership
- It should
- Unknown – ownership not established
- Yes
- Project must be owned by the community

QUESTION 10: Additional comments?

- Fortunate to have the project
- None
- Cooperation from SAPS valuable
- Pre and post photographic assessment of schools
- None
- Project was regular and structured
- Project leader helpful and accommodating especially considering fragmentation of time
- None
- Financial resources needed
- Excellent relationship with SAPS established
- Financial constraints are desperate. Security guards are employed from the school budget and often do not have shelters; fences and walls are outside of the range of most school budgets
- Project focuses on wrong target group as problems stem from the community not so much with learners and educators
- If key participants e.g. Principals are not committed to the process it will not work in the schools
- None