



# HIV and Life Skills Education Programme Through Football Pilot Programme in Rustenburg, South Africa

**Update Report**  
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Carradine House, First Floor, 237 Regents Park Road, London N3 3LF  
www. one2onekids.org nathalie@one2onekids.org  
tel +44 (0)20 8343 3622 fax +44 (0)20 8343 3655  
Patrons: Thomas Black, Dame Judi Dench, Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, Lady Sainsbury,  
Omar Sharif, Sir Harry Solomon, Terry Waite CBE  
Trustees: David Altschuler, Rita Eker MBE, Lawrence Gould, Kevin Gundie  
Director: Lauren Jacobson

Registered Charity 1086159

## 1. Background

With the generous support of the Mercury Phoenix Trust, One to One Children's Fund partnered with Africaid WhizzKids United for a one year HIV prevention pilot programme in Rustenburg, North West Province in South Africa in April 2009.

This programme aims to create an AIDS-free generation in a unique and innovative way. By employing the language of football, school children vulnerable to HIV/AIDS are educated on the dangers of the disease, teaching them in the process life skills which aims to bring about positive behavioural changes.

The fundamental belief of the programme is that young people can be taught skills that allow them to circumvent the pitfalls associated with their socio-cultural environment. By drawing analogies between life and football, children are taught not just these strategies, but also ways of changing behaviour that can be detrimental to their well-being in a broader sense.

One to One Children's Fund is also the co-founder and main funder of Paediatric Aids Treatment for Africa (PATA). PATA is an umbrella organisation of 86 paediatric clinics in 17 African countries that work collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams to help them provide better support to children and families affected by HIV. In Rustenburg, One to One Children's fund partnered with a PATA affiliated clinic, Job Shimankana Hospital, to work with WhizzKids United and deliver the Life Skills course to reach a target of 2,000 youth aged 11 plus - both boys and girls.

This pilot programme was developed to deliver a holistic approach to HIV prevention and care, as well as to offer long term sustainability and ensure that its impact on youth is measurable and far-reaching into the community.



Learning "life skills" in a primary school, May 2009.

## 2. Overview of HIV and Life Skills Education Programme

Over the years, One to One Children's Fund has developed its education programme through football to reach out to many children and adolescents and build the capacity of local organisations involved in youth engagement programmes and HIV prevention, and to support PATA affiliated clinics looking at different medium to care for the younger generation in Africa. Whizzkids United

(WKU) is a South African organisation with a strong track record in HIV/Aids educational programmes and affiliated to FIFA Football for Hope.

This programme develops children and adolescents' drive and ambition through the lens of football to help them reach their potential. Research strongly suggests that children who have goals and ambition are less likely to contract HIV.

The programme consists of three components which work together to form a support structure enabling youth to lead successful, HIV/AIDS free lives:

### Life Skills Football Training

The foundation of the programme is a 10-hour Life Skills Course, which uses football as the language of instruction. The Life Skills trainers actively engage the children, drawing analogies between football and life and thereby illustrating valuable life lessons in a fun, interactive way.

The Life Skills course is run in schools and consists of a series of sessions each addressing a different aspect of football and life. Boys and girls engage in football training exercises. After each exercise they are brought back together around a picture flipchart on the field where the lessons from the training are applied to life.



Life Skills learners in Rustenburg June 2009.

Understanding the importance of a goal in football is easy but what about the need for having goals in life? To score a goal in football you have to beat the defenders and the goalkeeper but what obstacles do you have to overcome in life to achieve your goals? How do you prevent HIV infection becoming your biggest obstacle in life? Without rules in football the game isn't fun but does the same apply to life? These are some of the questions that are explored during the Life Skills course.

At the end of the course children and adolescents graduate, the proud owners of a football strip, certificate and most importantly a set of life skills that, if applied, will protect them from HIV infection. Their graduation is celebrated with a World Cup Tournament.

### Peer Education

Learners with exceptional leadership qualities are trained to deliver a series of workshops to their classmates, reinforcing the lessons of the Life Skills course.

These "leaders" receive additional training in order to prepare for the workshops. Peer Educators reinforce the healthy lifestyle taught in the Life Skills course and provide an approachable source of intermediate support. Youths are much more likely to talk about sexual health with someone in their peer group than an authority figure. Peer Educators are supported by their trainers, local health care specialists.

### 3. The Rustenburg Pilot Programme

The one-year Rustenburg programme commenced in May 2009, with the aim of engaging with 2,000 school age children in schools and correctional facilities. The programme is to be piloted in at least four primary schools and one youth correctional facility in townships around Rustenburg province with aims to expand further. In order to do so, local partnerships have also been established with Departments of Health, Correctional Services, Departments of Education and Job Shimankana Tabane Hospital (JST).

#### Launch Event

The launch event took place on 2 May 2009 at the Olympia Stadium with the One to One Children's Fund and Whizzkids United football tournament.

The tournament was a success with 130 boys and girls from J.D Mosiah Primary School attending to play football with adherence to the rules of the game. Under the auspices of the FIFA Fair Play Initiative, the players self-refereed the games. The model was highly effective and co-ordinator Sister Tebogo Tshengiew also put WKU in touch with local people and the media which aired an insert on a children's show on the South African Broadcasting Corporation.



Football Tournament at the Olympia Stadium in Rustenburg, May 2009

## Delivery of the Life Skills Course



Training of trainers May 09

The six-session Life Skills training course was commenced with WKU Director Marcus McGilvray and Programme Manager Paul Kelly training Life Skills trainers Sibongile Seboloji, Motshedisi Nolekwa (Queen) and Elsie Molekwa, all experienced counsellors, also working at JST Hospital. In each session, football was used as a medium to teach life skills to the trainers with a focus on HIV prevention and long-term behaviour change.

Staff from the local hospital and a sports administrator also attended the training and expressed an interest in assisting the three trainers with the programme in a voluntary capacity. The training was a success as the trainers picked up the approach despite having had no football coaching experience before.

Trainers were also introduced to administrative documents and procedures, providing a fuller understanding of the programme and how it was intended to roll out into various schools. Schools were identified and visited by the trainers to finalise the working schedules.

### Local Partnerships and beneficiaries

Local partnerships were established with Departments of Health, Education and Correctional Services.

By mid-May, operations had started at J.D. Mosiah and Tshirologang Junior Primary Schools, with 174 and 645 pupils respectively and the timetables for the trainers were decided. All young learners have now completed the Life Skills course.

“The programme works because it teaches life skills, especially HIV/AIDS, through football. It is a very enjoyable programme for the kids because instead of standing in front of them and teaching for the whole hour about HIV, we take them out to the pitch, and use football to teach.”, declared the local project co-ordinator, Tebogo Tshengiwe, trained by WKU.

A partnership was also established with the Department of Correctional Services. Due to their social background, young offenders have a higher risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviour and therefore contracting the HIV virus. This was a great opportunity to fill a gap in the HIV response by targeting young offenders as part of the programme. Some of the participants at Correctional Services are HIV positive and already receiving Anti-Retroviral treatment (ARVs).

Despite difficulties experienced by the trainer in May and June at the Correctional Services (CS), 104 learners from one of the two schools at the CS were able to complete the life skills course. Since, the trainer’s attention was to focus on the second school within the CS known as “Centre of Excellence”, with six classes in a weekly course or through workshop classes the offenders agreed to take part in. The trainer reported that some adolescents lack motivation, can be disrespectful and unreliable. Despite the challenges, however, she managed to work and trained 173 young offenders in June and

July 2009. The Director of the Centre of Excellence is very satisfied with the programme so far and is excited about the football tournament.

In early August, 567 pupils enrolled at Letsibogo Primary School scheduled to complete the life skills course by the end of the third term in September. The first World Cup Tournaments will take place between 16 and 23 September for all children who have completed the Life Skills course.

Date of enrolment	School	Number of learners
May 2009	J.D. Mosiah Primary School	174
May 2009	Tshirologang Primary School	645
May 2009	Correctional Services – “School 1”	104
June 2009	Correctional Services – Centre of Excellence	173
August 2009	Letsibogo Primary School	567
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,663*</b>

\* Total number of all life skills course beneficiaries as of August 2009.

### Feedback from Learners and Trainers

Homework booklets for assessment were distributed to and filled out by the children. Grades for each learner are expected at the end of the course.

So far, the feedback from learners and teachers is very positive. Teachers confirm that the Life Skills course adds value to the school curriculum and that children are challenged and stimulated by the course.

“This is exceptional. The children enjoy their lessons tremendously. They do not just play, they are taught challenging skills and the ladies who teach are also of the best quality.” Hymn de Wet, teacher.

WKU also conducted assessments of the three trainers. All show a good understanding of the material and the relationship between life skills and football. However, there is still room for the trainers to apply themselves more fully to the material through continued reading and practising. In particular, they still require a better understanding of how to run the football exercises. Tebogo, local Project Coordinator from JST Hospital, agreed to work more closely with the trainers and setup a twice-monthly training session where they will be able to practice delivering the material and sharpen their football skills.

In the next weeks, WKU will focus on improving the standards of the local trainers and to empower children with leadership skills to become peer educators.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

One to One Children's Fund receives regular update reports from WKU on the progress made. Representatives of One to One Children's Fund and WKU also meet on a regular basis in the UK and in South Africa to discuss the outcomes of the pilot, re-assess the needs and impacts of the programme, and develop joint funding applications to roll out this HIV Life Skills programme to other provinces in South Africa, in partnership with PATA affiliated paediatric clinics and local partners. We aspire to lay the foundation for an AIDS-free generation, aware of their own potential with essential skills to remain healthy into adulthood.

One to One Children's Fund and WKU now estimate that the pilot programme could benefit as many as 4,000 children and up to 8 primary schools by March 2010.

To harness the excitement of the 2010 FIFA World Cup as a vehicle for social change, our priority is to roll out the Life Skills programme to the Eastern Cape province in early 2010 and reach out to as many as 4,000 children over one year. The Eastern Cape is one of the most impoverished provinces in the country with limited healthcare facilities and an estimated 10% of the population infected with HIV.

