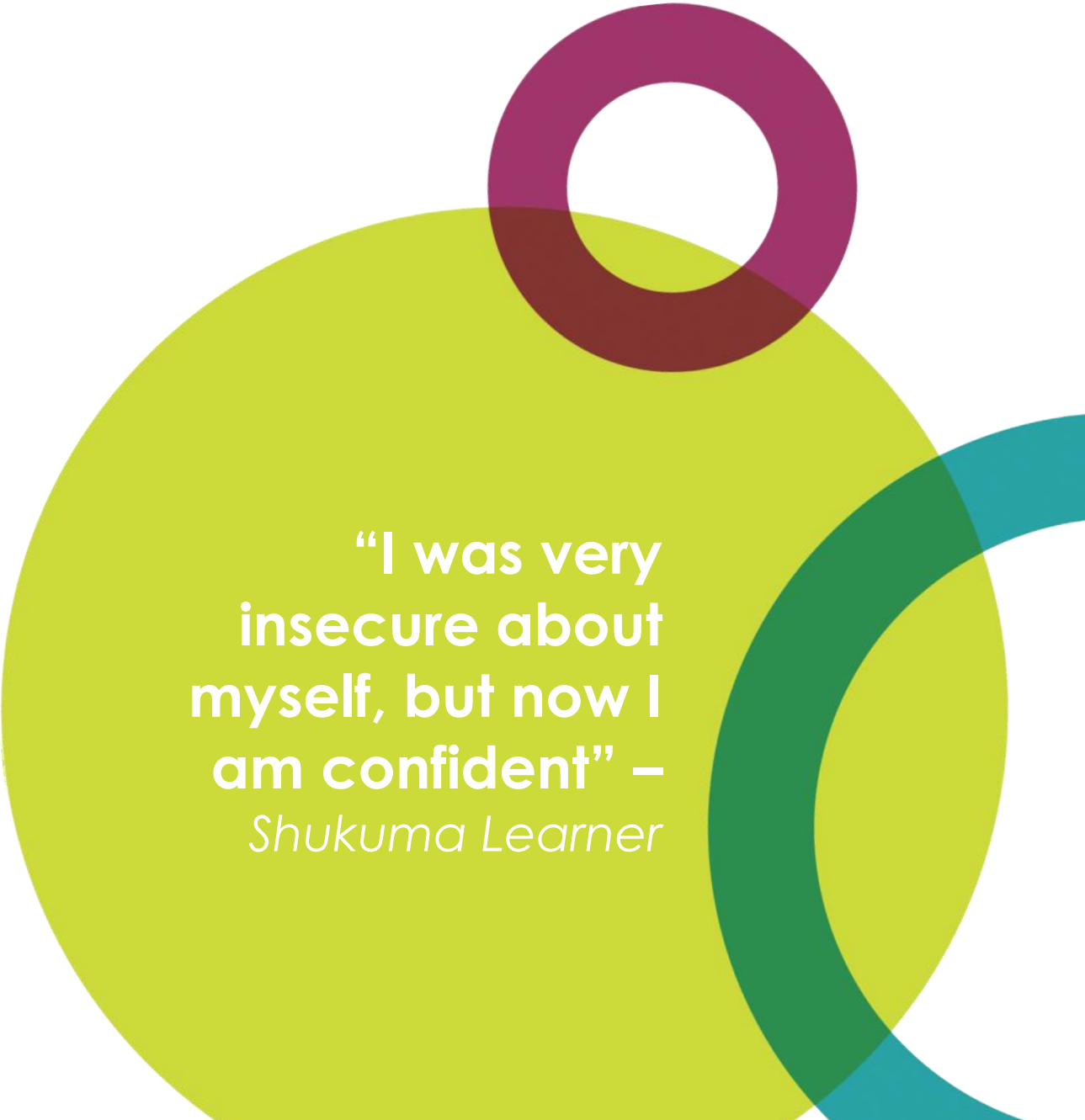

Department of the Premier
May 2022

Shukuma: Moving Mindsets

Policy Brief

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**“I was very
insecure about
myself, but now I
am confident” –
*Shukuma Learner***



Introduction

The Shukuma (formerly Violence Prevention Initiative @ Schools) is a Western Cape Government (WCG) initiative developed as a response to the acknowledgement of escalating levels of school-based violence amongst youth in the Western Cape. The project reflects the WCG commitment to improving citizen's wellbeing and ensuring their safety, particularly of youth. As such, both the Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP) 2019-2024 and the subsequent Recovery Plan (2020) focus on violence prevention as a key intervention. The Shukuma programme is located within the Wellbeing Priority of the Recovery Plan, with support from the Safety Priority.

Based on an initial needs assessment study conducted in May 2021, which sought to understand the drivers of school-based learner-on-learner violence in Cape Town secondary schools, Shukuma programme was successfully tested in 4 high schools in the Cape Metro between September – November 2021, with 155 Grade 8 and 9 learners receiving an average of 8 sessions over a 10-week period. The Test phase involved Western Cape Government (WCG) officials from the Department of the Premier (DotP), Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and J-PAL Africa, an external research and social evaluations organisation. All partners were responsible for co-designing and co-implementing the test phase. Key actors in the youth space, such as the Departments of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS), Social Development (DSD) and Health (DOH), were also consulted for strategic advice.

The aim of this policy brief is to consolidate the key findings of the Test phase and offer recommendations for the future of the Shukuma initiative as it moves to the pilot phase.

Context

1.1 School-based learner-on-learner violence

This policy brief on the Test phase of the Shukuma initiative draws from recommendations of the needs assessment study commissioned by DotP. The needs assessment study examined the high school learners' experience of, and exposure to violence in a number of schools in the Cape Town Metropole. The study, conducted in May 2021, found that experiencing and perpetrating violence often takes place at school. The study found that high levels of violence present in the broader community and at home tend to spill over into schools. Although only representing a small sample (217 questionnaires were completed across nine schools, with additional focus groups and interviews), the needs assessment confirmed insights from other Western Cape studies that pointed to the pervasiveness of violence in communities, schools, homes and individual's lives.



In this study, bullying and fighting were found to be closely related at school. Just under 40% of learners have experienced **another learner trying to break something that belonged to them** at least once or twice in the last school year. **70% of learners had something stolen from them by another learner** at least once or twice in the last school year. 22% of learners report that this happened many times and 40% of learners have had something belonging to them deliberately damaged by another learner in the last school year.

All the schools reported that younger learners from the lower grades fought more than learners in the higher grades. In particular, most of the staff interviewed noted that fights were most common amongst learners in grades 8 and 9.

In the community, the study found that there are notably high levels of violence in the broader communities of the learners, with significant indicators illustrating that most learners are exposed to **high levels of community violence, accept gangs as part of society and struggle with social connection**. 88% of learners reported having seen somebody being arrested at least once or twice, 30% of learners said that they regularly witness drug deals taking place, and 50% of learners have seen someone being beaten up many times.

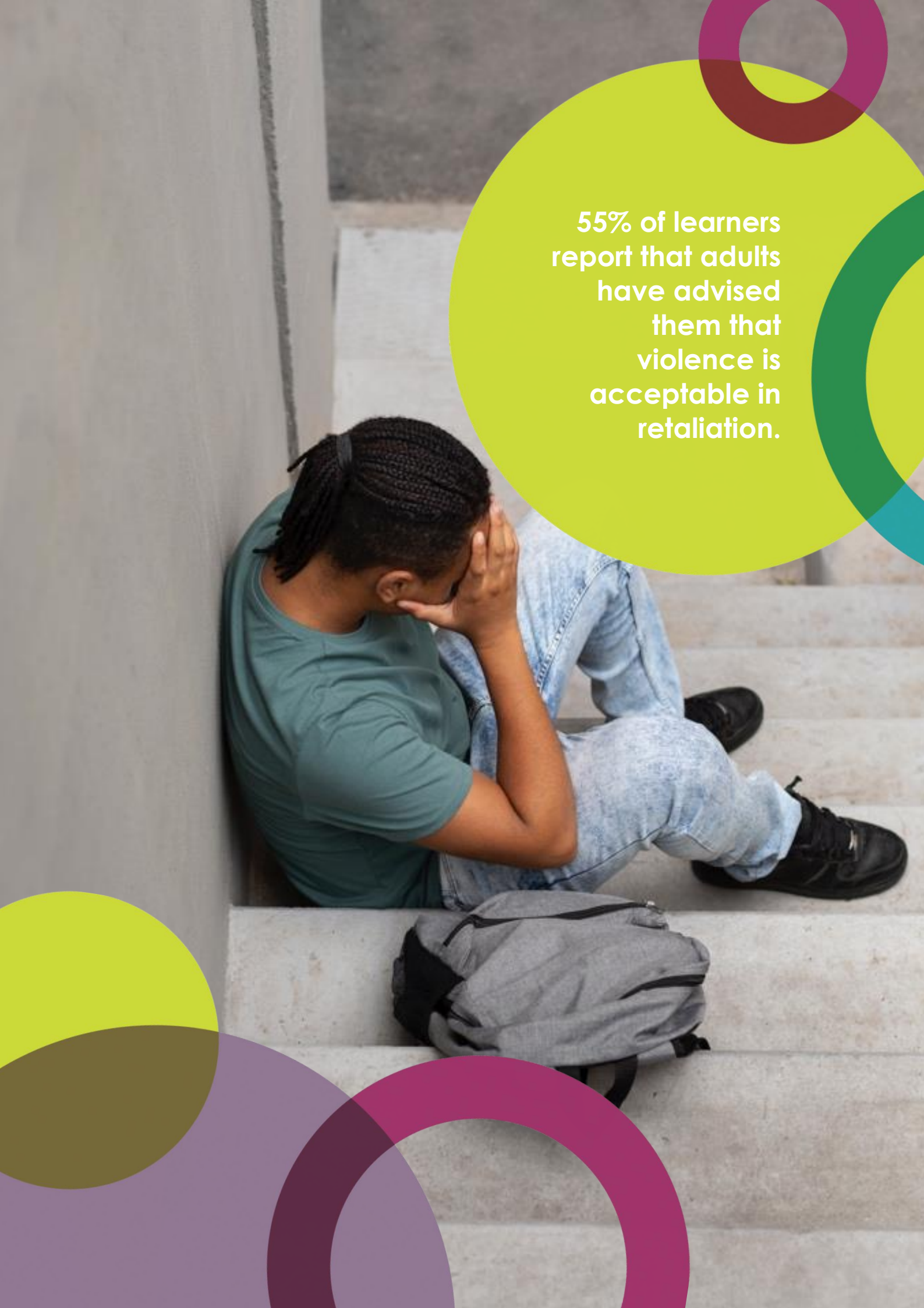
These figures indicate the heightened levels of resilience needed by learners coming from violent communities if they wish to thrive in their studies and more broadly in their lives. **Physical threats to learner safety may also “jump the fence” into the schools**, with some schools reporting that criminal gang members were entering the schools and threatening individuals on the grounds.

Building positive social connections (with peers, relatives and members of their community) is an important protective factor in preventing violence. However, **most learners (60%) surveyed in this study feel at least slightly disconnected from the world around them.**

Within the home, as many as 44% of learners report that a parent/caregiver has used a hard item (stick, belt, etc) to hit them at least once or twice in the past year, 62% of learners report that a parent/caregiver has called them names (dumb, lazy etc.) at least once or twice in the past year and 30% of learners have been threatened by a parent/caregiver to be sent away or kicked out of the house at least once or twice in the past year. This reflects **exceptionally high levels of violence in the home**, a key risk factor for other forms of violence against children. Parents also play a key role in setting norms around violence, with 55% of learners indicating that adults have advised them that violence is acceptable in retaliation.

On an individual level, learners responses indicate that **although they know they should not resort to fighting, they still fight at high-stake moments** – when retaliating or when trying to impress their peers. The study found that violence at an individual level is reflected in beliefs about retaliation, how learners respond to feeling anger and how they respond when challenged in front of their friends. There is also a significant number of learners who indicate signs of anxiety and depression.

The needs assessment confirmed that violence is pervasive in learners' lives – in their communities, schools, homes and individual lives. Addressing learner-on-learner violence at school in response to this makes sense, as schools provide access to a large number of learners making the programme scalable in the long-term, as well as being in a space that government has a relatively high degree of control. The needs assessment confirmed that a behaviourally inspired programme could be suitable in the Western Cape context to address learner-on-learner violence in schools. As such, DotP, WCED and J-PAL Africa began to investigate using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy as a potential solution to address the problem of learner-on-learner violence.



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1.2 CBT International Review

There is considerable international research on the impact of using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to prevent violence. Generalisable lessons on behaviour change and reducing acts of violence emerge from multiple studies undertaken in Mexico¹, Chicago², Liberia³ and El Salvador⁴, contexts similar to the Western Cape that share issues such as high levels of violence and persistent gang activity. In these contexts, one of the common issues is the limited investment in psycho-social support for youth to develop Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills. This is important because SEL skills and

preferences, including self-control and identity, are malleable in young adults, and investing in them can lead to reductions in criminal and violent activities and behaviours.⁵

CBT has been shown to help reduce self-destructive behaviours, likely by: helping youth focus more on the future; changing their self-perceptions; and/or slowing down their decision-making.⁶ The Theory of Change diagram below draws on the international review of CBT programmes to reflect these behaviour changes:

CBT Theory of Change

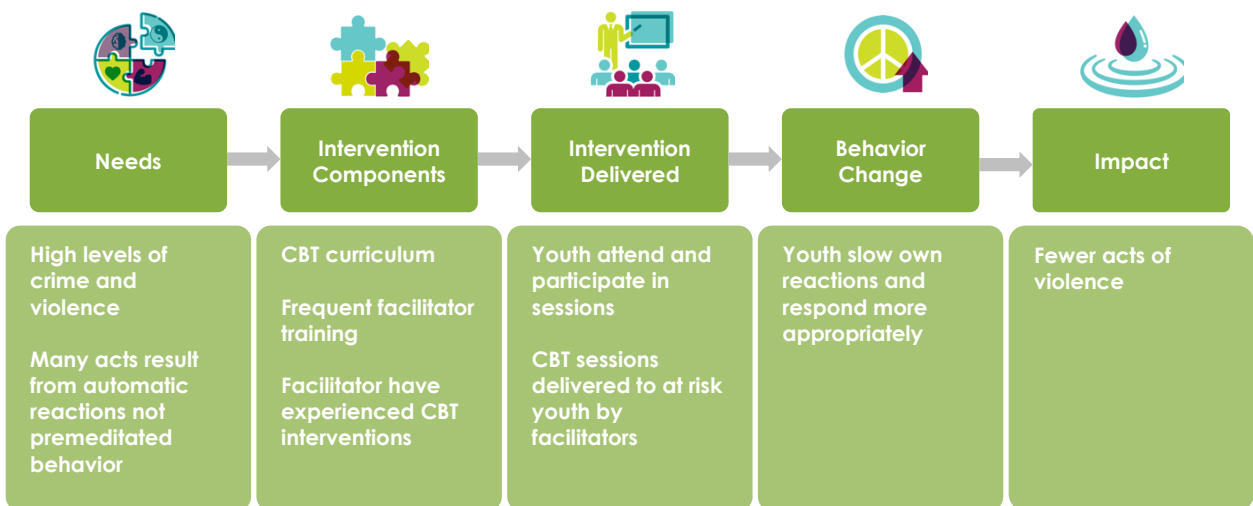


Figure 1: CBT Theory of Change

¹ Agostinelli, F., Avitabile, C., Bobba, M. and Sanchez, A., 2019. *The short-term effects of the Mobile Pedagogical Tutors: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial in rural Mexico*. Mimeo.

² Heller, S.B., Shah, A.K., Guryan, J., Ludwig, J., Mullainathan, S. and Pollack, H.A., 2017. Thinking, fast and slow? Some field experiments to reduce crime and dropout in Chicago. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132(1), pp.1-54.

³ Blattman, C., Jamison, J.C. and Sheridan, M., 2017. Reducing crime and violence: Experimental evidence from cognitive behavioral therapy in Liberia. *American Economic Review*, 107(4), pp.1165-1206.

⁴ Dinarte, L. and Egana-delSol, P., 2019. Preventing violence in the most violent contexts: Behavioral and

neurophysiological evidence. *World Bank Policy Research working paper*, (8862).

⁵ Lipsey, M.W., Landenberger, N.A. and Wilson, S.J., 2007. Effects of cognitive-behavioral programs for criminal offenders. *Campbell systematic reviews*, 3(1), pp.1-27.

⁶ Lipsey, M.W., Landenberger, N.A. and Wilson, S.J., 2007. Effects of cognitive-behavioral programs for criminal offenders. *Campbell systematic reviews*, 3(1), pp.1-27; Blattman, C., Jamison, J.C. and Sheridan, M., 2017. Reducing crime and violence: Experimental evidence from cognitive behavioral therapy in Liberia. *American Economic Review*, 107(4), pp.1165-1206.

In particular, the effectiveness of using CBT in school environments has been demonstrated in various contexts, such as Becoming a Man in Chicago and through after school programming in El Salvador.⁷

The potential impact of a CBT-inspired curriculum is to **slow down learners' automatic responses to violence**, give young people the **tools to regulate emotions both during and post- schooling**, and to provide opportunities to **understand what drives learners' beliefs and actions to development an understanding of 'self'**. More indirectly, the potential impact of the programme could be to enhance psychosocial support for learners, provide opportunities for learners to engage with positive peer role models and to enable learners to have honest conversations in safe spaces at school. As reflected in the TOC above, the intended long-term outcomes of the Shukuma programme are

fewer acts of violence, as well as improved school attendance and graduation rates.

The review also revealed anecdotal evidence about best practices for programme success, suggesting that timing and facilitation are key to program success (e.g., implementing during the school day and using modestly trained, relatable, and approachable facilitators to lead sessions).

An international review of these programmes provided a framework for developing a CBT-inspired curriculum contextualised to the Western Cape context. To operationalise this CBT programme in the Western Cape, the Shukuma project was born. The next section outlines the details of the methodology employed to realise this project.

⁷ Barnes, Smith, & Miller, 2014; Feindler & Gerber, 2012; Larson, 1994; Lester, Lawrence, & Ward, 2017. Dinarte, L. and Egana-delSol, P., 2019. Preventing violence in the most violent

contexts: Behavioral and neurophysiological evidence. World Bank Policy Research working paper, (8862).



Methodology

Drawing on the recommendations of the needs assessment and international best practice for CBT-inspired violence prevention programmes, the WCG began developing an evidence-based behavioural violence prevention intervention to reduce learner-on-learner violence at schools in the Western Cape. This section outlines the methodology employed to realise the Shukuma programme - including consultations with key actors in the youth and education spaces, collaborative programme design processes and the development of a school-based theory of change, curriculum, programme values and learning agenda.



2.1 Overall Timeline

Following the findings of the needs assessment study, Shukuma was collaboratively designed, including **two design workshops** with key WCED officials and research partners. WCED **Districts and principals** from the selected schools were then engaged through **online meetings**. 4 high schools in the Cape Town Metro were selected out of the 10 high schools which had taken part in the needs assessment study. These schools were selected to allow for diversity in testing environments – based on Safe Schools risk levels, race, language and geography. The schools that were selected to take part in the Test phase were Leiden Secondary School in Delft, Spine Road High School in Mitchell's Plain, Crystal Senior Secondary School in Hanover Park and Manyano High School in Khayelitsha.

To deliver the curriculum, 16 students from the University of Cape Town (with a preference for Psychology, Social Work and Social Development students) and 22 existing WCED staff members (from the Ottery Child and Youth Care Centre) received a 5-day **training** in the programme content and general facilitation skills. This training was run by the DotP, WCED and J-PAL Africa team, with online support from curriculum consultant Chris Jaffe.

The **Test phase** of the programme was then conducted with 155 Grade 8 and 9 learners receiving an average of 8 sessions over a 10-week period. 1 class of learners per grade were targeted, with the class split in half into two groups, with 1 facilitator per group. The programme ran across school terms 3 and 4, from 6 – 23 September (school holidays: 1-12 October); 13 October – 12 November 2021.

In each of the participating schools, one Shukuma Champion teacher was identified to act as a project liaison, and existing WCED district level social workers served as a referral pathway for learners needing more specialised support.

Finally, to close out the Test phase, a **'Thank you' event** was held to appreciate facilitators, principals and champion teachers. Following this, a **Strategic planning** event was held with key actors in the youth and education space, as well as our partners, to reflect on the lessons learnt from the Test phase, and to begin planning for the pilot phase, scheduled for 2022.

The timeline below illustrates the consultative process that has informed the Test phase of the Shukuma programme:

Where are we now?

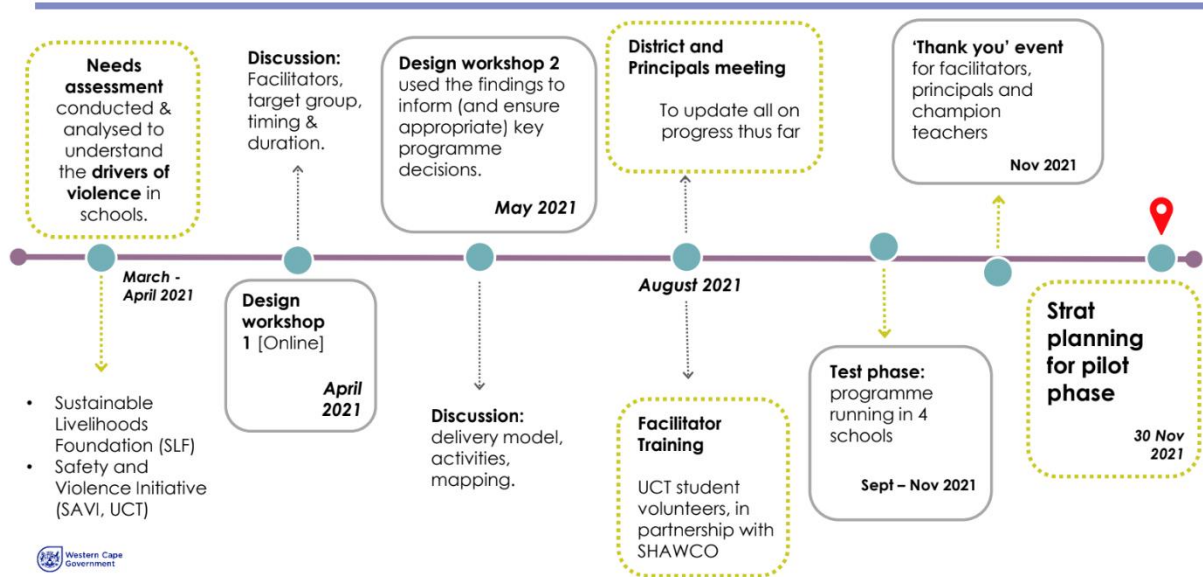


Figure 1: Timeline of Shukuma programme

2.2 Test phase Objectives

As reflected above, the Test phase of the Shukuma programme ran from September – November 2021, and had the following objectives:

- To adapt the suite of evidence from CBT-inspired curricula worldwide to the Western Cape schools' context
- To assess which sessions / activities resonate most with students and which will need restructuring for the pilot, scheduled for 2022
- To assess whether some sessions / activities resonate more with different segments of the student body (e.g., boys vs girls)
- To outline longer-term objectives of the Shukuma programme, a school-based Theory of Change was developed, as discussed in the following section.

2.3 Theory of Change

The international review of CBT-inspired programmes provided a framework for developing a school-based CBT Theory of Change (TOC), as reflected below.

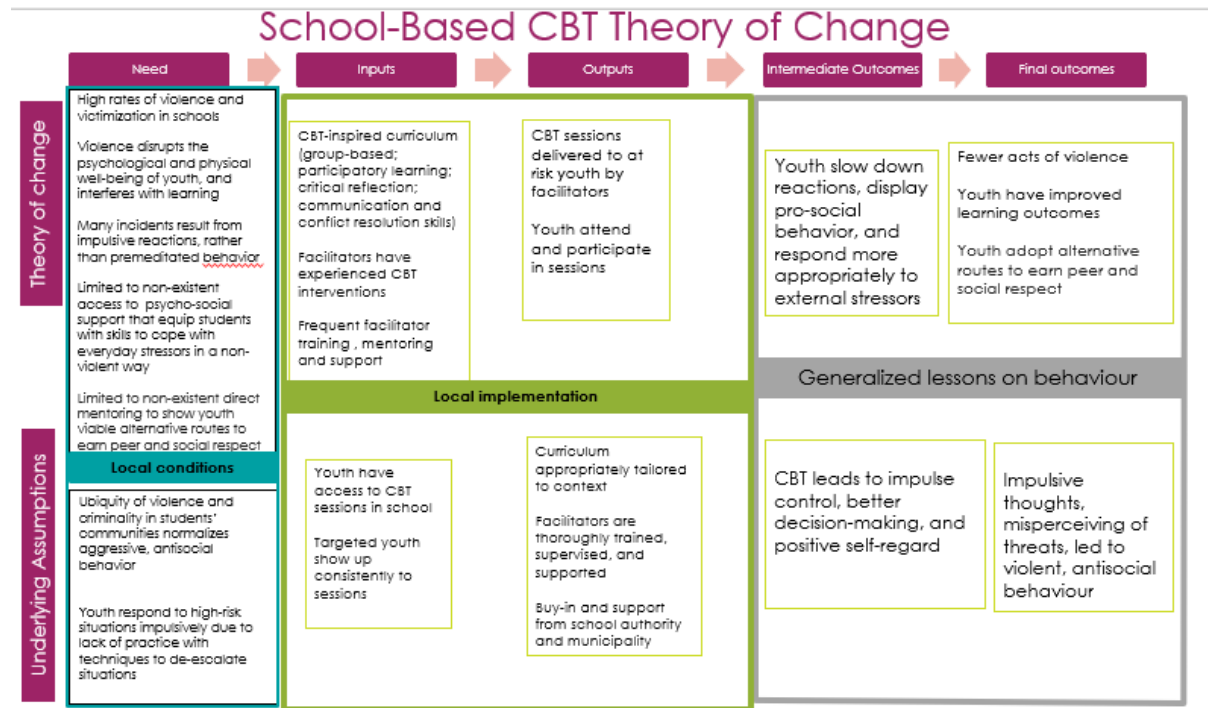


Figure 2: School-based CBT Theory of Change

In the Test phase, the focus was to successfully deliver inputs and achieve modest outputs, with limited change in outcomes due to the short length of the Test phase. The upcoming, longer Pilot phase of the project is anticipated to result in changes in outcomes. To achieve these intended outputs and outcomes, a Shukuma curriculum was developed.



2.4 Curriculum Overview

The Test phase adapted the suite of evidence from international CBT-inspired curricula to the Western Cape schools' context under the guidance of two curriculum specialists – Chris Jaffe a curriculum developer and facilitator of the Becoming a Man (BAM) programme in Chicago, and Euria Hendrickse, an experienced curriculum developer and facilitator from the Western Cape. The 10-session curriculum is outlined below:

#	Session Name	Description
1	Orientation and Check-in	Introduction to the values of the program and the PIES (Physically, Intellectually, Emotionally and Spiritually) check-in process, which will be used in each subsequent session.
2	Five Emotions	Exploration and group definition of the five basic emotions: anger, sadness, fear, joy, and shame.
3	Integrity Role Play / Truth and Story	Learners get an introduction to the core concepts of integrity and accountability, then have the option to reflect on a real example from their own life.
4	Deep Breathing / Empathy Game	Introduction to the practice of mindfulness, deep breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation. Learners read and respond to 'situation cards' depicting difficult life situations and how they would feel if they were placed in that situation.
5	Reflective Listening	Learners engage in a reflective listening exercise and practice empathy.
6	Boxes	Learners identify learned words/feelings/judgments about the opposite sex and the same sex, and how those words/ feelings/ judgments are true, untrue, oppressive, or liberating.
7	Deep Check-In	Following the regular check-in process, the facilitator initiates additional prompts for the group to engage in a "deeper" check-in.
8	The Shadow	Through role play and lecture learners explore the concept of having a "shadow", parts of themselves that they hide or suppress and the importance of being aware of those things.
9	My Vision	Through brief, guided visualization, learners develop a positive vision for themselves and their community.
10	Golden Hot Seat	Each learner takes a turn sitting in the middle of the circle while all other learners express positive affirmations to the individual group member.

2.5 Values of the Shukuma programme

The Shukuma programme, both in content and facilitation is underpinned by a number of core values, as listed in the table below:

Shukuma Core Value	Value Definition	Learner Outcome
Empathy	I respect myself and others. I seek to understand.	Understand & share the feelings / experiences of others
Self-Awareness	I am conscious of my thoughts, emotions, motivations, and desires	Identify and articulate their emotional state Practice coping mechanisms for life stressors
Integrity	My words and my actions say the same thing	Make choices that are consistent with their life goals
Accountability	I am responsible for the consequences of my actions, whether intended or unintended	Accept responsibility for personal choices
Trust	I trust myself and I can trust others	Learn to trust themselves Develop cohesive peer groups
Vision	I have a positive vision for myself and my community	Set achievable personal goals



Key Findings

The key findings from the Shukuma Test phase are based on a review of the learning agenda objectives, end line data sources and feedback from learners and facilitators. This data was collected in the form of post-implementation surveys and focus groups. The monitoring and evaluation work was done by partners from the J-PAL Africa team to understand key questions in the learning agenda. This section includes findings in the following areas:

- Learner impact: to understand from learners, teachers and facilitators if they felt that the curriculum content and facilitators resonated with learners
- Programme content reflections: to understand whether learners and facilitators felt the content was appropriate
- Programme design reflections: to understand the facilitators' experience of the programme design
- Facilitation lessons: to understand how the learners experienced the facilitators and general lessons related to the facilitation of the programme
- Implementation lessons: to understand the operation and programme delivery lessons from the project management team

3.1 Learner Impact

Learners expressed a high amount of personal growth, citing **pro-social behavioural changes** such as “swearing at people less”. Learners found the programme useful in improving their psycho-social skills and relationships with others.

“I was not making friends, I had only one friend, [name], but this programme helped me talk to others and now I'm friendly to boys and girls.”- Shukuma Participant

*“I was very insecure about myself, but now I am confident”
- Shukuma Participant*

“I will make better choices this time and learn to control my anger” - Shukuma Participant

“My life will be better if I forgive...It's hard to forgive, but I will try to forgive” - Shukuma Participant

Learners' biggest takeaway from the programme was **their high satisfaction with knowledge** they gained about emotions and other concepts such as empathy.

*“[The programme] was **empowering**.” – Shukuma Participant*

“... Favourite part was we knew how to control our emotions and how others feel when we do something to them.” – Shukuma Participant

“... Programme that helps people think properly”– Shukuma Participant

Learners cited **not having other spaces or opportunities in school/community** to discuss these topics, relying on family members for this kind of support. Teachers and facilitators reinforced the important of this space for learners:

“... often learners come to me looking for someone to talk to one-on-one and I don't always have the time”. – Champion Teacher

“They (the learners) are very transparent, but they really need someone who they can talk to who is close their age, as their teachers are always busy, thus, they don't have time to listen and play with them.” - Shukuma Facilitator

“[Facilitator] told us how to deal with when our parents are wrong, how to be calm. And it worked.” - Shukuma Participant

3.2 Programme content reflections

The learner's favourite activities were the PIES check-in and various icebreakers. Overall, the 'Shadow' lesson was the most beloved. Some session **activities were received differently** in different groups, although this might have to do with facilitators' experience and skill. The intention of the curriculum was to engage learners about their own beliefs and behaviours around violence and equip them with tools to regulate their responses and views. One facilitator shared the following:

*"I learnt that they (the learners) understand the difference between the 5 emotions and they can identify them as well. They also told me that **shame/embarrassment triggers them to continue fighting**. All the members understood that fighting is wrong and fighting back is wrong but all of them agreed that **they need to stand up for themselves or else they will be seen as a weakling**. All the boys mentioned that they would fight back because "that's what men should do." The girls also agreed that they would also fight back but two girls mentioned that they would walk away." - Shukuma Facilitator⁸*



The content of the sessions was mostly **suitable for Grade 8 and 9s** and learners demonstrated buy-in to the content of the sessions.

"The group session seemed to be a much-needed space for the learners to share their emotions and learn coping mechanism."- Shukuma Facilitator

However, some of the **content may need to be simplified**. The learners found the content somewhat challenging, and concepts such as 'integrity' needed explaining and contextualising.

"... most of my kids could not grasp the concepts and jargon that was used in some of the sessions." – Shukuma Facilitator

"Most learners don't fully grasp English, so it was difficult for them to understand the point or to speak out their opinions." – Shukuma Facilitator

"It was our first time hearing those big words"– Shukuma Participant

More work needs to be done to **further contextualise activities** to appropriately fit

the Western Cape context and student profile. This includes adding more topics that are directly related to learners' immediate stressors e.g., gangsterism.

"Lessons should be planned to completely induce learners, to bring discussions that most find taboo... If the curriculum decides to follow a life orientation path, being very passive and lessons that really don't help."

Some learners **cited discomfort in engaging with topics around parental resentments** when discussing gender roles and stereotypes.

"Didn't like talking about my father because I don't like him" Shukuma Participant

"Some learners showed lack of emotional maturity to fully grasp the concept or lesson of this particular session (on gender stereotyping)." - Shukuma Facilitator

"We have heard these things but we never went so deep" – Shukuma Participant



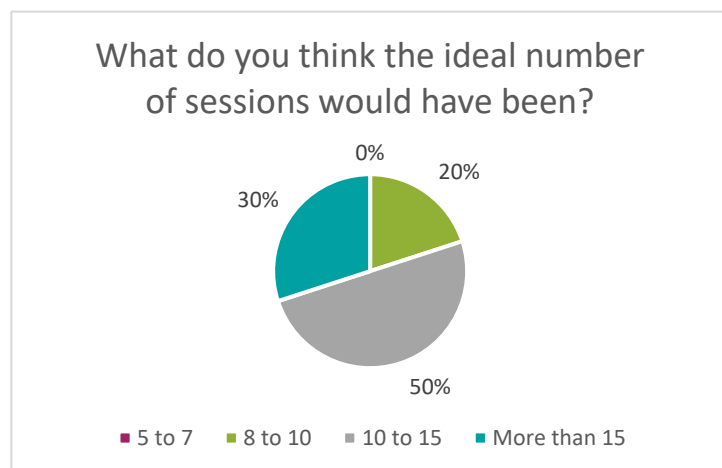
**“It felt good to
share things about
myself.”**

*– Shukuma
Participant*

3.3 Programme design reflections

As the intention of the Test phase was to test the programme design, this section includes the design reflections of the programme facilitators (13/14 completed the survey).

80% of facilitators said that **more sessions** would have been beneficial.



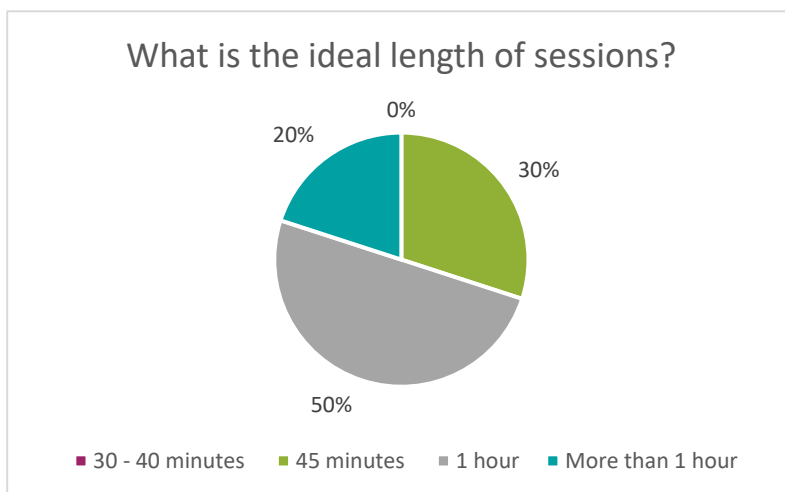
*“They really started **opening up around (session) 5 or 6** and then and there the relationship really started.” – Shukuma Facilitator*

*“I feel like **we needed more time** with kids and material.” – Shukuma Facilitator*

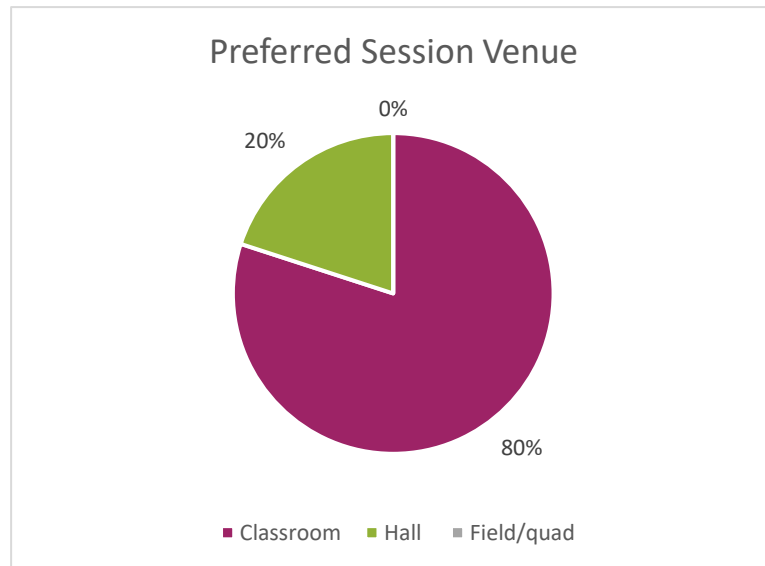
80% of facilitators said that **45 min to 1 hour** was the optimal time for sessions. 20% of facilitators reported that one hour was not enough to deliver the programme.

*“Ideally, the session should be of the same length of the normal subject lessons which is **usually 45 minutes.**” – Shukuma Facilitator*

*“The **attention span of learners** would not go beyond one hour.” – Shukuma Facilitator*



80% of facilitators said that **classrooms** were the best place to have their sessions because they were easy to control and maintain attention. However, at times it was challenging if there was noise from passers-by or other classes, especially if the space was shared with another group.



Despite some initial concerns that some of the content might be delivered best in groups split along gender lines, **gender composition** did not affect the group dynamic significantly and learners expressed no desire to be split along gender lines, citing that they have a class group identity (e.g., Grade 8F) and prefer to remain together.

"It did not affect my sessions in any negative way, there was a mutual respect." – Shukuma Learner

"... it was a bit intimidating for them (the boys) to open up amongst each other." – Shukuma Learner

Facilitators supported the mixed gender composition:

"Something I learnt is that the boys in the group were actually really comfortable discussing emotions." – Shukuma Facilitator

3.4 Facilitation Lessons

Overall, **facilitators reported that learners responded positively to the programme.**

“The learners are enjoying the sessions. There is a high level of cohesion and sharing, and a great deal of trust in the group.” – Shukuma Facilitator

Learner trusted their facilitators with sensitive matters, activating two instances of activating potential referral pathways – to the liaison teacher and to the WCED School-Based Support Teams. Learners **consider facilitators role models** and would go to them for a wide range of issues. In the focus groups, learners gave facilitators overall marks ranging from an A+ to B, and the average rating for facilitators was an A-. Learners perceived the **facilitators as knowledgeable and patient** in explaining difficult concepts. The barriers between facilitators and learners were less than anticipated, particularly given the differences in age, education and socio-economic background. Key facilitator traits were vulnerability, genuine interest in students' lives and engaging energy. The following quotes from learners in the learner focus groups, reflect this feedback:

"He listens" | "Positive energy" | "Smiling" | "Willing to help"
| "Interested in what you're saying" | "Open, tells us about her life"
| "She loves to talk to people".

Learners were **motivated to participate in sessions** because of the openness and warmth of their facilitator.

"It felt good to share things about myself." – Shukuma Participant

"[Facilitator] told us about his life, so we told him about our life." – Shukuma Participant

[Facilitator] is just lekker (nice). He's not like the others. We can trust him" – Shukuma Participant

"I felt free"– Shukuma Participant

Facilitators were recruited through a partnership with SHAWCO, at the University of Cape Town (UCT). In the Test phase, **scheduling and participation** in the programme worked best for UCT students in their final year and Honours programmes for Psychology and Social Development. It was more difficult for students from Occupational Therapy and Law.

Facilitators with **previous volunteer youth experience** were more equipped with classroom management and group facilitation skills. Facilitators' experience and facilitation skills affected how session activities were received. Facilitators who were able to build in flexibility and flow

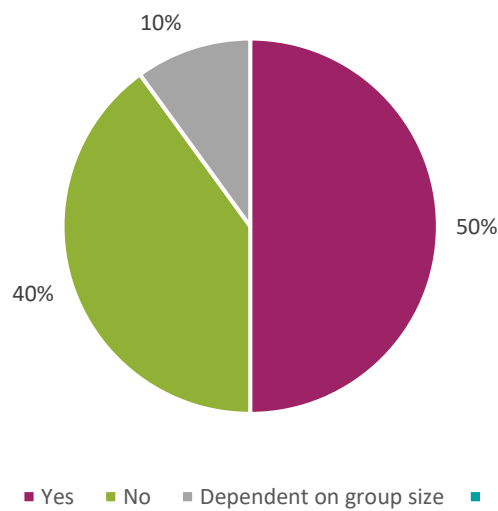
allowed learners to engage in more in-depth discussions.

Facilitators with **knowledge of and experience in the community** and neighbourhood the schools are located are better equipped to facilitate learners in these environments. This was corroborated by findings that it is beneficial to have facilitators' **language skills** suited to the schools e.g., isiXhosa, Afrikaans. Most learners responded well to sessions in English, but appreciated interweaving Afrikaans, Xhosa and slang.

"I codeswitched from English to Afrikaans for some learners but all of them engaged well with the English lessons." – Shukuma Facilitator

Larger groups of learners particularly benefitted from having a **co-facilitator** who was able to share their experience. It was particularly beneficial to have female and male facilitators in the mixed group. However, some concerns around having a co-facilitator were the risks of being disjointed, more difficult to build trust and the potential of dividing learners' attention. Overall, groups of 10+ need a co-facilitator.

Would your sessions have benefitted from having a co-facilitator?



Facilitators were motivated to volunteer for the programme to **make a difference in preventing youth violence** and to **learn more about the CBT-inspired approach** to youth development. They reported that being part of the programme had positively impacted their **professional development** – by facilitating sessions in schools, attending weekly debrief meetings and learning from other facilitators, and learning about the research protocols of the study. All facilitators **believe they made a positive difference** in the lives of the learners I was assigned and almost all facilitators are very **confident in their ability to reteach** curriculum content.

Facilitators shared that being involved in this programme had positively influenced their own personal development, in addition to the learners:

“Facilitating this course started off as a plus on my CV, something that could possibly get me a bursary. I never in my wildest dreams could imagine it would have the powerful impact on my personal life which it currently is having. I realize now that I really am just like one of my learners, still learning as I go on my way and that even though my Shadow seems big, my resilience and strength to overcome is so much bigger.” – Shukuma Facilitator

3.5 Implementation Lessons

A number of implementation lessons were shared from the project management team, to consider in the implementation of the Pilot phase going forward.

Scheduling and participation were impacted by Covid-19 class schedules for learners in both positive and negative ways. The rotational scheduling was complex and constantly shifting, which made it difficult to schedule sessions and secure available venues while being mindful of mitigating learning loss as learners try to catch up after missing significant portions of the school year in 2020 and 2021. There were various approaches to this across the 4 schools the programme was based in. For example, one school alternated: 1 week grade 8s and 1 week grade 9s. Another school held classes for Grade 8A, group A on a Monday, and Grade 8A, group B on a Tuesday. One school set up a fixed time for the weekly session (every Wednesday for 1hr), which was useful for consistency and scheduling, but did not offer flexibility in perhaps adding an additional session for the week if this timeslot was disrupted.

At the same time, the Covid-19 schedule changes also allowed for smaller learner groups that could have potentially enhanced learning. The recommendation is to have set times and days for sessions in schools for learner consistency.

Timing of the sessions affected learner energy levels, especially when the sessions were too early, just before break or just before the school day ends. Learners tended to be either sleeping or uninterested (too early in the day) or restless and less concentrated (just before break or before the school day ends).

Transport was the most expensive line item in the budget, and further renditions might reconsider the model of bringing facilitators in from campuses. Data/airtime costs and travel costs for facilitators should be factored into future budgets and programme requirements. The recommendation is for airtime/data bundles to be provided for joining meetings.





“For the most part the timing of the sessions was good, but it was difficult when the sessions was before break or just before the school day ends. Members tend to be more restless and less concentrated at these times.”

– Shukuma Facilitator

When the sessions were early in the morning, we might as well not have gone because they were sleeping and uninterested.”

– Shukuma Facilitator

Communication via WhatsApp groups with facilitators and Shukuma champion teachers and principals were effective but managing WhatsApp groups in real time required substantial time commitment and focus. Clear channels of communication need to be established with the clarification of roles and responsibilities within a team.

School partnerships need to be development more robustly, for example having a memorandum of understanding or a contract. **School onboarding** requires strategic engagement and adequate time. Communications with schools (Shukuma liaison teachers and principals) varied across schools each week. The recommendation is to engage Shukuma Champions so that they go through curriculum training with facilitators. There needs to be thorough sensitisation and onboarding of schools to assist with buy-in.

A dedicated **project coordinator** is required with the various project stakeholders.

These key findings reflect the rich insights gained from the successful delivery of the Test phase of the Shukuma project. These findings have significant implications to inform the Pilot phase going forward.



Implications

The findings of the Shukuma Test phase show that a school-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) programme benefits learners by providing a separate environment to develop Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills and have honest conversations in safe spaces at school. This is significant because learners cited not having other spaces or opportunities in their school or community to discuss these topics. The findings of the Test phase show that this programme stimulates personal growth (exhibited by their pro-social behavioural changes) and increases

learners' knowledge around emotions and other concepts such as empathy. However, more research needs to be conducted on intermediate outcomes around learners' automatic responses to violence, and their ability and willingness to regulate emotions both during and post-schooling.

Learners demonstrated buy-in to the curriculum content, and facilitators noted the suitability of the content to Grade 8 and 9 learners. However, learner and student feedback argued for simplified and further contextualised content and activities to fit

the Western Cape context and student profile. The findings of the Shukuma Test phase also demonstrate that the best format are sessions that are: mixed gender, between 45 minutes to 1 hour, and conducted in classrooms. Ideally 10-15 sessions should also be conducted.

The Test phase also found that learners had the opportunity to engage with facilitators, who they felt were positive role models and knowledgeable and patient in explaining difficult concepts. Facilitators played an important role in motivating learner participation and creating a warm and open environment for students to share their honest thoughts and experiences. Facilitators that had previous volunteer experience and knowledge of and experience in the community (including the appropriate language capacity to translate complex concepts) were best equipped with the classroom and facilitation skills for the programme. Larger groups of learners particularly benefitted from having a co-facilitator.

Covid-19 impacted the scheduling of sessions in both positive and negative ways but demonstrated how the implementation of the Shukuma programme was subject to wider factors that impact school scheduling. The timing of the sessions also had a big impact on learner energy levels. Transport of facilitators and communication within various stakeholders also had a big impact on programme implementation and success. A dedicated project coordinator and strengthening of school partnerships (through a strategic school onboarding) would further boost programme success. However, more research needs to be conducted on potential longer-term impacts such as enhanced psycho-social support, improved self-regulation and self-efficacy, increased school attendance, improved educational outcomes and decreased incidences of learner-on-learner violence within schools.



Recommendations

The findings have important implications to inform the Pilot phase of the Shukuma intervention. We recommend that a scaled-up version of the Shukuma Test phase that addresses learners' automatic responses through a behaviourally inspired programme be implemented. The intervention should target between 40-50 low-, medium- and high-risk schools. The intervention should be targeted at approximately 2000 Grade 8 and 9 learners, which would involve the recruitment of approximately 200 facilitators. The number of sessions should be increased from 8 to 10 to 15 - 20 sessions, conducted over 6 to 8 months. Where possible, sessions should continue to be held during the school day, as it was during the Test phase.

We recommend engaging an implementation partner to manage the

increased number of facilitators and prioritising school-onboarding and sensitization before rollout to ensure all stakeholders buy into the programme. In order to ensure scheduling and timing that ensures optimal learning, we recommend requesting a standing class period at every school with observation/shadowing from the Life Orientation teacher. We recommend a dedicated field support staff per school/ set of schools to respond to immediate concerns from learners, facilitators or liaison partners.

Facilitators should be recruited from communities with requisite language skills, and sessions with both genders should be maintained for Pilot and test deviation in follow-up evaluations. We also recommend engaging a WCED Research Team member to catalyse admin data-sharing.

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