



Theory and implementation evaluation of the Khanyisa programme

Summary Report

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The research for this report was conducted as a Dissertation for the Master's in Programme Evaluation based on a request for such research by Action Volunteers Africa (AVA)

**The UCT Knowledge Co-op facilitated this collaborative project
between AVA and UCT.**

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Introduction

AVA has played an active role in advocating for the large-scale use of volunteering as a means to address the growing youth unemployment. In its Khanyisa programme, volunteers implement the Shine reading model with grade 2 learners in schools while receiving ongoing training and support to prepare them for finding employment.

This report summarises the key findings of the evaluation and presents the draft theory of change for comment. The findings are discussed according to the six evaluation questions:

1. How do the various stakeholders' perspectives of the theory of change compare and contrast?
2. Is the theory of change plausible?
3. What specific duties or activities should be included in the school placement component, according to the different perspectives?
4. How should the self-development component be designed, considering the intended outcomes from the different perspectives?
5. How do volunteers spend their time during the school placements?
6. Are the volunteers satisfied with the school placements?

1. How do the various stakeholders' perspectives of the theory of change compare and contrast?

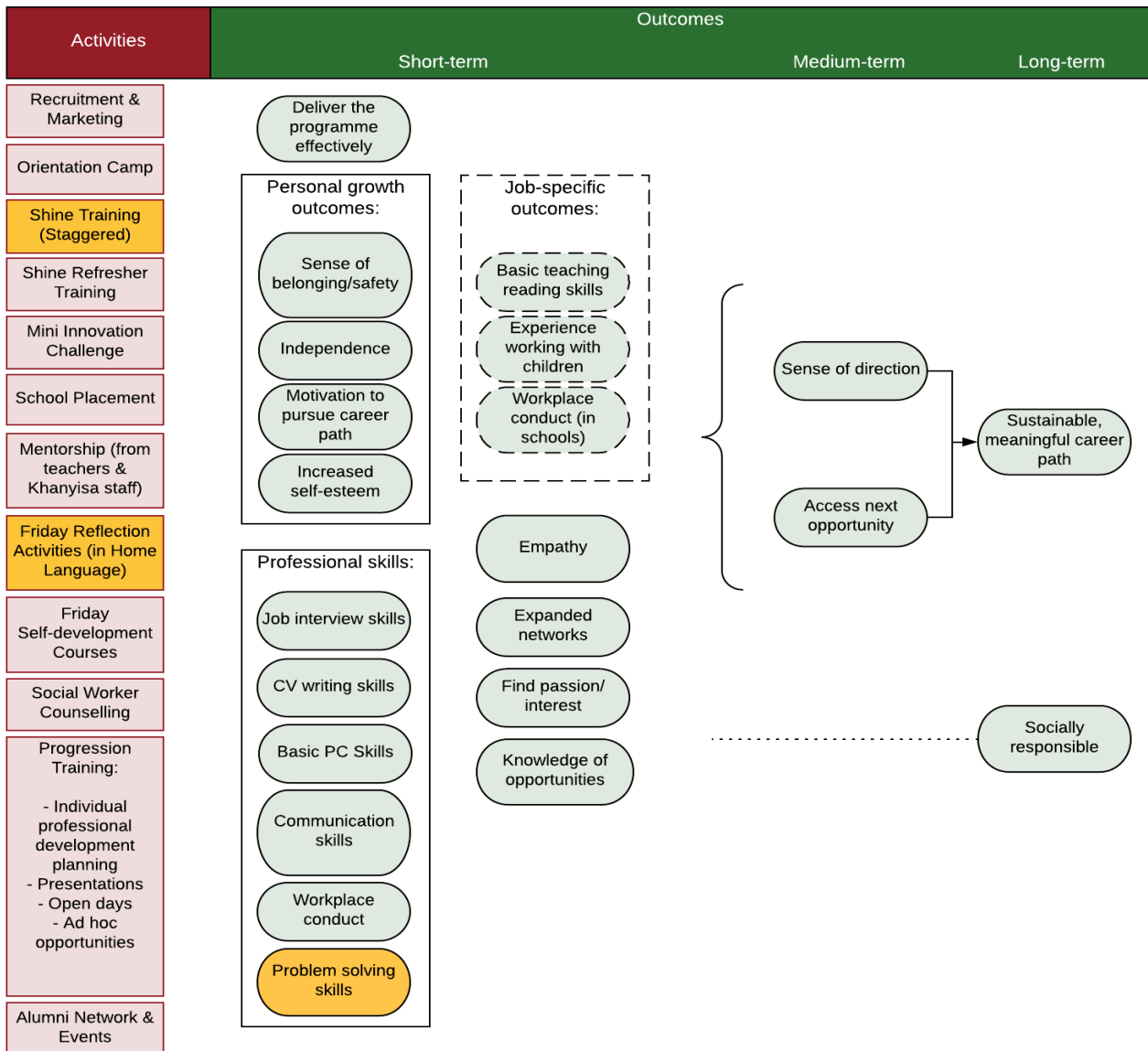
Key findings:

- Largely, there was agreement between the different stakeholder groups on the theory of change:
 - o All stakeholder groups highlighted the importance of accessing the next opportunity, increased communication skills and increased confidence.
 - o Khanyisa programme staff and volunteers highlighted the importance of gaining confidence in speaking English.
 - o Three out of four groups highlighted increased skills working with young people, effectively delivering the reading intervention and appropriate workplace conduct as intended outcomes of the programme.
 - o AVA management and volunteers highlighted sense of direction and agency/independence as intended outcomes.
- However, there were some key gaps:
 - o Volunteers were unclear on the intended impact of the programme.
 - o Khanyisa programme staff and volunteers did not mention expanded networks as an intended outcome of the programme.
 - o No stakeholder groups highlighted the importance of volunteering as the mechanism of change, rather relying on the self-development component to develop personal growth outcomes.

2. Is the theory of change plausible?

Before the plausibility check can be conducted, a commonly agreed theory of change is needed. The theory of change below was drawn from the various stakeholders' theories of change as well as a theory of change workshop with all stakeholders represented.

The blocks highlighted in yellow refer to changes to the programme suggested in the workshop.



Once reviewed and confirmed, the plausibility of the theory of change will be tested through literature review.

3. What specific duties or activities should be included in the school placement component, according to the different perspectives?

Key findings:

- All stakeholders emphasized roles and responsibilities related to delivering the reading intervention:
 - a. Conducting paired and shared reading
 - b. Shine management also highlighted key reporting activities that need to occur
 - c. All stakeholders emphasized that volunteers helping teachers with other tasks should be kept to a minimum

- According to the stakeholders' perspectives of the theory of change, the specific duties that the volunteers have are not relevant for programme success. Rather, the mechanism of being exposed to a work environment and the associated experiences (handling workplace conflicts, expectations of punctuality and professionalism, etc.) are key.

- However, assuming the importance of volunteering as a mechanism for change (as per the programme documents), then the literature suggests that (a) volunteers' level of engagement, (b) fulfilling personal motivations of volunteers. Other possibly relevant factors may include: being appreciated, making important decisions, having opportunities to do rather than only observe and being interested in the work.

4. How should the Self-development component be designed?

The appropriateness of the Self-development component was explored in a recent evaluation of the Work4Progress programme by evaluators from Southern Hemisphere. The evaluation concluded that the component was appropriate for the intended outcomes.

There are only two points to add to these conclusions:

- a. All stakeholders saw computer literacy skills as important outcomes for the volunteers. However, the computer course is currently an optional course.

Recommendation – make the computer literacy course compulsory or dependent on demonstrated proficiency.

- b. The purpose of the reflection activity is to help volunteers overcome challenges that they have faced at school through group discussion and sharing. This can be undermined, however, as volunteers are forced to share in English, which causes stress to those with low confidence or low proficiency in English. The matter is further complicated, as the volunteers acknowledged that by being forced to speak English in these settings, their confidence improved.

Recommendation – Ensure mixed opportunities for sharing (i.e. some in English and some in the volunteers' home language).

5. How do volunteers spend time at the school placement?

Key Findings:

There were a number of encouraging findings:

- Volunteers reported spending a large amount of time interacting with students (almost 6 hours per day on average).
- 91% of volunteer responses indicated that they received feedback from their teachers each day of the study.
- All volunteers responses indicated the volunteer had conducted paired reading each day of the study. However, 81% of responses indicated that shared reading occurred for less than 30 minutes per day (*Note: It is possible some volunteers may have misinterpreted the question as 'time per student'*).
- 96% of volunteer responses indicated that shared reading had been conducted each day. However, in some cases shared reading was used extensively - 50% of responses indicated shared reading had been conducted for more than 30 minutes in that day. 27% of responses indicated that shared reading occurred for over an hour that day.

There were also some concerns raised:

- One concern was that of unproductive time, where volunteers felt they were not doing anything useful. This is substantiated with 41% of volunteer responses indicating that they had spent over 2 hours networking with peers at school that day. 36% of volunteer responses indicate that they spent more than 1 hour observing the teacher that day.
- Another concern was that teachers were using the volunteers inappropriately – as teaching assistants rather than Reading Buddies. Although there seems to be evidence for this concern, the issue does not seem wide-spread based on the quantitative data:
 - o The biggest inappropriate use of volunteers was to lead the classroom. 41% of volunteer responses indicated that they had led the class for over 30 minutes that day.
 - o 73% of volunteer responses indicated that they had done less than 10 minutes of admin work (printing, copying, taking register, etc.) that day. By contrast, 14% of responses indicated that they did admin work for more than one hour that day.
 - o 64% of volunteer responses indicated that they had assisted with non-reading related teaching for less than 30 minutes that day.

Recommendation – Stronger monitoring of volunteers' time at the schools – either through the use of journals (such as those used in this study) or weekly surveys.

Point of clarity – The teachers are brought to the last day of the volunteers' training. How else are they trained to supervise the volunteers?

Further research – There is a need to investigate how well the school placement addresses the needs of the programme's logic. For example, there are questions of how the volunteer experience mirrors a real-world working environment (i.e. how stringently are expectations of punctuality, professionalism, etc. applied to the volunteers?), volunteers' levels of engagement with the programme and whether the programme meets their individual motivations.

6. Are the volunteers satisfied with the school placements?

Key Findings:

Volunteers expressed positive feedback about the school placements, with:

- 91% of volunteer responses indicating that they were happy and/or motivated from individual reading that day.
- 86% of responses indicated that they were happy and/or motivated from receiving feedback from their teachers that day.

However, there were some concerns raised:

- In at least two schools, the volunteer was placed in a school which where the predominant language spoken was not their home language, causing them discomfort and embarrassment.
- Several volunteers reported conflicts with the school staff. One major cause of conflict was when corporal punishment was reported, the school staff blamed the volunteers.

Recommendation – Review the procedure of reporting and responding to instances of corporal punishment to ensure volunteers' anonymity is ensured.

- Another source of conflict was that volunteers perceived a lack of respect from school staff.
- Volunteers also highlighted instances of poor communication between schools and Khanyisa coordinators. For example, there were occasions when volunteers reported an absence to the Khanyisa coordinators, but it was not passed on to the school. This meant that the volunteers were viewed negatively when they returned to school.