

UNDERLYING THEMES AND PRINCIPLES

IkamvaYouth has had great success by applying the following principles and being aware of the underlying themes, in the work that we do. The basic premise is that if you are able to understand 'WHY' you are doing something, it will be far easier to actually do it.

This overview will help you to understand the thinking behind the action and to see that IkamvaYouth's success is a sum of multiple interacting parts rather than a 'blueprint' or 'exact science'. All these principles and themes will re-occur throughout this manual and you will be provided with the practical tips to apply them.

You can use this section as a reminder when you are wondering 'Is this REALLY necessary?' – A question you are likely to ask yourself often, as although the model is simple, the work is certainly not easy.

One way to understand these interactions is to link them to the 5 core values:

- **Culture of responsibility for self and others**
- **Commitment to impact through democratic processes**
- **Collaboration and peer to peer support**
- **Integrity and openness**
- **Paying it forward**



CULTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELF AND OTHERS

75% Attendance requirement and strict kick-out policy

[Watch this short video about the importance of taking attendance](#)

To keep their place in the programme learners must attend 75% of the sessions. This key element of the model was actually developed by learners in the class of 2005. Before then, tutoring was open to anyone who pitched up, and attendance wasn't diligently recorded. As exams loomed, more and more learners began coming to tutoring, and those who'd been attending regularly the entire year pointed out how unfair this was. Now, when they needed them most, their tutors were pulled in all directions by learners who were trying to cram at the last minute, and cover ground that the committed learners had cleared ages ago.

The 75% attendance requirement was proposed at the Makhaza branch committee meeting, and was adopted following a 100% consensus vote. It led to many positive developments, and ultimately successful results. These include: a strong sense of belonging; an exchange rather than a hand-out; a culture of responsibility; a sense of ownership and to give the learner the ultimate choice whether or not they want to be part of the programme.

At the end of term all learners whose attendance falls below 75% are kicked out, following a mid-term intervention procedure. Although this sounds strict, it is absolutely necessary to implement in order to get committed and responsible learners into your programme.

Being responsible and reliable is a quality required in most professions, so encouraging it from a young age will give your learners a step up into the labour market. Encouraging commitment and giving learners responsibility will allow them to become well-rounded adults that not only strive to do what they think is right, but will also begin to question the actions of others and hold them to account too.



Report Collection and Feedback

Recognition of effort, improvement and output is one of the primary motivators for both children and adults alike. Being acknowledged for the good work you are doing naturally feels good. Young people in the contexts in which we work are not always acknowledged for their efforts and successes. This is due to various reasons; huge class sizes and lack of teacher capacity, delay in school reporting, unstable home lives and parents/guardians who did not themselves receive quality education, and are so ill-equipped to help their children with their own.

It is therefore paramount that the learners in your programme feel recognised for their successes, and can begin identifying their areas of weakness in an environment that provides the assistance to overcome these challenges. The skill of seeing successes and failures and taking responsibility for setting (and meeting) targets for improvement is an essential life lesson so often neglected in poor school environments. The act of report collection and providing individual feedback will impact hugely on the life of the learner and their sense of responsibility.

Tutoring Pedagogy

Pedagogy can be defined as ‘the art, science, or profession of teaching or education’. It is used interchangeably throughout the manual with ‘methodology’. Tutoring can be defined as the action of giving additional, special or remedial instruction, typically to one learner or a small group.

IkamvaYouth’s tutoring methodology cannot and does not aim to replace the teaching learners receive at school. Instead, it aims to provide the additional support to help learners to identify the gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and to fill these through peer-to-peer learning. While teaching involves the delivery of curricula, tutoring helps learners learn how to learn. This distinction is important to make.

Teaching lays the concept and transfers knowledge i.e. $1+1=2$. Tutoring then uses this foundation to develop a deeper understanding about that concept and tests for ‘landing’ -



when a concept is fully understood from multiple angles i.e. $1+1=2$ therefore $2-1=1$. It can even take a step back and ask what is '1'? And what is '+'?

A tutor works with 5 learners who bring with them the work they are struggling with in order to get help. The tutor then asks targeted questions which encourages the learner to identify the gaps in their understanding, communicate these effectively and then work with the tutor, their peers and individually to fill these gaps.

This method ultimately teaches them how to learn. Using this methodology in after-school education distinguishes it from classroom learning. It puts the focus and the responsibility squarely on the learner and shifts their role from a passive recipient of knowledge to an active participant in their own knowledge construction. People learn better by constructing their own knowledge and understanding rather than being told how or what something 'is'.

Inarguably the ability to learn is an essential skill for any productive member of society, particularly in the 21st century, with increasingly fast paced changes in technology and the subsequent skills people need to thrive in such an economy.

Future focused activities

A learner's life doesn't stop after matric. Whether they pass or fail, there are numerous options and choices to be made. Activities are needed that are focused on providing the learner with the skills and support to identify their options, search for opportunities, and access a post-school placement of their choosing. These include 1:1 mentoring and career guidance, computer literacy classes, media, image and expression workshops, and health, leadership and life skills.

The idea is not to hold the learner's hand all the way through life, but it is to provide a reliable place from which they can draw advice and guidance while they develop the necessary competencies and resilience to tackle the challenges of life on their own. This can take some learners longer than others, but with persistent assistance and by effectively 'tutoring' the learner in 'life', they are able to take responsibility for themselves and their own futures. In turn, they will provide the same service to another.



COMMITMENT TO IMPACT THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

Democratic and inclusive decision-making mechanisms

Giving young people a voice, listening to what they say, and actually including their input in the decision-making that impacts them, is hugely empowering. This is particularly the case for teenagers, and especially teenagers living in contexts of poverty who are subject to its oppressive structures. These learners often have limited perceptions of the choices they have and their own ability and right to speak up or influence the structures and systems around them. Providing clear mechanisms to engage learners in the decision-making process will benefit the learner's future ability to be heard. It will also support your own programmes longevity as you will be making decisions based on collective input and a broad consensus.

On a practical level learners may design and implement their own ideas/activities at the branch. Being given responsibility to implement something that contributes to the grander functioning of the branch also enforces the value of 'Culture of Responsibility for self and others'. It requires that the learner contributes to decisions and takes actions that will impact positively upon others. This is, by nature a huge responsibility and requires the development of empathy and the ability to view things from a variety of perspectives and angles.

Tracking and Monitoring Attendance

IkamvaYouth has a devout commitment to impact. We have been able to demonstrate impact over the past 10 years by tracking learners' attendance, collecting learners' reports, and collating learners' matric results and post-school placement data. Positive impact should be a primary goal of any programme, organisation, initiative or company. If what you do is having a positive impact - meaning things are better with your intervention, than



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without your intervention - you know that you are doing the right thing. This is such a simple but under-acknowledged principle. Many organisations exist that do not monitor performance or track impact. This doesn't mean that they do not have it, but without the data (both quantitative and qualitative) to support it, they cannot know for sure.

Monitoring performance and tracking impact will improve your programme delivery as you will be able to identify your gaps. Luckily, impact measurement also leads to more funding opportunities so that you can access the resources to fill these gaps.



COLLABORATION AND PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT

1:5 Tutor Ratio

The number of learners in a classroom in South Africa can be up to 80 students with one teacher delivering instruction (if indeed there is a teacher!). This does not give a lot of room for individualised attention and feedback. IkamvaYouth works toward recruiting enough volunteers to ensure a 1:5 tutor ratio. 5 learners then work with 1 tutor and learners receive the real-time feedback that they need in order to progress at their own pace. These smaller, more manageable groups allow tutors to tutor rather than teach (see ‘tutoring pedagogy’ for more detail) and allows for more tutor-learner interaction as well as peer learning.

Peer learning

The majority of IkamvaYouth’s tutors are young people, many were once IkamvaYouth learners themselves. They facilitate the peer learning that happens between the learners. This can occur in study groups related to classes and subjects whereby learners share information, techniques and know-how in order to lift the collective understanding of the group. This doesn’t happen overnight and it will often take time, and some serious facilitation on the part of the tutor to establish this as a norm.

Peer learning also occurs informally, as through the after-school programme learners establish themselves as part of a ‘new peer group’. The power that a teenager’s peers has on their development is enormous. There is a tendency, particularly of this age group, to shape their behaviour based upon the people with whom they surround themselves with.

Therefore, by creating a new peer group, where peers are focused on academic success, high future aspirations, and supporting one another to attain these goals, a new norm is established. Ikamvanites learn from their peers and collectively adopt this ‘way of being’ as their new norm.



Strong relationships with schools, parents, and community

IkamvaYouth's view is that we must collaborate to achieve something better together than we could have done alone. Bear this in mind as you start, run and grow your programme and organisation. Look around you at the opportunities to strengthen progress towards your own aims and support those of others around you.

Learners wear many hats. They are sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, students, friends, sport team members, churchgoers, choir singers, etc. It is important to understand that they are part of a much wider community and for them to be wholly supported and nurtured. The different aspects of their lives need to speak to one another.

Building relationships and collaborating with parents, older siblings, teachers, coaches, pastors, imams and other organisations in the community will help to better support the learner and will also have an effect on the success and sustainability of your programme by increasing your own support system.

Culture of Learning

'Culture' is a term often used, particularly in the Rainbow Nation, where many cultures must live and work together. There are historic cultures; national, tribal, religious, etc. all of which are based on underlying belief systems and often a set of values that guide and govern the behaviour of those within a culture.

IkamvaYouth promotes the development of a new culture, a culture of learning that instils a different way of thinking, behaving and working. A culture that anyone can belong to!

Peer learning and the connections with the wider community help to create this culture of learning. It starts from the individual taking responsibility for themselves and seeing their future as an output (tertiary/job) of today's input (studying). It then grows and spreads as their peers adopt the same outlook. It is supported by tutors who offer proof that this new way of thinking and behaving has positive outcomes. Staff and other volunteers at the branches constantly remind and encourage learning, making it fun and



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accessible. It gets deepened by the involvement of parents, teachers and the wider community who help to provide supportive structures for learning. This culture ultimately gets passed on to others by the learners, who see and share the view that learning, school and education is a means to a much greater ends....and so it continues.

Programme implementation within this culture means that you're constantly learning from what works and what doesn't; identifying ways to improve; learning from mistakes, and innovating to overcome the inevitable challenges that arise.



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INTEGRITY AND OPENNESS

A Sense of Belonging

People crave meaningful relationships, they crave interaction with others, and more than anything they crave a sense of belonging.

Everyone who has ever been to an IkamvaYouth branch will have noticed the Ikamvanites' eagerness. It stems from the relationships that exist between learners, tutors, and staff. There is a real sense of belonging to something - to a big family. This family spreads across the whole of South Africa, and although learners in Masiphumelele and Ikakeng are unlikely to meet (unless they end up at the same tertiary institution), they have a bond as motivated people who are taking their future into their own hands. It is the relationships that they form with each other, and the eagerness to maintain these relationships that foster commitment and responsibility.

It is important to acknowledge the characteristics of these relationships. They don't form overnight and require persistence and consistency from all involved. Just showing up, knowing a learner's name, asking how their week has been, and remembering a small detail about their life will show the learner that you are interested in them, and that you care.

It is also important to involve and engage the learner in the structures of the tutoring programme. Ask their opinion on decisions, speak with them honestly about your concerns, share with them the challenges that you are experiencing and ask for their advice.

IkamvaYouth attempts to be as open as possible at all levels of the organisation and through democratic governance structures IY informs and invites participation from all involved.

Creating an environment of openness and honesty relies first and foremost with you, the tutors, and the learners being open and honest with each other. One way that this is achieved is through the establishment of a Branch Committee (Branchcom). A Branchcom is a decision-making committee comprising of staff, tutors, learners and parents. It is conducted to involve the beneficiaries in the decisions that affect them. An effective Branchcom can only function in an environment of trust and integrity.



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At these bi-weekly meetings all members are encouraged to be honest about what is not working and what is going wrong. By voicing concerns and then problem solving together it shifts the members' approach to overcome obstacles and challenges. Instead of worrying about getting in trouble for voicing discontent and therefore suffering silently people are encouraged to question, hold people to account and propose ideas. The acknowledgement of and transparent response to these voiced concerns fosters a deep sense of trust but also provides an active platform on which people hold themselves and each other to account.

IkamvaYouth extends this value of openness to all the interactions and collaborations with other organisations. By adopting a 'sharing' attitude and providing free access to resources and information the answers to some of South Africa's biggest problems are far more attainable and the solution itself is strengthened by the marrying of expertise.



PAYING IT FORWARD

Positive relationships and role models

Young people, particularly in adolescence create a lot of their meaning from their peers and the interactions they have with the people around them. It is all too well known that many young people do not have enough access to positive role models. This is largely due to the legacy of apartheid that has left this country facing divisions and segregation.

The immediate surroundings and role models for many young people living in contexts of poverty, are adults who are also living in contexts of poverty. This becomes the norm, and dreams beyond these circumstances become something that happens to 'the other' - someone to which a young person living in a township cannot relate.

IkamvaYouth addresses this through the concept of paying-it-forward, whereby ex-learners return to tutor at branches and provide the learners with role models that alter their perceptions about what is possible. This has multiple positive implications. We learn best from people like us, or those who can relate to our personal realities. They speak the same 'language', they understand our challenges, they are able to guide and advice based on experience, and they offer us hope that these challenges *can* be overcome. Encouraging ex-learners to pay it forward as tutors and recruiting tutors from the community itself are an essential part of maintaining the quality of your programme and sustaining it in the long-term.

For those who've benefitted from a system where the minority receives quality education, the opportunity to pay-forward this privilege is a fulfilling and useful way to contribute towards social cohesion and to overcome the negative impacts of segregation and inequality.

