

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



S O H K
SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

trialogue The MTN Awards for Social Change 2021 MTN

Hollard. SPORT INDUSTRY AWARDS 2021 RUNNERUP

The Year in Summary

SOHK's 2021 was dedicated to improving the mental wellbeing of young South Africans in the midst of the on-going public and mental health crisis. I am immensely proud of our team in showing perseverance and passion to reach as many young people as possible over this period, despite the deep disruption to school calendars.

Their hard work paid off as we can point to a number of concrete successes detailed in this report. What felt most significant was to receive a 97% approval from our learners' caregivers regarding our support at home. Parents are really beginning to understand their children more. Further, we instituted a mental health referral system to handle serious cases beyond our skill set, and I personally know a life that has been saved through this process.

A real highlight for the year was that the team's efforts through the hardest part of COVID were recognised in June with the MTN Award for Social Impact.

Last year we set a goal of growing our gender transformative work. With new partner Naspers we piloted bespoke gender content with even better results than 2020 for improving young people's harmful perceptions of gender.

We have also launched a new programme called #NextGenMen aimed at reducing gender based violence through an approach with adult men. This and reaching more youth through our Schools programme are what we are excited about for 2022.



Founder & Director



The Challenge

Exposure to trauma

In 2020 we undertook a survey which measures Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), a proxy for exposure to trauma. In it we found SOHK learners are exposed to high levels of violence in their daily lives. Those suffering the most trauma had lower corresponding wellbeing.

59%

of learners stated having a stressful or traumatic event recently

46%

recently witnessed a violent crime

Learner Survey 2021 | ACES Survey 2020

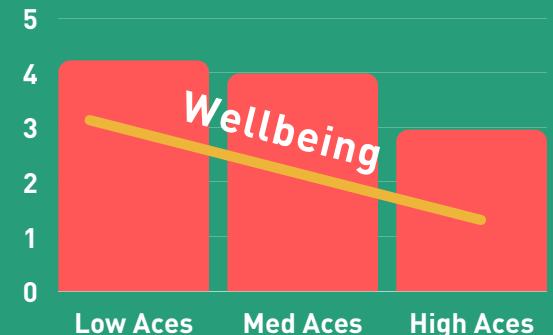
63%

had experienced one traumatic event in last 6 months.

23%

of learners surveyed had recently been hurt by an adult

ACES 2020



Learners with more ACEs were more likely to have lower levels of well-being

2020 ACES Survey / 2020 Learner Surveys

The Physiology

When people are overwhelmed by trauma, it negatively impacts decision-making, self-regulation, fear-processing, memory and stress management. This can lead to acting out in harmful ways we call a 'fight response.' Alternatively, some stay silent and avoid talking about their challenges, blocking them out and disconnecting from their feelings as a way of coping, we call this 'flight' and it is associated with mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety and suicidality.

The Need

Our Wellbeing Survey

Thematic analysis of SOHKs 2021 focus groups suggests that SOHK learners grapple with feelings of anxiety, stress, isolation and loneliness (especially during COVID), along with anger and frustration. Yet they have few people to turn for support. In summary they shared that they:

DON'T HAVE SAFE SPACES TO SPEAK OPENLY &

"It's very important. I don't really have [someone to talk to] at home so like I come to school and I have SOHK."

NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO

"Sometimes I wish I had someone to just talk to about my problems."

GIRLS HAVE LOWER WELLBEING THAN BOYS

SOHK girls showed 10% less wellbeing at baseline than boys, suggesting girls are more adversely affected.

STRUGGLE WITH ONGOING LOSS AND GRIEF

18% suffered the loss of a close family member (pre-covid).

EXPERIENCE ANGER, FRUSTRATION AND ACT OUT IMPULSIVELY

"I always butt heads with my parents and argue. I stress it would make me a miserable person & I'd become rude and angry."

"A lot of the times when I go to the program I am angry."

FEEL STRESSED AT HOME

"Yes home is where the stress is. I just keep quiet and say nothing."

"I usually just end up like bursting out at them or shouting back or even just leaving home."

ARE DISPLAYING MORE RISKY AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR SINCE COVID

SOHK staff have had more disclosures of suicidal thoughts than in any other year, and there is a 250% rise in teenage pregnancies amongst SOHK youth.



Coach Urshwin

Our Approach



One of the significant impacts of trauma that we see is a difficulty with regulating emotions.

Many young people function largely in survival mode, reacting from a place of fight, flight or freeze, as opposed to responding from a place of awareness or emotional connection.

Attachment issues with primary care-givers and other difficult experiences may have also led to young people not trusting adults and seeing those offering help as a threat initially, until trusting relationships have been established.

This often means that relationship building is the first step before other programme activities can begin, and can require substantial time, before the deeper work can happen."

Our Approach

Explained

The SOHK for Schools programme addresses these issues by using a combination of psycho-social counselling from caring adults and life skills through rugby coaching (The Hard Knocks).

LIFE SKILLS SESSIONS

By teaching social and emotional awareness through rugby our learners master a new sport which creates the platform for learning self-awareness and coping techniques to deal with every day stress.

WITH CARING ADULTS

We prioritise hiring staff who come from similar backgrounds to the young people that they work with as we recognise these are people who speak their language and understand their culture.



CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Our Social Worker delivers services to participant families identified as at-risk and who have asked for help. This is aimed at keeping children safe in their families through supportive intervention. Family coping skills are increased by strengthening family bonds as well as facilitating the family's utilisation of formal and informal community resources.

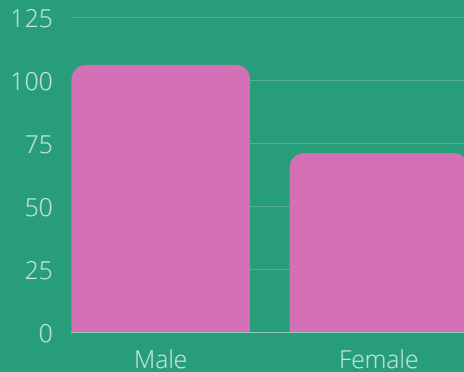
ACCESS TO PITCHSIDE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Our Coaches are 'trauma informed' experts who are trained to listen. When coaches notice that young people are struggling they find time at the side of the field to talk one on one. If this goes beyond what they can address there and then, they can refer the young people to our registered counsellor.

Our Implementation

With school timetables being severely disrupted we were forced to split traditional school groups into separate grades with lower numbers to maintain social distancing. Overall this resulted in us reaching fewer children than our target of 200 at the beginning of the year.

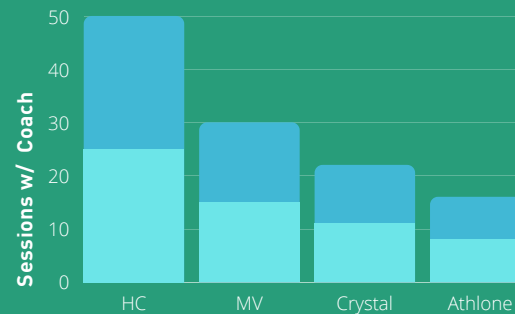
LIFE SKILLS SESSIONS



109 group life skills sessions delivered to 79 girls and 99 boys

Coach Assist App 2021

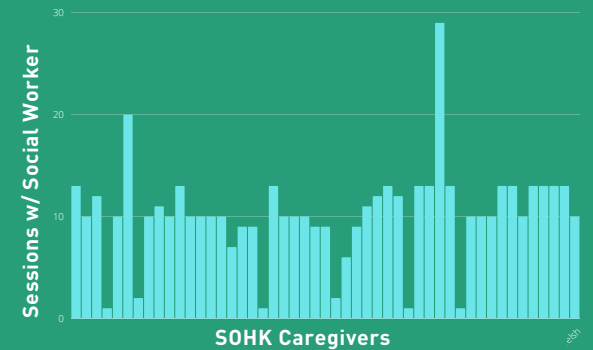
PITCHSIDE THERAPY



177 pitch side One on One therapy sessions, 71 to girls and 106 to boys.

SOHK Counselling Database 2021

CAREGIVER SUPPORT



156 Social Work sessions to 50 caregiver families

SOHK Social Worker Database 2021

REVISED CURRICULUM

In 2021 Linda Bruce, a Child Development specialist, revised SOHK's existing curriculum and incorporated improved mental wellbeing tools into it to improve emotional regulation. She also delivered 4 customised workshops to up-skill the SOHK Coaching team with these new tools.

Key Findings

Better Self Awareness



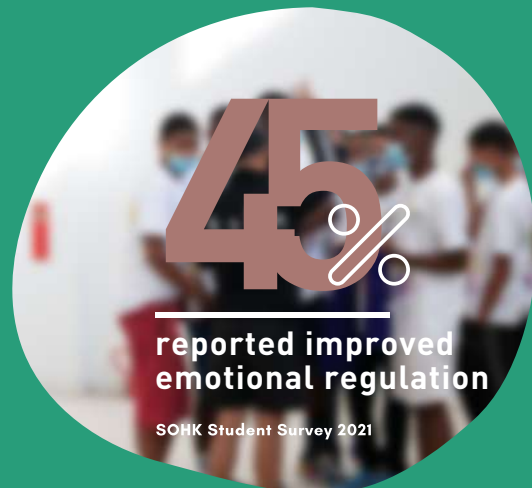
"SOHK made me more aware of the consequences to my actions and **more aware of what I'm feeling** and why I feel like that and it showed me my faults. It made me realise - okay this is what I need to do better and this is what I need to work on."

SOHK Student

"SOHK offered a safe space for me to feel not judged, I felt it **helped me express myself in a different way** you know than how I would normally."

SOHK Student

Better Emotional Regulation



"I'm actually proud of myself. I controlled a few things and managed to do those few exercises of breathing and calming yourself down in a rough situation or when you feel a certain way then I can have self control."

SOHK Student

"I deal with stuff much better than I did before. The different ways to go about dealing with conflict really opened my eyes to how different we can react to stuff, so thank you so much for that."

SOHK Parent

Key Findings

Improved Relationships



Before SOHK I didn't understand my child, but since speaking to the social worker, I have a better understanding of who my child is and why she makes certain decisions.

SOHK Parent

I don't think I would even talk to [my parents] if it weren't for School of Hard Knocks.

SOHK Student

Safe Space



"It offered a **safe space** for me to feel not judged, I felt, it helped me express myself in a different way you know that how I would normally."

SOHK Student

SOHK honestly improved my life and had a huge good change. I've been in the darkest of times in my life I've chosen suicide many times but with the help of SOHK I've seen things differently. **If not for SOHK I probably wouldn't be alive today.**

SOHK Student

What did we learn?

SELF-REPORT MEASURES, ALONE, MAY NOT BE ACCURATE

Emotional literacy is not strong, especially at the start of a programme & youth may not be able to accurately report. Self reporting measures on daily behaviour might be more accurate for tracking progress and shifts in character.

We aren't alone, Waves for Change, one of our peers, found that there was a real discrepancy between the outcomes of their self-report surveys and the stress levels experienced by youth in their programmes.

TRADITIONAL TALK THERAPY OR TECHNOLOGY IS NOT ALWAYS APPROPRIATE

Our participants don't like the term 'counselling' and prefer 'mentoring.' They don't like to talk on the phone, and prefer short 10 minute regular conversations where they feel comfortable to disclose after trust has been built over time.

COVID WAS VERY HARD

Our delivery team have noted an increase in severe mental health needs (e.g. attempted suicides, abuse in the home). Most children have been exposed to some form of loss – loss of school, loss of social connections or the loss of loved ones – and our team have provided extra support (telephonic check-ins, more structured one on ones) to cope with grief.

TRUST IS SO IMPORTANT

Young people expressed feeling safer opening up to people with whom they have existing relationships and the potential for longer term support. Staff inside organisations are therefore better positioned to offer emotional support than external counsellors.

Case Studies

Courtney & Briony*

Briony is a very talkative, outspoken person who loves to give her input. Her short term goals are to finish school and study marine biology post school.

Courtney says "she initially struggled with setting personal boundaries as well as asking others to respect her own. She has over time learnt how to communicate and interact with people, as well as work in a team."

"It's better to be able to speak to someone about the hard things than to keep it to your self. SOHK just makes me feel more comfortable" says Briony.

Courtney says "she is more confident about her physical body and her unique personality. She's full of self love and feels no one is able to take it away from her. She has much more self control and doesn't get angry as easily anymore."



*We have used a pseudonym



Urshwin and Joshua

Jamie, a Grade 10 learner from Bonteheuwel, is "a quiet person but prone to finding trouble outside of our sessions," says Coach Urshwin.

"As time passed I got to know Jamie better and saw how he was fascinated by gangsterism. He started coming high to the sessions and started interacting less and less until I decided to intervene."

"Jamie stays in a gang infested area where if you don't stand out you tend to want to fit in. Where Jamie comes from drugs have become a norm."

"I had a few one on ones with Jamie and he made a huge turn around. He is more outspoken now and has even changed his way of speaking - he doesn't use gang language in front of me anymore."

Gender Equity

Our #NextGenMen Schools project sought to change perceptions around traditional gender norms and promote gender-equitable attitudes. Though we are still learning and growing in our approach to gender-aware coaching practices, this is what we achieved in 2021:

With the Gender Institute, we developed 4 unique sessions of gender-transformative curriculum content embedded in our year round life skills programming



We delivered this content to over 170 children in the SOHK schools programme during 2021

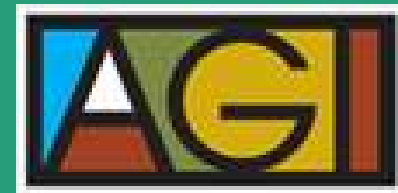


Delivered a 'Women In Sport' media campaign during Women's Month to highlight gendered journeys of elite female athletes.

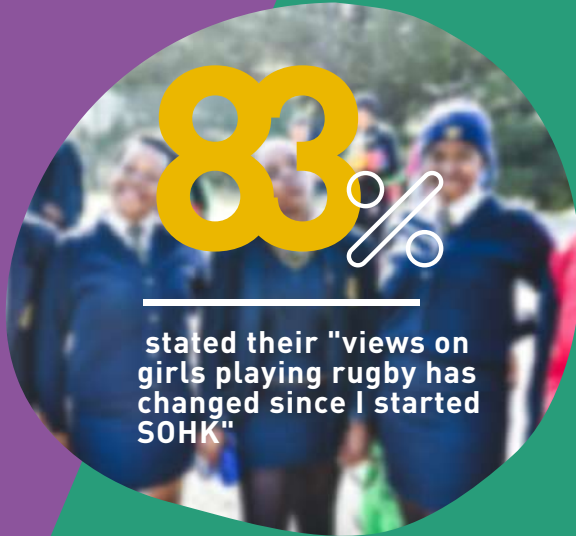
Installed a 'free for user' sanitary pad vending machine at Harold Cressy High with the Menstruation Foundation.



Conducted 4 days of capacity building delivered by the Gender Institute with SOHK staff



Findings: Gender Equity



83%
stated their "views on girls playing rugby has changed since I started SOHK"

My message to young people is that it's up to us to change the present and the future. The School of Hard Knocks and its programmes therefore are very important as it equips and educates towards that. Let's continue to be champions and bring down gender based stereotypes.'

SOHK Ambassador
Babalwa Latsha

74% participants lent verbal support to a 'new way of doing things' regarding traditional gender roles.

SOHK Male Learner

"Yes, girls need to be understood more, they are mentally and emotionally strong."

SOHK Male Learner

"Yes I always thought that rugby was too much contact for girls, I was surprised how good they can play."

SOHK Male Learner

SOHK have recruited a Programme Evaluation intern from UCT for 2022 to externally evaluate the outcomes of NextGenMen.



NextGenMen: Adults

Our Latest Project

Project #NextGenMen, a collaboration between Sonke Gender Justice, Fives Futbol and SOHK aimed to use the power of soccer to challenge and change problematic social norms and attitudes that underpin violence against women (VAW). To do this, we delivered Sonke's recognised gender transformative content aimed at promoting more positive masculinities to 20 soccer coaches in the informal soccer community.



We delivered 10 structured, evidence-based, workshops to 20 men culminating in the #NextGenMen Cup

44% showed a change in attitude supportive of diversity

33% showed a change in attitude supportive of consent

22% showed more support of men doing care work

25% showed a greater understanding of laws against sexual violence

0 10 20 30 40 50



The NextGenMen Cup hosted 68 youth designed to increase the project's gender transformative messaging and outcomes to a wider community.

Media Highlights

Entertainer and gender rights advocate Siv Ngesi launched our NextGenMen schools project. He participated in a very enlightening session on 'What is Gender' at Harold Cressy High.

My message to young people is simple, be whoever you want to be, no-one should tell you otherwise. I'm proud to support School of Hard Knocks and their efforts to dispel gender stereotypes. I love seeing exceptional female rugby talent when I visit their programmes. Please help support their work in whatever way you can.'

Siv Ngesi



Coach Courtney featured in UNICEF's Zwakala campaign to encourage young people to 'take their shot' and get vaccinated.

Springbok Captain Babalwa Latsha was on hand to install our free to use sanitary pad vending machine at Harold Cressy.



The MTN Awards for Social Change 2021



We have been awarded an MTN Award for Social Change, in recognition of our Monitoring and Evaluation work in South Africa. The MTN Awards, held in collaboration with sustainability consultancy, Trialogue, recognise and reward non-profits that are able to provide evidence of the positive difference they are making.

Where Your Money Goes

R1,575,766

SCHOOLS PROG 65%

Includes delivery team salaries and CEO oversight, curriculum content development, monitoring and evaluation, training and mentoring of staff, staff and school transport, telephone expenditure and kit and equipment for programme team and participants.

2020: 55%

NEXTGENMEN 18%

Includes curriculum content design, CEO oversight, M&E consultancy & design, service delivery (Sonke Gender Justice) of 10 workshops, transport, kit & equipment.

2020: N/A

SUSTAINABILITY 10%

Includes CEO salary quota, voicing charities mission, production of media content, web hosting, purchase of donor lists, fundraising events.

2020: 8%

OVERHEADS 6%

Includes rent at secure office with wifi, insurance, accounting, printing, stationery, PPE, & team management software.

2020: 8%



MATHETHA BOPAPE

FINANCE DIRECTOR

We are happy to report a fourth year of clean audits coupled with reduced spending in overheads, namely a further reduction in accounting costs. Further, we are building a diverse range of donors (from 6 to 10 in 2021) of which two are multi-year. The outlook is positive but not without significant challenges in the funding landscape.

PARTNERS



Naspers For Good became a new partner in 2021 with specific emphasis placed on our NextGenMen schools project.



Laureus Sport for Good in South Africa provide financial support, in-kind training and access to communities of practice to deepen our knowledge of the sector. Laureus Global provided support through a COVID specific grant.



The Learning Trust is developing South Africa's extended learning sector through capacity support to After School programmes.



Capitec are committed to providing access to critical services to low-income groups through personal service - just like SOHK.



The Emerging Markets Foundation is a global philanthropy organisation focused on at-risk youth in emerging market countries. A new partner in 2020.



DGMT is also a new partner in 2021. Our work is focused on reducing school drop out through psycho-social support.



Sport & Development, also new for 2021, is a project of the Agence Francaise de Development.

IN-KIND

WEBBER WENTZEL

In alliance with > **Linklaters**

Webber Wentzel have provided pro-bono legal services to SOHK since 2017.

Thank you

THE
WYFOLD
CHARITABLE
TRUST



LIFE & BRAND
PORTFOLIO

MEN *struatishu*
FOUNDATION



Our Inspiration

Desmond Tutu RIP



DONATE

Bank: Investec
Address: Grayston Drive
Account: 10011986498
Branch: 580105

NPO: 2017/084112/08
PBO: 930058607



CONTACT

Scott Sloan
Programme Director
072 939 5283
scott@schoolofhardknocks.co.za

ONLINE

www.schoolofhardknocks.co.za
facebook.com/sohksa
instagram.com/sohk_sa

ADDRESS

SOHK c/o Inyathelo
Buchanan Square,
Cape Town,
Western Cape, RSA
8000

S
O
H
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